

Being Christian in Chinese Context:
New Junzi, New Christian

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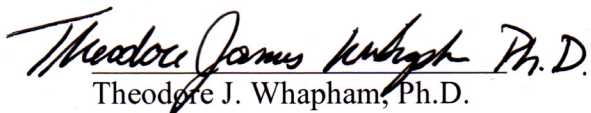
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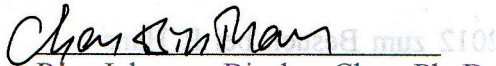
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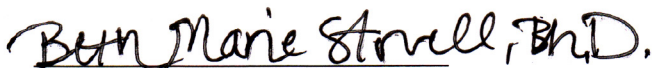
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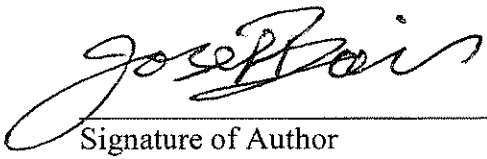


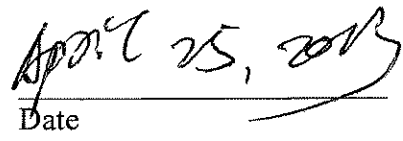
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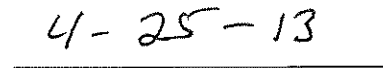
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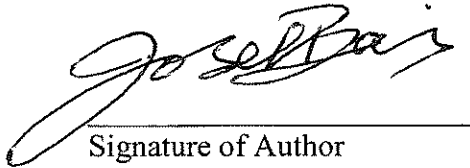

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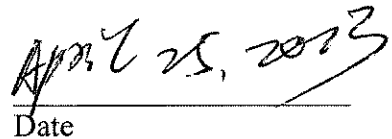
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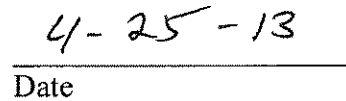
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Abstract

Contemporary Chinese Christians seek a new way of becoming authentically Chinese Christians. Christians in Chinese Confucian cultural context have experienced a tension of being both authentically Chinese and Christian. Through the practical theological method by following theology of inculturation, this dissertation aims to find a new way of being authentically Chinese and Christian. Confucianism offers a way of being authentically Chinese person who is a Junzi. Becoming Junzi is the first crucial step for becoming authentically Chinese Christians. Contemporary Catholic theologian Catherine M. LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insight delineates a model of becoming an authentically Christian who is a Trinitarian Christian. By valuing both Chinese Confucian traditional teachings about being Junzi and Christian teachings about being Trinitarian Christian, this dissertation helps contemporary Chinese Christians to bridge the tension of being both authentically Chinese and Christian, and to find a new way of becoming both authentically Chinese and authentic Christian. This new way of being a Chinese Christian is defined in this work as a Trinitarian Junzi.

Becoming a Trinitarian Junzi is a new way of being Chinese as well as being Christian in the Chinese context. The concept creates an understanding for Chinese people to participate in the life of the Triune God; it also reminds Christians to cherish the values of all of God's people and creations. Becoming a Trinitarian Junzi opens the horizon and vision of being Chinese in the light of Christianity; it also offers inspiration and imagination about being Christian in a new way through dialoguing with every local culture and beyond.

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CHAPTER ONE: SEEKING A NEW WAY

Introduction

On July 1, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI wrote a letter to Chinese Catholics.¹ The purpose of the letter was to acknowledge the faithfulness of Chinese Catholics and to give them pastoral guidance about the challenges of practicing their faith.² The reason for writing this letter was because there was a tension of being both authentically Chinese and authentically Christian in Chinese context.³ The different understandings of being

¹ The word “Chinese Catholics” or “Chinese Christians” means Christians who are in a Chinese cultural context and being formed by Christian faith and Chinese Confucian culture. This term indicates the importance of both Christian faith and culture in becoming an authentically Chinese Christian in a cultural context. Like the term “Chinese Christians,” there will a number of familiar English words that will be used in a technical way; each technical term will be clearly defined during its initial use. This technical use may not be equivalent to the traditional understanding of the term.

² Benedict XVI, “Letter of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China,” last modified July, 2007, accessed Nov. 20, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china_en.html

³ “Authentic (as in being authentically Christian and authentically Chinese), as it is used in this context, is similar in meaning to actualized, mature, or fulfilled. Being authentically Chinese means being a Chinese person formed in the Chinese Confucian culture, a concept explored in chapter four; authentically Christian means being Trinitarian Christian according to the foundation and model of the Triune God in the Trinitarian theological insight which is articulated in chapter five. Authentic is not a static concept; it is a process of becoming fully Chinese and Christian. Being is the ground of the verb “to be.” Because the verb “to be” cannot express the meaning of becoming in a process, “Being” expresses the understanding of becoming Chinese and becoming Christians as a process from the initial being toward a future of becoming. “Being” also emphasizes a process of cherishing one’s natural foundation which is Chinese culture and the supernatural revelation which is the lights from the Trinitarian God. So, just when one cherishes one’s initial being which for Christians in Chinese context are the Confucian culture and Christian faith, one will begin a process of becoming authentically Chinese Christians. Above all, the word “being”, expresses that the ultimate ground of our “being” is God, as Thomas H. Groome argues. The being of Chinese Christians has a process based on the Being of God, in the understanding of the being Christian in Christianity and person in Confucianism, and then to the fulfillment in the Trinitarian God. See, Thomas H. Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious*

Christian and being Chinese in Chinese contemporary context causes problems for Christian life and for Christians to practice their faith in society. Although political reasons play a very important role in causing the tension, the deep reason behind the tension has to be found. So, seeking the deep reason of the tension and bridging it for becoming authentically Chinese Christians in Chinese context and future, is the purpose of this dissertation.

In order to bridge the tension of being both being authentically Chinese and Christian and find a new way of being authentically Chinese Christians, this dissertation follows the process described next. First of all, it explores the method of theological inculturation in practical theology and other important categories for future work. Second, it reviews the experience of Christianity in China in different periods of history. Through the historical Christian experiences, this study examines the positive and negative experiences of being Christians in a Chinese cultural situation. The negative experience of being Christian in a Chinese cultural context should help define the reasons causing the tension of being authentically Chinese Christians. Third, in order to understand the meaning of being authentically Chinese, one has to dig deeper into Chinese culture. Confucianism as the dominant Chinese culture is explored. Through Confucian cultural teachings, the meaning of being authentically Chinese persons emerges as the first step towards becoming Chinese Christians. Four, finding the meaning of being authentic Christians is also very important for bridging the tension. The core teaching of Christianity is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who is the

Education and Pastoral Ministry, (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 32-34. Christians include all the followers of Jesus Christ along history. In this work, written from the perspective of a Chinese Catholic, the term often focuses on the Catholic experience.

foundation and model of being authentic Christians. Through Trinitarian theological insights, one grasps the understanding of the Triune God and God's relationship with humanity and all creatures. In the light of Trinitarian theology, the meaning of being authentically Christian develops. Fifth, in order to bridge the tension of being both authentically Chinese and Christian, a dialogue between Confucian cultural teachings about being authentically Chinese and Trinitarian theological insights about being authentically Christians is necessary. Through the dialogue of theological inculturation in the mutual nourishment and critique between Chinese Confucian culture and Trinitarian theological insights, a new model of being authentically Chinese Christians is developed for contemporary Chinese people. This model will be a new way of being a Chinese and being a Christian in the light of Confucian culture and Christianity.⁴

The Experience of Being Chinese Christians

Chinese Christians have experienced tension from the beginning of Christianity coming to China until now. The tension of being authentically Christian and authentically Chinese has caused great deal of pressure for Chinese Christians through history until contemporary time. When the first missionaries came to China, the Nestorian and Franciscan missionaries during the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) and the Yuan Dynasty (A.D.1271-1368) tried to use local religious concepts, such as Buddhism and Daoism, to express Christian faith. However, they did not use the dominant Chinese culture, the

⁴ Some contemporary scholars also call for reviving Confucianism which is a traditional Chinese wisdom for overcoming the contemporary family and social crisis. It is right to value traditional Chinese Confucian wisdom for contemporary Chinese crisis, but it is just a half way measure. One has to go further to open to other wisdoms for building a harmonious family and society. Christianity offers a new wisdom of being human. See Yong Chen, "Renewing Confucianism as a Living Tradition in 21st Century China: Reciting Classics, Reviving Academies and Restoring Rituals," in *Mapping Religion and Spirituality in a Postsecular World* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2012).

philosophy of Confucianism,⁵ as their dialogue partner. During the Ming dynasty (A.D.1368-1644), Jesuit missionaries led by Matteo Ricci (October 6, 1552 – May 11, 1610) tried to accommodate to local customs by seeking to use Chinese ways to express Christian faith with and for Chinese people. This was one of the positive experiences of being Chinese Christians. But other missionaries, such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, and some of the Jesuits, still held to the Western ways of converting Chinese people to Christianity. This approach caused the so called “Chinese Rites Controversy,” in which Chinese Christians were forbidden to practice the rites of venerating their ancestors and Confucius.⁶ This event caused a separation of Catholics from their families, from other people, especially from the Confucian scholars, and from social public life. After the Opium War in 1840, many missionaries came to China again with the protection of their governments. During this time, Christianity was considered a foreign religion by Chinese people, and those who joined Christianity were viewed as joining a foreign community. During this time, the positive experience of being Chinese Christian was led by the first Apostolate delegate, Archbishop Celso Benigno Luigi Costantini; Costantini encouraged Chinese Christians to value their culture in being Christians as well as Chinese.⁷ After

⁵ There is a debate of whether Confucianism is a Philosophy or a religion. In Chinese peoples’ view, Confucianism is always a philosophy which teaches how to be a good person, Junzi (君子). Chapter four gives a detailed explanation of Confucianism. For further information on Confucianism as a philosophy, see: W. Scott Morton, Charlton M. Lewis, *China: Its History and Culture*, fourth Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 2005), 32ff.

⁶ On March 19, 1715, Pope Clement XI issued a Papal bull *Ex illa die*, which officially condemned the practice of the Chinese rites. See: Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: a Conflict of Cultures*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 32.

⁷Guopeng Liu (刘国鹏), “Diyijie Zhongguo Zhujiao Huiyi de Kaishi, Chengxu yu Jieguo(第一届中国主教会议的召开、程序与结果)” August 15, 2011, accessed September 26, 2012, http://iwr.cass.cn/zj/zjxz/lgp/zxwz/201108/t20110815_7782.htm

1949, the new Communist regime almost totally abandoned Confucian teachings and forbade all religious faith. From 1980, China began to open her doors to promote economic growth and to dialogue with other wisdoms all over the world. Since that time, many Chinese scholars have realized the importance of traditional Confucianism inside and outside of China.⁸

There are the situations and tensions which have been experienced by Christians in the Chinese context throughout history. The positive experience of being Chinese Christian and of cherishing both the values of Chinese Confucian culture and Christianity should be inherited in contemporary Christian practice.⁹ In order to be authentically Chinese Christians, this tension has to be bridged. In order to bridge the tension, contemporary Christians have to value both the main Chinese Confucian cultural teachings and the fundamental teachings of Christianity about the Trinitarian God and to envision a new way of being authentically Chinese Christians. This new way of becoming authentically Chinese Christians is also a new way of becoming Chinese and of

⁸ Miiikka Ruokanen and Paulos Huang edit., *Christianity and Chinese Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 100.

⁹ Here the word “cherish” expresses the meaning of holding all the positive insights from both Christianity and Chinese culture together. The word “cherish” expresses an attitude of a special kind of love, such as agape, in treating both Christian revelation and Chinese Confucianism. This attitude, in dealing with the Chinese Culture and Christianity in the process of inculturation, helps one to see a kind of intimate relationship between Chinese culture and Christianity, between Chinese people and Christians. In the horizon of the Trinitarian God, one sees all people in different cultures and times, all the values of the cultures, has an intimate relationship and complementary role in the love of God. In this understanding of the values and roles of different people and cultures, the word “cherish” is used in a technical way for expressing the value of both sides of Chinese culture and Christianity. Although both sides have their limitations, it expresses hope of holding them together in order to become authentically Chinese Christians. The word “cherish” has a meaning of a Christian view of all persons and cultures: God values each culture and everyone has a relationship with and value for each other. The word “cherish” will have this meaning throughout this work.

becoming Christians. The tension of being authentically Chinese Christians also raises a pastoral question to contemporary Christian in Chinese context for seeking a new way of being Chinese Christians.

Pastoral Question

Contemporary Chinese Christians need a new model for being Christians in the Chinese context. Such a model should engage Chinese Confucian cultural teachings about being authentically human and should embody the Christian understanding of a Trinitarian God who is the model of being authentically Christian. Given the background experience of being Christians in Chinese cultural context, the resulting pastoral question regarding the Chinese context is: how can Christians in a Chinese context become both authentically Chinese and authentically Christian?

Two Wisdoms Nourishes One Life

In order to answer this pastoral question one has to go back to the dominant Chinese culture and then go deep to the core teaching of Christianity. Confucianism is the dominant Chinese culture which has influenced Chinese people for thousands of years. The core teaching of Christianity is the Trinitarian theological insights about the Triune God and God's relationship with persons and with all creatures. Hans Küng concludes that "being Christian cannot mean ceasing to be human. But neither can being human mean ceasing to be Christian."¹⁰ Being Christians and being humans always walk hand in hand. Being Chinese always should open to a new way of being; being Chinese Christian will be a new way of being Chinese people.

¹⁰ Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976), 601.

Since many scholars have already compared Junzi with Christology;¹¹ this dissertation does not repeat their work. Rather it seeks to compare the core teachings of Confucianism about becoming Junzi with the core teachings of Christianity about the Triune God who is the model of becoming Trinitarian Christians. Bringing these two cores of Confucianism and Christianity together will bridge the tension of being authentically Chinese Christians and will also envision a new way of becoming Junzi and of becoming Christian.

Becoming authentically Chinese is encapsulated in the concept of Junzi (君子).¹² In Chinese cultural teachings, Confucius offers a model of being an authentic human who is Junzi. In order to understand the meaning of being Junzi, this work focuses on Confucius' *Analects* and what they offer about being Junzi, which this study argues, is the first step of being authentically Chinese Christians. In Christianity, Trinitarian theology articulates the life of the Triune God and God's relationship with humans and all creatures from the revelation of Jesus Christ and through Christian practice. Contemporary Trinitarian theologian Catherine Mowry LaCugna offers special insights in understanding the being of the Triune God and a model of being authentically

¹¹ Fuya Xie (谢扶雅), 谢扶雅晚年基督教思想论集 (香港: 基督教文艺, 1986); Jonathan Yun-Ka Tan, *Jesus, the Crucified and Risen Sage: Constructing a Contemporary Confucian Christology* (The Federation of Asia Bishop's Conferences, 2004).

¹² Junzi means Gentleperson. There is a detailed explanation of the meaning of Junzi in Chapter Four. Here, Junzi refers both to a kind of person (OR a "kind person") and to the quality of that person. This work uses Chinese terms to express key words, such as Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite), and Tian ming (the mission of Heaven, the meaning of Heaven in Confucius understanding are both the sky and the Lord of the heaven and earth, a detailed explanation of which appears in chapter four). Using Chinese words to define Chinese Junzi (君子) is an invitation to understand Chinese concepts in Chinese cultural context.

Christians.¹³ Becoming authentically Christians is following the model of the Trinitarian God and becoming Trinitarian Christians. Through the contributions of Confucian teachings about being Junzi and Catherine M. LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights about being Trinitarian Christians, a new answer to the pastoral question should be found.

The fundamental teaching of Christianity is the doctrine of the Triune God.¹⁴ Many contemporary theologians envision the Triune God as a family.¹⁵ This family expresses love as nature in relational communion and extends this Trinitarian love to human beings and to the whole creation. Trinitarian theology is a way to understand the Triune God and God's relationship with humans and all creation in a communion. All the Christian teachings are based on God and explain Trinitarian theology on that basis. Trinitarian theology helps Christians to understand that God is the model of being an authentic Christian, as LaCugna has emphasized. There are three concepts of Trinitarian theology—person, relation, and deification—which deeply and significantly help Christians to understand the life of the Triune God and the meaning of being authentically Christians which is being Trinitarian Christians.

¹³ Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for us: The Trinity and Christian life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

¹⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 198, 234

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Puebla: A Pilgrimage of Faith* (Boston, MA: Daughters of Saint Paul, 1979), 86. For John Paul II, the best way to view a family is to look at the Trinity, not vice versa. Human is “an image of an inscrutable divine communion of persons.” See: John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human love in the Divine Plan* (Boston, MA: Pauline, 1997), 45-48. Contemporary theologians, such as John Zizioulas, Stanley J. Grenz, Catherine M. LaCugna and Patricia A. Fox all turn to the communion of persons to articulate the life of the Trinitarian God and human life. See, Patricia A. Fox, *God as Communion* (Collegeville, MN: A Michael Glazier Book, 2001). Among the contemporary theologians, John Paul II contributes one of the major developments in contemporary Trinitarian Theology.

These two wisdoms of Confucianism and Christianity offer different insights of being authentic persons. Through practicing Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite), and Tian ming (the mission of Heaven¹⁶) in a continuously spiraling life circle, Chinese people will become Junzi, who is the authentically Chinese. Through understanding the meaning of person, relation, and deification, Christians will understand the being of the Trinitarian God and the meaning of being authentically Christians. These three key concepts in the Trinitarian theology of LaCugna's *God for us* provide fertile ground for drawing correlations between the relational God who reaches out to draw humanity into participation within the life of the Trinity and the Confucian ideal of Junzi who reaches out in ever broadening circles in charity and respect to participate in the oneness of all that is.

The Purpose of This Study

Bridging the tension between being authentically Chinese and authentically Christian and envisioning a new way of being authentically Chinese Christians in contemporary Chinese context is the purpose of this research. In order to solve his contemporary crisis, Confucius tried to retrieve and to revive traditional wisdoms for rebuilding the moral life of family. Some contemporary scholars realize the challenge of this Chinese situation and call for reviving Confucian teachings.¹⁷ It is a valid way to

¹⁶ Heaven in Confucian understanding has two meanings; one indicates the sky, the other indicates the Lord of heaven and earth. Since the term Confucius means Tian ming, the mission of Heaven, and Tian ming also means human nature, it appears that here the meaning of Heaven means the Lord of heaven and earth. In this work, the meaning of Heaven will keep this understanding throughout. In chapter four, there is a detailed explanation about the meaning of Heaven in Chinese Confucian understanding.

¹⁷ See Qing Jiang, *Zhengzhi Ruxue: Dangdai Ruxue de Zhuanxing, Tezhi yu Fazhan (Political Confucianism: The Transformation, Special Characteristics and Development of Contemporary Confucianism)* (Beijing, China: Shanlian shudian, 2003).

value Chinese traditional wisdom for solving contemporary problems of family and society, but this is only a half-way solution for the crisis in contemporary Chinese family and society. One has to go further to find the foundation of human life and future of society and the world. Becoming authentically Chinese Christian is the way to rebuild the order of family and society and to envision a new future for Chinese culture. This new Chinese Christian will be a Trinitarian Junzi.¹⁸

This year (2012), the Catholic Church celebrates the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. This great council was a continuation of the Christian Tradition which calls for returning to the foundation of Christianity and opening to different peoples and their cultures. The Second Vatican Council clarified the relationship of the Church with the whole world in order to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people and to find God's presence among different religions and cultures. After this Council, valuing the theology of inculturation and building local theologies became hot topics in the Christian theological area.¹⁹ All the great callings and transformations could be done just by new Christians. Because of historical political reasons, Christians in China did not hear the news of the Second Vatican Council until twenty years later (1982). During the past thirty years, Christians in China have done a great job in rebuilding churches and studying and following the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and contemporary Church teachings. Christians in China have used the

¹⁸ Trinitarian Junzi is a kind of Christian as well as the quality of a Christian in Chinese Confucian cultural context. This concept is explored in chapter seven.

¹⁹ Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1974, 2002); Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008).

teachings of the Second Vatican Council as a new starting point for practicing the Christian faith and for bringing hope of Jesus Christ to Chinese people. Hopefully, this work about being authentically Chinese Christians will also become a response to the callings of the Second Vatican Council to dialogue with all cultures and a response to being authentically Chinese Christians in this new millennium. The Trinitarian Junzi is a new Chinese Christian who follows Christian Tradition, the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the contemporary Church teachings to bring the love of the Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to Chinese people. At the same time, the Trinitarian Junzi also will offer some new inspiration and imagination of being Christians in different cultural contexts all over the world.

The Structure of This Work

In order to answer the previously expressed pastoral question, this work first explores the method of the theology of inculturation. With the purpose of implementing a theology of inculturation, one has to understand the relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language, and the characteristic of Chinese culture which is Chineseness.²⁰ The relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language is in a mutually changeable spiral process. This understanding is influenced and inspired by Chinese thoughts of *Yin* and *Yang* (阴阳).²¹ In *Yin* and *Yang* thoughts, there is not an individual existence or position; everything has a deep connection with others because

²⁰ Chineseness is used to indicate the characteristics of Chinese culture. This is also a way to express the unique value of Chinese culture in becoming Chinese Christians. The understanding of Chinese culture helps the individual become a Chinese Christian. The concept of Chineseness is expanded in Chapter II.

²¹ For more information about the Chinese thoughts of Yin & Yang, Please see: Robin Wang, *Yinyang: The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese thought and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

the whole world is integrated. Everything interacts to fulfill one's responsibilities. In the *Yin Yang* thought, there is not one being or position that surpasses others, every being is equal in a process of fulfilling one's responsibilities in the light of the Tian ming (mission of Heaven). The doctrinal language and the pastoral language are in a constantly changing process in articulating and practicing Christian faith. These two languages always walk hand in hand. Through this exploration of the relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language, one should arrive at an understanding of the possibility and necessity for using Chinese Confucian thoughts to express Christian faith in Chinese cultural context. Chineseness is the character of Chinese culture. The openness of Chinese culture will help its people to realize the necessity to open to Christianity and will help Christianity to understand the possibility of being Christians in Chinese cultural context. The exploration of the theology of inculturation is necessary to prepare for a future dialogue between Confucianism and Trinitarian theological insights. Inculturation is a continuation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ who enters into all the cultures and among all people day by day. Through the understanding of inculturation, one understands the importance of dialoguing between Christianity and Confucianism. Once these foundations have been laid, the following chapters can be developed one by one.

Chapter three summarizes the Chinese Christian experience through history. There is a positive experience of being authentically Chinese and Christians; there are also the tensions of being both authentically Chinese and Christian inside and outside of Christian community. The tensions are caused by the misunderstanding of Chinese culture or Christianity, or both. The main tension is between the meaning of being

authentically Chinese and being authentically Christian. In order to bridge this tension, one has to go deep into understanding the main Chinese culture and Christianity.

Chapter four delineates the meaning of being an authentic person in Chinese Confucian cultural teachings. The whole purpose of Confucianism is to become an authentically Chinese person, a Junzi. The Junzi practices the Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety) in one's family life circle first, and then extends the same practice to a larger life circle of society through the practice of the Li (禮 rite), and then continually extends the practice of Xiao dao (filial piety) to a larger circle of life which includes Heaven and Earth in the light of Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven). Through the four cardinal virtues, Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (wisdom) and Yong (courage), one understands the deep meaning of Xiao dao (filial piety) practice in a Junzi's life. The goal of a Junzi's life is to become a Da ren (大人 great person) who is in Tian Ren He Yi (天人合一 oneness between Heaven and human). Being Junzi is also the first crucial step for being Chinese Christians.

In chapter five, research focuses on contemporary Trinitarian theologian LaCugna's insights about the life of the Triune God who is the foundation and the model of being authentically Christian. LaCugna emphasizes that the understanding of the life of the Trinitarian God cannot be separated from the understanding of human life. In bridging the Western and Eastern Trinitarian theological contributions, LaCugna offers special insights in understanding God's life and God's relationship with humans and with all creatures. The Trinitarian God is persons in relation to one another. The Triune God and humans are one and the same with the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* (from the Father and back to the Father) in which everything is from the Father in the Son through

the Holy Spirit, and comes back to the Father through the incarnation of the Son, Jesus Christ and in the deification in the Holy Spirit. Through her understanding of “person, relation and deification,” LaCugna delineates the meaning of being authentically Christians which is being Trinitarian Christians.

Chapter six explores the dialogue between Confucian teachings about being Junzi and LaCugna’s Trinitarian theological insights about being Trinitarian Christians. Through the mutual nourishment and critique between Confucianism and Trinitarian theological insights, the tension between being authentically Chinese and being authentic Christian is bridged. From these two nourishments, a new figure of being both authentically Chinese and Christian emerges: being authentically Chinese Christian is becoming Trinitarian Junzi.

Chapter seven explores the meaning of being new Junzi and new Christian. It is also a response of future practice to the pastoral question. Being Trinitarian Junzi is a way of being an authentically Chinese Christian. Becoming a Trinitarian Junzi is a new way of being both Junzi and Christian. In the light of Christianity, the Confucian Junzi will become a new Junzi who has a new horizon and a new vision to understand the meaning of one’s relationship with others as member of one’s family and of God’s family. In the contribution of Confucian cultural insights, Christians will also recognize the natural ways of the presence of God among different cultures and will begin to cherish the values of every culture and every religion. Being Christian in Chinese context is being Trinitarian Junzi.

Future Practice

In understanding the Chinese Christian experience and dialoguing between Trinitarian theological insights about being Trinitarian Christians and Confucian contributions about being Junzi, this work bridges the tensions of being authentically Chinese and authentic Christian and envisions a new way of being Chinese Christian for contemporary Chinese situations. This work tries to find one way to bridge the tension of being authentically Chinese and authentic Christian and to envision a new way of being Chinese Christians in a contemporary context. Obviously, there will be new tensions in being authentically Chinese Christian along the continuity of history; this work is not the definitive study of the way to become an authentic Chinese Christian. Being Trinitarian Junzi is just a beginning of Christian practice in contemporary Chinese context. This new way of being Junzi and being Christian will also offer an imagination and an inspiration for future research through which one can see the amazing Grace of God through working with different people.

CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGY OF INCULTURATION

Introduction

This chapter is organized in three steps. The first step articulates the distinction and relation between pastoral language and doctrinal language which are two very important ways of speaking for theological reflection. The second step probes the theology of inculturation in order to prepare for future dialogue between Confucianism and Trinitarian theological insights. The third step explores the nature of Chineseness which is the character of the Chinese culture and the cultural context of being Chinese Christians.

Method is a way of approaching knowledge and a way of life.²² A practical theological method is a way of understanding and practicing Christian faith in a particular context. Practical theology is a bridging approach which connects all the dimensions of life in one vision and action. This vision of practical theology means, in a sense, that all creation is in one body that comes from and belongs to the one Triune God. The action of practical theology is a Christian practice which participates in the action of the incarnated God Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit through deification to transform the whole world to God the Father. This work uses a practical theological method of theology of inculturation for becoming authentically Chinese Christians. Language plays a significant role in becoming an authentically Chinese Christian. In order to understand the relationship between different languages for the future dialogue between Confucian contributions and Trinitarian theological insights, it is necessary to discuss the relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language.

²² Terry A. Veling, *Practical Theology: on Earth as it is in Heaven*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 236.

One Reality, Two Languages

This work attempts to translate the doctrinal language of Trinitarian theology into pastoral language for living as an authentically Chinese Christian through the Confucian understanding of becoming Junzi. Before this task can be undertaken, it is necessary to explain the distinction between doctrinal language and pastoral language to which this work aims to contribute. The relationship between the use of different languages in evangelization and theological reflection has been described in many different ways but this researcher has found no examples of combining pastoral language and doctrinal language to express the process of dialoguing between Christian language and cultural language.²³ While a complete explanation of the topic is beyond the parameters of this work the following provides a concise summary.

Language plays a very important role in understanding and expressing reality and truth. Understanding nuances and meanings is essential. Hans Georg Gadamer argues that “language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs.”²⁴ Because language allows understanding and communication among people each language should be used as

²³John Paul II mentioned that Paul’s speeches in Lystra and Athens (Acts 14:15-17 and 17:22-31) are the models of using local cultural language to express the message of the Gospel to local people. *Redemptoris Missio*, 25. Hans-Georg Gadamer argues the importance of language in the work of hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 383ff. Paul Ricoeur also emphasizes the important role of language in his work. Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 2ff. When David Tracy argues that theologians should speak to three publics, he also gives a hint about using different languages. David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 6ff. Robert J. Schreiter and Stephen B. Bevans all call for using different languages in translating Christianity into a new culture. See Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 7; Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 39.

²⁴ Gadamer. *Truth and Method*, 390.

a cultural tool to communicate with its speakers. Every language conveys the shared experiences of its people²⁵ Understanding is actually a hermeneutic of conversation in the “fusion of horizons.”²⁶ Since language is a worldview, and different people have different worldviews, people have the problem of understanding the same reality through different worldviews when using different languages. When using different languages, people are often misunderstood and criticized, even when they are talking about the same reality. This is especially true in the process of inculturation of Christianity. This difference in usage not only occurs between different cultural systems, but also within the same cultural system when different forms of language, such as doctrinal and pastoral, are used to express the same reality of Christian praxis.

Doctrinal language concerns itself with being “correct” in expressing a faith. Here “correct” means precisely articulating Christian faith. Doctrinal language helps to understand practice. Through doctrinal language, Christians understand the reason and meaning of their practice. Doctrinal language conveys systematic expression. All Christian dogmas use doctrinal language to express Christian faith. Doctrinal language connects with and expresses Christian Tradition for the sake of future practice. This Tradition is a continuity of Christian faith throughout history to contemporary practice. Doctrinal language is based on Christian practice in pastoral language.

The language which people use in their daily lives is pastoral language. Pastoral language precedes doctrinal language, the latter emerging from the former. Doctrinal language also needs to be expressed in pastoral language for a new context. And since it comes from pastoral language, doctrinal language must return to its roots and become a

²⁵ Ibid., 436.

²⁶ Ibid., 390.

new pastoral language in order to express Christian faith to people within their cultural context. Doctrinal language is born out of a cultural context. Christian understanding and expression of the faith was deeply influenced by Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures which use pastoral languages. Doctrinal language was also formed in these cultural contexts.

Doctrinal language conveys meaning from one culture to the next. When the early Christians practiced their faith in Roman or Greek cultural contexts, their first language was Latin or Greek, and their understanding and expression of Christian faith was also contextual in Roman or Greek society. After Christians adapted the Greco-Roman culture to reflect Christian beliefs, they used doctrinal language to express their faith in a way that was appropriate for a new culture during a process of new inculturation. Doctrinal language plays a very important role in conveying Christian faith from one time to the next and from one culture to another. Doctrinal language exists for missionary purposes. For the missionaries, the good news that they preach to people in a local context is always in doctrinal language.

Doctrinal language is a very specific kind of understanding of the Christian faith so it is impractical. Doctrinal language cannot be used in Christian practice directly, which would cause a tension in Christian life.²⁷ This tension is related to being Christian in different cultural contexts, and could either destroy the local culture or cause people to be uprooted from their culture. When the missionaries forced local people to abandon

²⁷ For example, the new version of Mass in English caused many tensions among Catholics in America. Bishop Donald W. Trautman points out that “Liturgy needs not 'sacred language' but pastoral language.” Last modified October 26, 2009, accessed April 30, 2012.
<http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/liturgy-needs-not-sacred-language-pastoral-language>

their culture when converting to Christianity in China and South America, they actually used doctrinal language to preach the Gospel directly.²⁸ For example, in the Chinese cultural context, some of the missionaries forced Chinese Christians to use the pronunciation of “Deus,” the Latin word for God, as the name of God. Without pastoral language, doctrinal language risks leaning towards fundamentalism. Today, missionaries are advised not to tell Chinese people about Christian faith without using the Chinese culture, especially Confucian teachings. One has to use Confucian language to communicate the Christian faith to people in a Chinese context. This doctrinal language, which missionaries use, is distant from the real world in two senses. It is distant from the local pastoral language that people use in the original culture. And equally distant from the contemporary cultural language that people use in the target culture. These two distances are not problems, because doctrinal language does not exist for its own sake, but in order to be incarnated into a new pastoral language in a new context. Doctrinal language is an understanding of Christian faith; pastoral language is a practicing of Christian life. Doctrinal language is formal; pastoral language is flexible. Doctrinal language expresses Christian faith in a formal way, such as the Gospel or the Catechism. All Christian Traditions use doctrinal language to convey Christian understanding of their formal faith along history.

Pastoral language is relevant; it tries to express a faith, a philosophy, or a value in a more understandable and relevant way to people in different cultural contexts. Pastoral language is the first language of Christianity; it is what Jesus Christ and his disciples used

²⁸ David N. Power also argues the importance of using different forms of languages in Christian liturgical practice. See: David N. Power, *Sacrament: the Language of God's Giving* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1999), 59 ff.

when they preached the Gospel to Jewish people and beyond. Pastoral language is related to Christian practice. Christian practice uses pastoral language, especially in its liturgical celebrations and in the evangelization to the world. Pastoral language is a way to practice the Christian faith which originates in doctrinal language. Pastoral language is a flexible language that is always in dialogue with other cultures as it communicates the Christian faith. Because of its flexibility, pastoral language facilitates the understanding of doctrinal language of Christian faith by local people. Pastoral language is in dialogue with cultures. Pastoral language is also a constant process of incarnating Jesus Christ and his Gospel within any new culture and its people. So, pastoral language always has many colors and faces when it speaks to and for a new culture, because it also will be enriched by a new culture.

Pastoral language enriches doctrinal language. All doctrinal expression comes from pastoral language. Every pastoral language gives feedback and enriches its doctrinal language with a new understanding of being Christian. This new understanding is both a new inculturation and new incarnation. This is also a reason doctrinal language needs to be constantly renewed in expressing Christianity throughout human history. Pastoral language renews Christianity. Pastoral language is a new way to express and to understand Christian faith in a new cultural context. This new language renews Christianity through its cultural contribution, while at the same time it's a way for God to speak to God's people. Pastoral language is supported by doctrinal language. It expresses and enacts doctrinal language in Christian daily practice. Christians practice their understanding of doctrine through action as described in pastoral language. There is no such thing as a "blind Christian practice." So, any description of Christian practice needs

to reflect its vital underlying concepts, which are conveyed in doctrinal language. On the one hand, Christian practice in pastoral language flows from the understanding of Christian faith in doctrinal language. On the other hand, pastoral language enriches doctrinal language with a new understanding of Christian faith in practice. God is a living God, and so Christian languages, whether doctrinal or pastoral, are always being renewed by Christian practice in different cultural contexts.

Without doctrinal language, pastoral language would lean towards relativism. Christianity has a formal, doctrinal expression of its faith; without this formal expression, any use of local cultural expressions will be in a danger of losing the essential meaning of being Christian, and risk falling into relativism. If a Chinese Christian just follows the teachings of Confucianism, but ignores the Christian Tradition, he too leans towards relativism. Trinitarian theological insights allow Chinese Christians to use Confucian values to articulate and practice their faith.

Pastoral language connects to practical theology. Practical theology values people's experience, the way people encounter others and the living God in their cultural context. This experience represents a historical continuity of human understanding and practicing of one's faith. Any new experience is based on some former experience of life. The past experience is expressed in doctrinal language, and the new experience appears in pastoral language. When Stephen B. Bevans writes about contextual theology, he cherishes the experience of Christians in the past, the tradition, and the experience of Christians in the present.²⁹ For him, the context of Christian practice encompasses these

²⁹ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, xvi.

two forms of experiences, initially expressed in pastoral language as Christians practice their faith.

Doctrinal language and pastoral language are mutually interdependent. They are two ways of understanding and expressing Christian faith and practice for a same purpose. They are inseparable and equally important since they are both needed to speak to different people in their own language. The Church Fathers at Vatican II knew how to use different languages to speak about the Christian faith to the Church and the world. In the *Lumen Gentium* (the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church), the Council used doctrinal language to speak the mystery of the Church to the people of God; in the *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), the Council used pastoral language to speak to the world about the relationship between Church and the world. To help Chinese Christians to be both authentically Chinese and authentically Christian, we have to use both an understanding of being an authentic Christian rooted in Trinitarian theological insights and a Confucian understanding of becoming an ideal person, Junzi. It is of vital importance to use Confucian cultural contributions as pastoral language to express Christian faith grounded on Trinitarian insights.

In summary, doctrinal language tries to express a reality formally; pastoral language tries to express a reality relevantly to people in different cultures. Doctrinal language expresses the faith Tradition; pastoral language expresses a living faith in a new cultural context. Both are very important when people experience the tension of being authentic in both their culture and their Christianity. Doctrinal language and pastoral language also have a dynamic relationship of constantly enriching each other. This is a continuously developing circle from pastoral to doctrinal language, developing again

through inculturation in a new context as pastoral language, and once again into a new doctrinal language.³⁰ Without pastoral language, doctrinal language would be stuck in a historical abstraction and would appear as fundamentalism, thus conveying the idea that there is only one way of being Christian in all time periods and cultural contexts. Without doctrinal language, pastoral language would be just focusing on individual culture or local experience, which would soon slide into relativism. By not cherishing the essence of the living Christian tradition, we negate the essence of Christianity. Doctrinal and pastoral languages are inseparable and are models of expression for understanding and practicing Christian faith and culture. Christian theologians should always understand these two languages and become bilingual.³¹

Throughout the history of Christianity in China, the conflict among missionaries about how to evangelize in Chinese context was actually a tension between using doctrinal language and pastoral language. Matteo Ricci's rule³² was a way of using pastoral language to express doctrinal language in which he used Chinese Confucian culture to express Western Christianity. Other missionaries tackled the problem by using doctrinal language directly while speaking to a new people in a completely different culture and time. This approach of using doctrinal language directly works with children or uneducated people, but it would be very difficult with a more educated audience. Historically, the Jesuits, through their close contact with Chinese people, especially the Confucian elites, tried to use Confucian cultural expressions to explain Christian faith

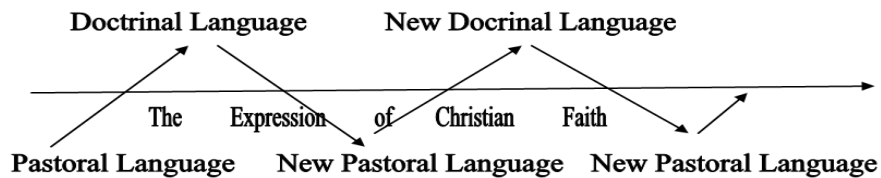
³⁰ See Chart 1.

³¹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman, *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 8.

³² See chapter three.

and life, which was also using pastoral language to express Christian faith in doctrinal language. However, other missionaries used doctrinal language, which was the Western understanding and expression of the faith, to teach Chinese people directly. The “Chinese Rites Controversy” was ultimately also a matter of choosing which language to use for preaching the Gospel in a Chinese cultural context. Language is a worldview; language is an expression of a culture. Today, Christians in Chinese context must engage in the language of Christian faith and Confucianism to speak with and to Chinese people. The love of God is one reality; people need to learn and speak two languages in order to practice Christian faith. These two languages, Trinitarian theology about the doctrine of God as the model of being a Christian, and Confucian teachings about being Junzi, will help a Chinese Christian become both authentically Chinese and authentically Christian.

Chart 1. Pastoral Language and Doctrinal Language



Note: Along the main line of the expression of Christian faith, the pastoral and doctrinal languages are in a process of interdependence and mutual influence.

After exploring the meaning, the tension, and the mutual relationship between doctrinal language and pastoral language, one can see the possibility and necessity of dialoguing between the Christian Trinitarian theological insights and Confucian cultural teaching. At the same time, one still can hold the tension of being Christian and being

Chinese.³³ After exploring the relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language, it is necessary to delineate the process of practicing the doctrinal language by using pastoral language by means of inculturation.³⁴

Inculturation

Inculturation is a process of incarnation of Christianity in a contemporary cultural situation for evangelization.³⁵ Understanding the idea of inculturation will help Christians find a way to inculturate Christianity through Chinese Confucianism. Inculturation is a relatively new concept in contemporary understanding of evangelization and the relationship between Christian faith and a surrounding new culture. As Gerald S. M. Arbuckle defines it, “inculturation is a dialectical interaction between Christian faith and cultures in which these cultures are challenged, affirmed, and transformed toward the reign of God, and in which Christian faith is likewise challenged, affirmed, and enhanced by this experience.”³⁶ Inculturation is not a one-way street, but a mutual way of renewing and transforming both the understanding of Christian faith and the local culture. From the very beginning of the Jesus movement, evangelization was a process through inculturation. For the disciples of Jesus Christ, especially St. Paul, their mission was a

³³ Being Chinese means being reared in the Chinese Confucian principles and influenced by this culture.

³⁴ The term “inculturation” first appeared in Catholic literature in 1962 in Joseph Masson “L’Eglise Ourverte Sur Le Monde.” (*Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, 84, 1962) 1038.

³⁵ Catholic Church, “Faith and Inculturation,” last modified 1988, accessed December 12, 2012,

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1988_fed_e-inculturazione_en.html, 8.

³⁶ Gerald S. M. Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique* (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 152.

process of inculturation.³⁷ They used symbols, art, architecture, meals, and the calendar in new ways to nourish Christianity,³⁸ and at the same time, the local cultures were also enriched by Christianity. Throughout the history of Christianity, inculturation has been a continuing action of Jesus Christ, who “who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity through his flesh” (The Letter to the Ephesians 2:14-18). Through inculturation, Christianity opens itself to and dialogues with all cultures. Inculturation is also a way of evangelization. Robert J. Scheriter argues that “Our faith is also a *fides ex auditu*, a faith we have heard from others. The gospel is always incarnate[d], incarnate[d] in the reality of those who bring it to us, and incarnate[d] in those who help us nurture the beginnings of faith.”³⁹ Evangelization is also a process of incarnation.

When Matteo Ricci and his companions were preaching the Gospel in a Chinese cultural context, they found the best way of dialoguing with the dominant Chinese Confucian culture. Ricci’s approach was to help the Chinese people understand and express Christianity in a Chinese way. When Reberto de Nobili (1577-1656) worked in India, he also, first of all, studied the Indian culture and their religions, and then preached Christian faith as an Indian “Rajah Sannyasi” which means “noble holy man.”⁴⁰ In order to let other people in a new culture understand Christian Gospel, Christians have to understand the local culture and people first. Inculturation should not change the essence of Christian faith or cultural teachings, but it should provide a new way for cultures to

³⁷ Graydon F. Snyder, *Inculturation of the Jesus Tradition: the Impact of Jesus on Jewish and Roman Cultures* (Harrishburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

³⁹ Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 21.

⁴⁰ Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 157-160.

understand and to enrich each other. Culture and Christian faith are ways in which God speaks to God's people. The world, including all peoples and all cultures, belongs to Jesus Christ the incarnated God; he is the subject of incarnation and inculturation. From the Trinitarian life, Jesus came down to dialogue with human beings. Inculturation is a continuation of Jesus' incarnation.⁴¹ God is the God of all peoples and all cultures, not just the God of Christians.

Inculturation is also a way in which Christianity communicates with the world. Inculturation has a very important role in the Church teachings from Pope John XXIII to the Second Vatican Council, and to Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). John Paul II was one of the strongest proponents of inculturation. He travelled further and visited more countries than any other Pope, which helped him to understand deeply the importance of culture in relationship with faith in the modern world. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Catecheis Tradendae* (1979), John Paul II emphasized the importance of inculturation:

The term 'acculturation' or 'inculturation' may be a neologism, but it expresses very well one factor of the great mystery of the Incarnation. We can say of catechesis, as well as of evangelization in general, that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. For this purpose, catechesis will seek to know these cultures and their essential components; it will learn their most significant expressions; it will respect their particular values and riches. In this manner it will be able to offer these cultures the knowledge of the hidden mystery and help them to

⁴¹ Keith F. Pecklers, *Worship: a Primer in Christian Ritual* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 126.

bring forth from their own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought. Two things must however be kept in mind. On the one hand the Gospel message cannot be purely and simply isolated from the culture in which it was first inserted (the biblical world or, more concretely, the cultural milieu in which Jesus of Nazareth lived), nor, without serious loss, from the cultures in which it has already been expressed down the centuries; it does not spring spontaneously from any cultural soil; it has always been transmitted by means of an apostolic dialogue which inevitably becomes part of a certain dialogue of cultures.

On the other hand, the power of the Gospel everywhere transforms and regenerates. When that power enters into a culture, it is no surprise that it rectifies many of its elements. There would be no catechesis if it were the Gospel that had to change when it came into contact with the cultures.

To forget this would simply amount to what St. Paul very forcefully calls emptying the cross of Christ of its power.⁴²

John Paul II emphasized the importance of inculturation in preaching the Gospel by cherishing the values of both Christianity and local culture. This understanding of inculturation becomes fundamental in his future teachings, where the Pope mentions the importance of studying cultures and the deep relationship between inculturation and incarnation. Although he encouraged the work of theological inculturation, he still favored the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures because, even though there is no “pure gospel”, the first gospel message was developed in the

⁴² John Paul II, “*Catecheis Tradendae*.” *Origins* 53 (October 16, 1979).

Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures. This teaching is a reminder that inculturation is not a way to abandon the old expressions of Christianity or a culture, but rather a way of opening up to new culture and embracing all the people within different cultures in a process of incarnation.

On his pastoral travels all over the world, John Paul II frequently remembered to talk about inculturation as a way of evangelization. In 1980, he spoke to the bishops of Zaire on the subject of “the inculturation of the Gospel and the Africanization of the Church.”⁴³ This “Africanization” is a call to cherish African culture and enrich the Church with African blessings from God. On May 20, 1982, John Paul II founded the Pontifical Council for Culture to promote dialogue between cultures and between culture and Gospel. After this significant event, almost all his teachings would make some mention of inculturation. In his Encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* (1998), John Paul II again emphasized the great importance of inculturation, especially in religious and philosophical contexts.⁴⁴ In *Redemptoris Mission* (1990), he defined inculturation as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.”⁴⁵ Christianity and culture mutually enrich each other in the process of inculturation. In the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia* in 1999, John Paul II also emphasized the importance and challenge of inculturation when proclaiming Jesus Christ in Asia.

⁴³ Shorter, Aylward. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 225.

⁴⁴ John Paul II, “*Fides et Ratio*.” *Origins* 72 (September, 14, 1998).

⁴⁵ John Paul II, “*Redemptoris Mission*.” *Origins* 52 (December 7, 1990).

Culture is the vital space within which the human person comes face to face with the Gospel. Just as a culture is the result of the life and activity of a human group, so the persons belonging to that group are shaped to a large extent by the culture in which they live. As persons and societies change, so too does the culture changes with them. As a culture is transformed, so too are persons and societies transformed by it. From this perspective, it becomes clearer why evangelization and inculturation are naturally and intimately related to each other. The Gospel and evangelization are certainly not identical with culture; they are independent of it. Yet the Kingdom of God comes to people who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building of the Kingdom cannot avoid borrowing elements from human cultures...

In the process of encountering the world's different cultures, the Church not only transmits her truths and values and renews cultures from within, but she also takes from the various cultures the positive elements already found in them. This is the obligatory path for evangelizers in presenting the Christian faith and making it part of a people's cultural heritage.⁴⁶

Here, the Pope emphasizes the natural and intimate relationship between evangelization and inculturation, especially the importance of taking the positive elements from a new culture and making Christian faith part of this culture.

Inculturation is a mutual nourishing process between Christianity and other cultures. This teaching helps Asian Christians, especially Christians in the Chinese

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Confucian cultural context, to take their cultural values seriously in becoming Christian and preaching the gospel. The Pope reminded contemporary Christians that the history of the Church shows Christians that “the message failed to take root among these [i.e. local] peoples.”⁴⁷ These teachings remind all the missionaries and Asian Christians, especially Chinese Christians, to cherish their cultural values in being authentic Christians and evangelizing Chinese culture. In the history of Christianity in China, a conflict between being Christian and being Chinese emerged when some of the missionaries ignored Chinese cultural values. Here John Paul II also develops his understanding of inculturation by cherishing the values of local cultures, and emphasizing the mutually dynamic and beneficial help between the expression of the Gospel and culture in the process of inculturation. Being Christian not only means that one can just receive the message of the Gospel through another cultural form, but also that one should value one’s own culture as enriching Christian understanding of God’s actions. Inculturation is a form of continuity with the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who calls all his disciples *Ad Gentes* (The Gospel According to Matthew 28:19). Chinese Christians should dialogue with Confucian cultural teachings in order to be both authentically Chinese and Christian, and to preach the Gospel to Chinese people.

Since the beginning of Asian Christianity, its followers realized the importance of inculturation. Inculturation is a instrument for understanding and preaching Jesus Christ in an Asian cultural context. James H. Kroeger said: “Inculturation is the process of becoming a People of God in Asia; it means we learn to reflect the face of Jesus in an

⁴⁷ Ibil., 22.

Asian way.⁴⁸ Inculturation is a means to be authentically Christians in all of Asia, as well as in China.

In their teachings John Paul II and Benedict XVI value inculturation but emphasize the idea of unity in the practice of inculturation; John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*, emphasized the importance of the Greco-Rome culture.

In engaging great cultures for the first time, the Church cannot abandon what she has gained from her inculturation in the world of Greco-Rome thought. To reject this heritage would be to deny the providential plan of God who guides his Church down the paths of time and history.⁴⁹

It is true that without the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures, later Christians could not have understood the content of gospel. However, this process of inculturation did not stop at that point in history but is extended to all the people and cultures where the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached.

Benedict XVI, the successor of John Paul II, follows his predecessor in cherishing the importance of understanding cultures. He emphasizes the “riches of the one truth in the plurality of culture.”⁵⁰ Benedict XVI, also like John Paul II, emphasizes the uniqueness of the Greco-Roman culture. When Benedict XVI gave a lecture in Regensburg, Germany, on *Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and*

⁴⁸ James, H. Kroeger, *Inculturation in Asia: Directions, Initiatives, and Options*, last modified 2005, accessed June 8, 2012, <http://www.ucanews.com/html/fabc-papers/fabc-115.htm>

⁴⁹ John Paul II, “*Fides et Ratio*” 72.

⁵⁰ Benedict XVI “Marriage Is a Real Good for Society,” last modified May 11, 2006, accessed April 1, 2012, <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=6988>

Reflections, he reminded his listeners of the dangers of abandoning Christian historical reality and misunderstanding inculturation: “In the light of our experience with cultural pluralism, it is often said nowadays that the synthesis with Hellenism achieved in the early Church was an initial inculturation which ought not to be binding on other cultures.”⁵¹ The Pope calls to cherish the historical continuity of inculturation. Benedict XVI mentions that the Greek translation of the Old Testament “is an independent textual witness and a distinct and important step in the history of revelation, one which brought about this encounter in a way that was decisive of revelation for the birth and spread of Christianity.”⁵² Inculturation cannot abandon the historical Christian revelation. It would be a mistake to interpret Benedict XVI’s words in this lecture as a rejection of inculturation rather than a reminder of the importance of reason and the historical continuity of Christian faith as a reality, not a philosophical theory.

It is true that Greco-Roman culture played a unique role in the process of inculturation; without Greco-Roman culture, people would not understand Christianity. Christians should value original cultural expressions and forms of faith, which carries the information of God’s actions among human history through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit as a reality. But the Greco-Roman cultural understanding and expression of Christianity is neither a static nor the only form of being Christian, but rather a beginning of incarnation and inculturation. From the original cultural expression of Christianity, Christians need to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, who taught the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Benedict XVI “*Faith, Reason and the University Memories and Reflections*,” last modified September 12, 2006, accessed April 1, 2012, <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=6988>

Samaritan woman in her confusion that “the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth” (The Gospel According to John 4:21-23). Here Jesus has corrected the misunderstanding that one culture is higher than others. Christians should cherish the Greco-Roman cultural contribution, but do not need to overemphasize the uniqueness of Greco-Roman culture, which would pose a danger of ignoring other cultures’ values in professing the Christian faith. The Greco-Roman culture was the first culture to follow the Gospel, but it does not mean it is superior to other cultures. Every culture has a unique and equal importance in the process of incarnation. In the process of inculturation, people should cherish both the uniqueness of every culture and at the same time realize the equality of different cultures in articulating the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Having accepted the Christian faith, every culture, every race is equally worthy of glorifying God. As St. Paul writes: “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (The Letter to the Galatians 3:28). Everyone, every culture is equal in the presence of God. The ultimate purpose of inculturation is to be an authentic Christian who is a living “*Alter Christus*” --- second Christ --- in a new cultural context. Being authentically Christians in any cultural context should bring the local cultural values and Christian historical continuity together to find a new way of being God’s children in the real world. Inculturation is a continuation of incarnation that cherishes the values of every culture while communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Peter Phan, a Vietnamese born Asian-American theologian, calls for the plurality of inculturation. Phan emphasizes his Asian-Confucian heritage and the Vietnamese context when he uses Gustavo Gutierrez's liberation theological method to inculturate the Gospel into Asian context.⁵³ Phan calls for a plurality of inculturations, especially in Asian culturally and religiously plural contexts. He argues that the Church is not in Asia, but of Asia. He claims that there should be an "Asianness of Christianity."⁵⁴ Phan explains that the Asianness of Christianity relates to "how it will respond to the challenges of the Asian social, political, economic, and religious contexts and whether and how it will effectively help Christians live their faith in fidelity to the gospel and the living Christian tradition, here and now, in Asia."⁵⁵ Phan argues that Christianity in Asia should address responsibility in all dimensions of people's life. He emphasizes the importance of culture in being Christians in Asian context. Phan calls for a new way of being part of the Church and being Christian in Asian contexts, and focuses on the local context.⁵⁶ His purpose is to have a more mature local Church that's also more independent from the universal Church. He likes the Asian Colloquium on Ministries, which claims that "the basic fact is that today in our Asian context we are in the process of re-discovering that the individual Christian can best survive, grow and develop as a Christian person in the midst of a self-nourishing, self-governing, self-ministering and self-propagating Christian

⁵³ Peter C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Book, 2003), 26.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

community.”⁵⁷ Seeking maturity should be the purpose of local churches. Any local Church should become mature in a context and in relationship with the universal Church and other Christians. Otherwise, it will face a danger about which Jesus warned His disciples when he said, “just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me” (The Gospel According to John 15:4). Christians cannot be separated from the Christian community which is the Church; likewise a local church cannot be separated from the universal Church.

Phan’s approach to inculturation will have more local cultural characteristics, and less of the universal unity of the Church. Peter Phan’s concern is the plurality of inculturation, which emphasizes every culture’s values and every local church’s face. Inculturation should be diverse. As Jesus used different ways to approach different people, so for different cultures there should be diverse ways of expressing the Gospel. Different people and different cultures play a unique role in the process of incarnation through inculturation.⁵⁸

Inculturation is an approach to evangelization, but not the purpose of the incarnation. Phan’s overemphasizing the diversity of inculturation, without cherishing the unity with the universal Church and the reality that Jesus was a Jew, is in risks leaning towards relativism. Christians should understand other religions and cultures

⁵⁷ Rosales, Gaudencio and Arevalo, C.G. Ed. For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. Documents From 1970 to 1991 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 1:77 (no. 9).

⁵⁸ Catholic Church, “Faith and Inculturation,” last modified 1988, accessed December 12, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1988_fed_e-inculturazione_en.html, 12, 20.

through the revelation of Jesus Christ in Christian tradition, not vice versa. Christian faith is a revelation from above. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ, Christians recognize the values of oneself, one's culture and other cultures. Inculturation is not like "the blind men touching an elephant"⁵⁹ where everyone has his/her own different cultural understandings. The local church should have a culturally specific face, but has to unite with the universal church. Each local church is a part of the universal Church and is a presence of the Church in a different situation. The process of inculturation should show the same respect when dialoguing with each culture and should do it as a continuation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ from the Greco-Roman inculturation to Asian inculturation. Inculturation is a process in which the main river of Christianity encounters different creeks of cultures, and each is enriched by the other in running toward the sea of life which is also their original source, the Triune God. Overemphasizing that plurality of cultures in the process of incarnation will harm the unity of Christian faith and the values of the reality of the revelation.

John Paul II and Benedict XVI were both concerned about relativism, so they emphasized unity in the process of inculturation. John Paul II reminded people that "the process (of inculturation) is thus a profound and all-embracing one, which involves the Christian message and also the Church's reflection and practice. But at the same time it is a difficult process, for it must in no way compromise the distinctiveness and integrity

⁵⁹ This is a popular story in which every blind man touched part of an elephant and everyone experiences touching the elephant but each individual's understanding of the experience is incomplete; they need the cumulative accounts of all who touched parts of the elephant and the one person who saw and touched the entire animal to understand how it looks.

of the Christian faith.”⁶⁰ Inculturation is a process of mutual understanding and enrichment of Christian faith and local culture. Inculturation is not a way of abandoning the historical expression of Christian faith in doctrinal language, especially in the Hellenistic cultural expression, but rather a way to enrich the local culture and Christian faith in its continuation of the incarnation in a pastoral language.

John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Peter Phan all value the importance of inculturation. Because they have different emphases and concerns, they have different understandings of how to do inculturation. John Paul II and Benedict XVI emphasize the unity of Christian faith while remaining concerned about relativism. This emphasis on the unity of Christianity, especially the role of Greco-Roman culture, carries a danger of subordinating other cultures to lower levels. John Paul II actually warned of this danger in his the Apostolic Exhortation to Churches in Asia.⁶¹ Peter Phan emphasizes the plurality of cultures; in his case, the main concern is the local church and the values of every culture. This emphasis carries a danger of relativism and secularism, which would ignore the reality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the historical cultural context. These two approaches to inculturation are in tension. Christians can hold them together by cherishing both unity and diversity. If one uses both doctrinal language and pastoral language to understand the process of the inculturation, and heeds concerns of both these Popes and Peter Phan, then one should

⁶⁰ “*Redemptoris Mission*” 52, December 7, 1990.

⁶¹ In his Apostolic Exhortation, he warned that “the faith which the Church offers as a gift to her Asia sons and daughters cannot be confined within the limits of understanding and expression of any single culture, for it transcends these limits and indeed challenges all cultures to rise to new heights of understanding and express.” John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, 20. Accessed June 8, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_06111999_ecclesia-in-asia_en.html

be able to diminish the tension and value their contributions. John Paul II and Benedict XVI use doctrinal language to express their concerns for the unity of Christian faith; Peter Phan uses pastoral language to express his concern for diversity and cherishing the values of cultures. They share a purpose of evangelization through inculturation, but they use different languages to articulate it. John Paul II and Peter Phan offer two different approaches for inculturation. An analysis of both approaches leads to the conclusion that the Greco-Roman culture plays a unique role in the process of incarnation and should be cherished; actually, every culture plays a unique role in the one process of incarnation.

Every culture is equally able to express the one Gospel for its own people. Chinese Christianity equal to Western Christianity in the eyes of the one Church family. Chinese Confucian culture can and should play as important a role as any other culture in articulating Christian faith to Chinese people and offer their special contributions to the Universal Church, as valuable as those of the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures. The inculturation of the Gospel in Chinese culture is a continuation of the same process of inculturation which started with Greco-Roman inculturation, but is enriched by Chinese Confucian culture. By valuing the unity of Christian faith and the diversity of Christian practices, the Chinese cultural teachings and Christian revelations, Chinese Christians bridge the tension between being authentically Chinese and authentically Christian and the tension between the Church in China and the universal Church. This could be accomplished by embracing both John Paul II and Peter Phan's divergent theological approaches to inculturation.

This work aims to arrive at a theology of inculturation by combining these two approaches in a way that they complement each other. John Paul II's approach to inculturation values the historical reality of incarnation of Jesus Christ in the Greco-Roman culture. Peter Phan aspires to relate Christian faith to local culture. John Paul II emphasizes the Christian faith as a whole in the process of inculturation. Peter Phan values the role of individual culture in carrying Christian faith. John Paul II calls for arriving at a of inculturation in a continual process from the beginning of the Gospel to every culture. Peter Phan wants every culture to have a new face in shining the light of the same Gospel. These two approaches to the theology of inculturation are both very important. In order to cherish Church Tradition and every culture for new evangelization, one has to hold these two approaches together. By holding these two approaches to inculturation, one reaches the new horizon of a theology of inculturation which values both supernatural revelation of God in Jesus Christ through the Greco-Roman culture, and the natural revelation of God through every culture; one can cherish the unity of Christian faith as a whole and let every person and culture shine in the light for praising God; one can also follow the living Church Tradition of experiencing God through Sacramental ways and find God's presence in every culture and race; one also realizes that West and East should work together in preaching the same Love of God to all. It is through the vision of the Trinitarian God that one can fuse these two approaches in a theology of inculturation.

A theology of inculturation where the teachings of John Paul II and Peter Phan come together can help us understand that individuals play distinct but complementary and equally dignified roles in society. Everyone is equal in Grace, but has different

responsibilities in different times and situations. Culture is a way of human life, so different cultural expressions of the Gospel have different, but equally valuable functions in bringing the full Gospel to light. St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, helps Christians understand that every person and culture is equal to others in dignity and shares the same mission of Jesus Christ, but carries the unique responsibility of a specific role in society (The Letter to the Romans 12: 4-8). Paul's use of the analogy of the body to describe the distinct, yet complementary roles of the different parts of the church is an example for contemporary Christians to understand the value of different peoples and cultures. Just as the eye and the hand are equally useful members of the human body with different functions, so is each group or individual, gender, culture and local church equally valuable, but each has a distinct role in the mystical body of Jesus Christ. John Paul II's approach to inculturation helps Christians to have a big picture of Church as a whole; Peter Phan's approach will help Christians to cherish everyone's value in building the Kingdom of God. Holding these two approaches together, a complementarity of theology of inculturation will help Christians to practice their faith more effectively in every cultural situation.

This complementarity of theology of inculturation offers some inspirations in many areas of Christian life. Through this method, this work establishes a dialogue between Trinitarian theology and anthropology, between Christianity as a culture and Confucian culture, between the structure of the Trinitarian God as a family and the structure of Chinese Confucian family. Furthermore, this method of theology of inculturation aims to facilitate the awareness and understanding of the complementary

value of every person, culture, gender and creature in revealing God's presence, carrying God's message and glorifying God.

Inculturation is a way of life which flows from the heart of its foundation, the Triune God. This life is born and formed through Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, in the Holy Spirit. This way of life is also the mission that Jesus Christ gives to his disciples (The Gospel According to Matthew 28:19). Inculturation is walking with the people of God, in the name of the Church, in a new context, with a sense of finding that "God was here before our arrival."⁶² Through inculturation, Chinese Catholics can understand the importance of cherishing both Chinese cultural values, which are the Confucian teachings about being an authentic person, and Christian Trinitarian theological teachings about being authentically Christian, as they seek to become authentically Chinese Christians.

When one sees the great importance of inculturation, one understands the possibility and necessity of inculturating Christianity in a Confucian context for being an authentically Chinese Christian. Now let us enter into the context of Chinese Christianity, which is the characteristic of Chinese culture: Chineseness.

Chineseness

Chinese Christians are nourished by Christianity and Chinese culture together in order to become both authentically Chinese and authentically Christians. Through inculturation, one understands that Christianity tends to dialogue with different cultures in the process of incarnation, since the very nature of Christianity means it is open to all cultures. Because inculturation is a two-way exchange, an exploration of Chineseness is

⁶² Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 56.

necessary in order to understand the possibility of Christianity dialoguing with Chinese culture.⁶³

Chineseness signifies the openness and Chinese culture⁶⁴ becomes Chineseness though openness, growth and maturity. Through an understanding of Chineseness, one also acquires an understanding of the paths by which Christianity can walk together with and in Chinese culture. Like all the other cultures, Chinese culture has a history of being both nourished and enriched by openness to other cultures. According to historical records, from the Xia dynasty (B.C. 2070-B.C.1600) through the Shang dynasty (B.C.1600- B.C. 1046) to the Zhou dynasty (B.C.1046– B.C. 256), China already had an advanced civilization.⁶⁵ Throughout history, China has not only grown geographically, but over time it also incorporated many different ethnic groups. “Chinese” does not refer to a pure and unique idea of ethnicity and land, but to a reality that the country continually grew and shrank in different areas along borders and in her ethnic and cultural identity. From the time of the Han dynasty (A.D. 202-220) to the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-907), there were many immigrants who lived among Chinese people.⁶⁶ When the Nestorian missionaries came to China during the Tang dynasty, they first served their compatriots and then began preaching the Gospel among Chinese people. Similarly, in the ninth century a group of Jewish people came to Kaifeng (开封) and built their

⁶³ Many researchers have studied the characteristics of Chinese culture or Chineseness, among them Andrea Louie, *Chineseness across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁶⁴ Louie, *Chineseness across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States*, 191. Andre Louie argues that Chineseness embraces diversity because of its historical openness to different cultures and wisdoms.

⁶⁵ See: W. Scott Morton, Charlton M. Lewis, *China: Its History and Culture*, 11-17.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 54, 59, 84-86.

synagogue there.⁶⁷ Kaifeng was a world-famous city during the Song dynasty (A.D. 960-1279), which attracted many people from all over the world. Today, they have all become part of the meaning of Chineseness.

Every ethnicity that has been integrated into China has contributed to the richness of Chineseness in different ways across history. Although the majority of Chinese people belong to the Han ethnicity, this group has not always been what is known as a leading community; this position has been occupied at different times by smaller groups such as the Mongolians (蒙古族) who built the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1271-1368) and the Manchu people (满族) who built the Qing dynasty (A.D. 1644-1912). The Yuan dynasty pushed China in contact with other ethnicities and countries as far away as to Europe. Whenever Chinese governments closed the door to other wisdoms and cultures history, Chinese people became isolated and their culture also lost the wisdom of their contributions. When Christian missionaries came to China, especially Matteo Ricci and his companions who brought Christianity and Western modern science, the Chinese people again realized the necessity of being open to the whole world. Today, China has about fifty-six different ethnicities with their sub-cultures which are vital elements of the total meaning of Chineseness.⁶⁸ In the era of globalization, Chineseness has gained new meaning as it opens the door to the world, not only in the economic sphere, but also in the areas of cultural and religious insights. So, opening up to Christianity should also be a natural way of being Chinese.

⁶⁷Matthew Fishbane, "China's Ancient Jewish Enclave." The New York Times, accessed December, 12, 2012, http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/04/04/travel/04journeys.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

⁶⁸“Chinese fifty six ethnicities,” last modified 2012, accessed May 22, 2012, http://www.gov.cn/test/2006-04/17/content_255861.htm

Chineseness is a process of dialoguing with and embracing other wisdoms, such as different ethnicities, religions, and diverse cultures. Being Chinese means being open to and living with other cultures, religions, and wisdoms throughout Chinese history. Scott Morton argued that, in China, “in spite of the divisions between the dynasties, cultural continuity was maintained.”⁶⁹ Chinese culture is a vital part of Chinese identity.

Chinese philosophy includes Confucianism (儒学), Daoism (道学), Buddhism (佛学) and other wisdoms. Among them, Confucianism is the dominant one. Buddhism originated in India, but has long been integrated into the Chinese culture. Buddhism became Chinese through a process that could serve as a model for Christians on their path to inculturation in the Chinese context. On the one hand, Buddhism enriched Chineseness with a new way of thinking, music, architecture, and so forth; on the other hand, Chinese culture also enriched Buddhism with a fresh worldview. Christianity should also be one of the wisdoms dialoguing with Chinese culture and offer its contributions in building Chineseness. Chinese culture also contributes to Christianity from its Confucian insights. Dialoguing with Christianity would be not only a natural way of being Chinese, but also a way of enriching Chineseness with a culture of revelation from Heaven above. Christianity helps Chinese people understand the meaning of Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety), Li (禮 the rite), and Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven) which are the core teachings of Confucianism. Openness to different philosophies has enriched the Chinese culture and wisdom, and will continue to nourish Chinese culture with other philosophies from different cultures all over the world in the one family. So, Chinese culture should continue to be open to all the cultures.

⁶⁹Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 100.

Openness is one of the characteristics of Chinese culture. Confucius taught his disciples to learn from ancient wisdom, from their contemporaries, and from other wisdoms. Although the Chinese are always willing to converse with other cultures and learn from them, the essence of Chinese identity, based on being an authentic person, need not change. Chinese culture focuses on learning where Western culture focuses on teaching. Learning does not lead to losing one's identity and cultural essence, but to opening oneself to other people as brothers and sisters for mutual enrichment. While Chinese people welcome learning from other cultures and peoples on an equal basis, they have little tolerance for those who want to teach from a position of superiority⁷⁰. An open dialogue with other cultures, wisdoms and religions can lead to a deeper understanding of being an authentic person.

The individual is at the heart of Chinese culture. The main goal of Confucian cultural teaching is becoming a Junzi (gentleperson). The difference between Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy is that the former pursues wisdom while the later seeks to be an ideal person. When Socrates praised Isocrates, he claimed that there was philosophy in the man. But in Chinese culture, one would say that there is a man in Chinese philosophy.⁷¹ The heart of Chineseness is to seek perfection in one's relationship to family... one's family, society, and Heaven and Earth. This relationship, *Guanxi* (relation, 关系 in Chinese), is a connection with all creation from one's family to the whole universe. The connection between the individual and creation derives from the

⁷⁰ The Chinese experienced being partially colonized and treated as second class citizens by the Japanese and other countries. The negative consequences of this experience should serve as a reminder to missionaries to use different methods for evangelization in China.

⁷¹ Dongmei Fang (方东美). *The Original Philosophy of Confucianism and Daoism* 原始儒家道家哲学 (Teibei: Li Ming Wenhua Shiye Gufen Youxianggongsi, 1983), 40.

idea that human nature comes from both life and the mission of Heaven, which is the foundation of all creation.

Chineseness is the nature of Chinese culture, which opens its understanding and horizons to dialogue with other people from different cultures. Chineseness offers both an opportunity and a calling to dialogue between Chinese culture and Christianity in the search towards becoming an authentic person.

Conclusion

Christians in the Chinese cultural context have experienced a tension between being authentically Christian and authentically Chinese throughout their history. Contemporary Chinese Christians and missionaries face an urgent pastoral question: “how can Christians in a Chinese context become both authentically Chinese and authentically Christian?” In order to answer this pastoral question and bridge this tension, the three foundations of the theology of inculturation are explored. In the first place, understanding the mutual relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language allows one to see the possibility and necessity of using the Confucian cultural definition of the ideal person to express Christian Trinitarian theological insights about being authentically Christian in a Chinese context. Secondly, understanding inculturation leads to appreciating the importance of a new approach to evangelization through baptizing the cultures, promoting mutual analysis and enrichment between culture and Christian faith, and balancing the tension between unity and diversity that develops from the process of inculturation. Finally, understanding the meaning of Chineseness allows one to see how it should be natural for Chinese people and Chinese culture to welcome Christianity for the enrichment of their culture and their future. Based on this method, chapter three

summarizes the Chinese Christian experience which includes positive experiences and tensions.

CHAPTER THREE: THE EXPERIENCES OF BEING CHINESE CHRISTIANS

Introduction

The previous chapter explores the method of theology of inculturation. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the experience of being Chinese Christian, which includes both the positive experience and the tensions between being Chinese and being Christian. The positive experience should be valued for its future potential, while the tension between being both authentically Chinese and Christian should be bridged. Throughout history Chinese Christians have experienced tensions between being Christian and being Chinese. The history of Christianity in China is a vast subject beyond the parameters of this work. In order to depict the tensions experienced by Chinese Christians in different stages of Chinese history, this work reviews the history of Christianity in China from the time of the first missionaries in China to the contemporary longing for being authentically Chinese Christians. This study is divided into four stages of Christianity in China.

The history of Christianity in China can be divided into four historical periods, each impacting the concept and the tensions of being Christian in China in different ways. The first stage of Christianity in China was the initial encounter of Christianity with Chinese culture. During the second stage of Christianity in China, there was a positive side to the experience of becoming an authentically Chinese Christian, yet still a tension between being Chinese and being Christian. The third stage of Christianity in China also involved both a tension and a positive experience of being Chinese Christian. Some missionaries followed a colonial way of thinking and treated Chinese culture as subordinate. The fourth stage of Christianity in China is the contemporary Catholic

situation after 1949 when the communists came to power. The tensions during this stage are not only between being authentically Chinese and authentically Christian, but also about being Chinese according to Confucian or to Communist ideals.

From these four stages of being Christian in the Chinese context, one can see a clear tension between being authentically Chinese and authentically Christian, which is the negative experience of being Chinese Christian, as well as a degree of positive experience in becoming Chinese Christian which should be cherished in future Christian practice. From this historical narrative arises a calling to bridge this tension for today's Christian practice.

The First Stage of Christianity in China

During the Tang (A.D. 618-907) and the Yuan (A.D.1271-1368) dynasties, Christianity entered China for the first encounter with Chinese culture. This stage encompasses two periods of Christianity encountering Chinese people—namely, the Christian Nestorians in the Tang dynasty and the Christian Catholics in the Yuan dynasty. In these first two encounters, one can see that the first tensions regarding being authentically Chinese Christian arose because the missionaries did not find a proper dialogue partner in the Chinese context.

Christianity in the Tang Dynasty

During the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 - 907), Christianity arrived in China for the first time when the Nestorians arrived along the Silk Road. According to the Nestorian Monument in Xi'an, China, the Nestorian Bishop Alopen (阿罗本) and his companions came to Chang'an (today's Xi'an), then the capital of China, in the ninth year of Zhen guan (贞观) A.D. 627. The Tang dynasty was a period when China opened her doors to

all other cultures and to people all over the world. During that time, many people from different countries came to China, including the Nestorians; many Chinese people also went to other countries to do business along the Silk Road. According to the Nestorian Monument, when Alopen and his companions arrived in Chang'an, the Emperor Taizong Li Shiming (太宗·李世民) ordered his Prime Minister Fang Xuanling (房玄龄) to go out to the west gate of the Royal City to welcome Nestorians as distinguished guests.⁷²

Taizong granted Alopen permission to translate Nestorian Christian books for the Imperial library. With the help of Chinese associates in A.D. 638, Alopen translated the first Christian scripture into Chinese. The Emperor Taizong was interested in the teachings of Nestorian Christianity. After understanding the insights of the Nestorian teachings, the Emperor issued a decree that highly recommended them and allowed them to proliferate: "The way does not have a common name and the sacred does not has a common form. Aloben, the man of great virtue from the Da Qin empire, Came from a farther land...his message is mysterious and wonderful beyond our understanding. The message is lucid and clear; the teachings will benefit all; and they shall be practiced throughout the land."⁷³ The attitude of the Tang emperor to allow Christian practice in the land shows that Christianity is compatible with Chinese thought.

The Nestorians, supported by the Emperors for six generations, built their first church in Chang'an in A.D. 638, named Da Qin Shi (大秦寺). According to the primary source, the Nestorian Monument, many churches were built in Chang'an, Luoyang,

⁷²The Nestorian monument also called the Nestorian Stele, was discovered in 1625, in Zhouzhi, west of Xi'an, China. Currently, the monument is kept in *The Museum of Forest of Stone Tablets* in Xi'an.

⁷³Martin Palmer, *The Jesus Sutras: Rediscovering the Lost Scrolls of Taoist Christianity* (New York: Ballantine, 2001), 43.

Quanzhou and other places.⁷⁴ The widespread attitude of welcoming Nestorianism showed the openness of the Chinese in the early history of China.

Nestorianism was a branch of Christianity which was promoted by Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople (A.D.428-431). He did not accept Mary as the Mother of God.⁷⁵ The Nestorian ideas were condemned as heretical at the First Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431 and the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451.⁷⁶ From the Nestorian Monument, which was written in Chinese, one can see that the Nestorian missionaries or their assistants apparently had good training in Chinese.⁷⁷ Among the Dunhuang (敦煌) manuscripts there are some Nestorian documents, including parts of the New Testament which were translated into Chinese. One scholar reminds people that “from these (Dunhuang) documents we can see the remarkable combination of Christian ideas and concepts mixed with Daoist and Buddhist terms that constituted Nestorianism in China.”⁷⁸ These documents show that the Nestorian missionaries tried to use the Chinese people’s everyday religious language to express Christian faith, for example, they used Tian Zun (天尊), which is the name of God in Daoism, to name the Christian God, and Shi Zun (世尊), which is the title of Sakyamuni used in Buddhism to name Jesus Christ.

The Nestorians were affected by the limitations placed on local religions when the Emperor forbade Buddhism. Buddhism and Daoism were considered religions as well as Chinese philosophies of the time, but they were not and still are not the main philosophy

⁷⁴ According to the original Nestorian Monument that there were many temples in different cities (法流十道，国富元休。寺满百城，家殷景福).

⁷⁵ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1978), 311.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 327; 339.

⁷⁷ The Nestorian Stele proclaimed the “three-in-one God” in Chinese as 玄枢而造化，象圣以元尊者，其唯我三一妙身无元真主阿罗诃坎.

⁷⁸ Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, 9.

of Chinese culture, a position occupied then and now by Confucianism, which influences Chinese people's lives in all dimensions. When Wuzong, one of the emperors, rejected Buddhism because some of the Buddhist monks interfered in political affairs in A.D. 845, the Nestorians were also banned as a religion because of their use of some Buddhism ideas. Nestorianism eventually disappeared in China. The next time Christianity came to China would be with the Catholic Franciscan missionaries during the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1271-1368).

There were two reasons why Nestorian Christianity disappeared in the Tang dynasty. First, the Nestorians never had many followers. Although they had many churches (temples) in different cities, it seems that, unlike Buddhist monks, few of their monks achieved positions of leadership in their communities outside the church.⁷⁹ Secondly, they did not dialogue with the main Chinese cultural system. Although they tried to use some of the concepts of Daoism and Buddhism, they did not realize that the main Chinese philosophy is Confucianism.⁸⁰ During the Han dynasty (209B.C.-A.D.220), Confucianism had already become the dominant philosophy that influenced Chinese people in all dimensions of life. By not recognizing the importance of Confucianism as a dialogue partner, the Nestorians failed to find good soil for planting the gospel at the very beginning of Christianity's presence in China. Nestorian Christians were at the vanguard in bringing Christianity to China. During the Tang dynasty, most Christians were immigrants and became the first Christians in the Chinese context.

⁷⁹ Thompson Brown, *Christianity in the People's Republic of China* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1986), 16.

⁸⁰ Miikka Ruokanen and Paulos Huang, eds., *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, 197.

Christianity during the Yuan Dynasty

After the Nestorians disappeared from public life during the Tang dynasty, there is no record of Christian presence until the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1271-1368), when Catholic Franciscan missionaries first arrived in China. In A.D. 1294, Italian Franciscan priest Giovanni de Montecorvino (A.D. 1246-1328) arrived in the Yuan capital city, Dadu (today's Beijing). He started to preach the Gospel there among Mongolians and other immigrants. Later on, in 1313, he became the first bishop of Beijing. During the Yuan dynasty, there were churches in different cities, such as the port city of Quanzhou, Hangzhou and Yangzhou.⁸¹ In a letter that Montecorvino wrote to his superior in February 1306, he informed his superior of the rapid development of the Catholic community and that he had already built a second church near the Khan's palace.⁸² Montecorvino translated the Bible into Persian and Turkic for the emigrants. The liturgical celebration was performed in Mongolian.⁸³ This was the very first time Catholics practiced inculturation in a Chinese context. Montecorvino's missionary work was focused on the Mongolian minority and some immigrants, not the majority of Chinese people. Montecorvino and his fellow brothers were the pioneers who preached the Gospel in China. Because of the limitations of time and situation, "the elements of Christianity present seem to have been so closely tied to the foreign presence that was almost no influence on indigenous person [i.e.] and institution."⁸⁴ Montecorvino spent his time among the immigrants and Mongolians preaching the Gospel.

⁸¹ Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, 14.

⁸² Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, Trans. M. N. L. Couve de Murville, *Christians in China: A.D. 600 to 2000* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius, 2007), 103.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁸⁴ Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, 14.

When Giovanni de Montecorvino rested in the Lord in about 1330, some missionaries arrived in Beijing, but they did not stay there to continue the evangelizing work.⁸⁵ Few documents about this church community remain today but it is believed that it failed to grow because the work of evangelization did not continue and the missionaries did not focus on training the local people, especially the priests, as leaders of this Christian community. After the Yuan regime ended, the Chinese people had few stories to remember about the Franciscans and their Christian community. Other reasons for the mission's failure to thrive were lack of support from the Church, divided at the time into two papacies, and poor financial backing from a plague-devastated Europe. Thompson Brown argues that "the Church at home, suffering from the ravages of the Black Plague (A.D.1348 – 1350), was not able to support the effort across the vast distance."⁸⁶ There was another very important reason for the discontinuation of evangelization at this time, although most scholars ignore it, which was that Montecorvino and his followers did not dialogue with Confucianism. They did not use Confucian teachings to express Christian faith to Chinese people. Although the Mongols were the governing people, the dominant culture was still Confucianism in China. During this time, Christians were mostly immigrants and some Mongolians.

In summary, in this first stage of Christianity in the Chinese context during the Tang dynasty and the Yuan dynasty, Christian missionaries initially preached the Gospel among immigrants and among ethnic minorities although they also tried to express Christianity through local religious categories. They did not dialogue with the dominant Chinese Confucian philosophy. The Chinese culture did not play an important role in

⁸⁵Charbonnier, *Christians in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 107.

⁸⁶ Brown, *Christianity in the People's Republic of China*, 17.

being Christian in the Chinese cultural context. Chinese Christians were in danger of losing Chinese culture and becoming Westernized Chinese people; this was one of the tensions facing Chinese Christians at the very beginning of the encounter between Christianity and Chinese culture. The missionaries left the seeds of Christianity in the Chinese land, but during this time Christianity did not take root in the Chinese cultural soil; this would be the work of the next generation missionaries.

The Second Stage of Christianity in China

From the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644) to the Qing Dynasties (A.D. 1644 – 1911), the second encounter of Christianity with Chinese culture took place. This was also the second stage when Christianity became a permanent part of the Chinese religious landscape.⁸⁷ On the one hand, there was a positive side to the experience of becoming Chinese Christians. During this time Christianity found a proper dialogue partner in Confucianism, which forms the world view of the majority of Chinese. During this time Christianity had started to take root in the Chinese cultural soil and sought to embrace Chinese culture as a way to express Christian faith, and there are some successful models of being authentically Chinese Christians, the Jesuits being the most prominent example. On the other hand, there was still serious tension between being authentically Chinese and authentically Christian arising from the missionaries' diverging perceptions of the importance of Chinese culture. The Chinese Rites Controversy was the chief expression of this tension. First, this section explores the positive experience of being Chinese Christian, showing how missionaries cherished Chinese Confucian cultural contributions

⁸⁷Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, 18.

to the development of Chinese Christianity. Then it articulates the tension involved in being Chinese Christian during this historical stage.

Seeking a Right Way in a New Land

The Jesuit missionaries went through a process of learning Chinese culture and of seeking an effective way to preach the gospel to Chinese people. From Francis Xavier to Matteo Ricci, they experienced a process of becoming familiar with Chinese culture and using Chinese Confucian culture to evangelize Chinese people. Francis Xavier, one of the founders of the Society of Jesus, arrived in China in 1552, having acquired knowledge of the Chinese culture from the Japanese and Portuguese.⁸⁸ Since the Ming dynasty had closed their doors to foreigners at that time, Xavier could not get permission to enter mainland China, so he landed on the Chinese island of Shangchuan (上川), where he died on December 3rd, 1552. Although he did not enter mainland China, his dream was to evangelize the whole of China, a mission later accomplished by his followers.

Following in the steps of Francis Xavier was Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607), whose Chinese name was Luo Mingjian (羅明堅). Ruggieri realized that the Chinese were highly educated and missionaries needed to use a new approach to preach the Gospel to them. He used an accommodational approach to preach the Gospel in the Chinese context. His approach “was to adopt the Chinese language and culture when teaching, rather than trying to turn the Chinese into Europeans by converting them to Christianity in a way that made them alien to their own tradition.”⁸⁹ Ruggieri realized the importance of using Chinese language and culture in helping people become Chinese

⁸⁸Fengzhen Zhang (张奉箴), *The History of Preaching the Gospel in China* (福音流傳中國史略) (Taiwan: Fu Jen University Press, 1970), 543; Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 132.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 141.

Christians. He already had a sense of how to use doctrinal and pastoral languages for the purposes of inculturation as discussed in chapter two. Evangelization not only entails converting people to Christianity, but also represents a way of using inculturation and finding God in all things.

Matteo Ricci (October 6, 1552—May 11, 1610, Chinese name 利玛竇, Li Madou), arrived in Macao in August 1582. He opened a new phase in the history of Christianity in the Chinese context. Ricci followed an approach similar to Ruggieri's and developed a new strategy of dialoguing with Confucianism to preach the gospel in the Chinese context and for Chinese people during his journey from Macao to Beijing. The strategies of Ricci and his followers were:

- (1) Accommodation and adaptation to Chinese culture;
- (2) Evangelization from the top down, addressing the literate elite, even the Emperor if possible;
- (3) Indirect evangelism by means of science and technology to convince the elite of the level of European civilization;
- (4) Openness to and tolerance of Chinese moral values and some ritual practice.⁹⁰

These strategies of Ricci show that the missionaries were learning the importance of Chinese culture for helping people become Chinese Christians. For an outsider, it is very difficult to find an appropriate way to approach the heart of a culture, especially a culture with rich diversity. As Ricci tried to study Chinese Confucian culture and

⁹⁰ Nicolas Standaert, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Grand Rapids, MI: Willey Blackwell, 2000), 310-311.

understand Chinese society, he found an effective way of preaching the Gospel to Chinese people.

When Ricci and his brothers first arrived in China, their initial attempts at conversion were unsuccessful. Jacques Gernet tells us that “the first Jesuit missionaries had assumed the appearance and names of Buddhist monks, hoping in this way to penetrate China and convert the Chinese more easily. But they were surprised to find that in this country priests have neither so much prestige nor so much authority as they enjoyed in Europe.”⁹¹ Daoism and Buddhism had neither influence nor status in Chinese society at that time. Faced with the differences between Chinese and Western societies, Ricci realized that in China, in order to be well received in society, one had to present himself as a “man of letters,” a Confucian scholar, who had mastered Chinese culture and was a moralist, a philosopher and scholar.⁹²

Adjusting themselves according to Chinese culture was the missionaries’ best choice to preach the gospel to Chinese people. In 1583, Ricci and Ruggieri were allowed to stay in Zhaoqing. There they began to follow the customs of Confucian scholars and Ricci started to use his Chinese name Li Madu (利玛窦).⁹³ This was a significant moment for Ricci as he turned to a new way of evangelizing China and a turning point in his life as a missionary among Confucian scholars. After Ricci

⁹¹Jacques Gernet, Trans. Janet Lloyd, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures* (New York: Cambridge University, 1982), 16.

⁹² Ibid., 16. In traditional Chinese society, a Confucian scholar is one who has a good education in Confucianism and a good social position. Some of the Jesuit missionaries had become government officials and had served in Beijing, such as Ferdinand Verbiest (October, 9, 1623-January, 28, 1688), Giuseppe Castiglione (July, 19, 1688-July 16, 1766).

⁹³ Michela Fontana, *Matteo Ricci: A Jesuit in the Ming Court* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 69.

studied the Confucian classics, he wrote his first Chinese book, *Tianzhu Shi yi* (天主实义 *The True Meaning of the Master of Heaven*).

In order to help Chinese people understand the Christian God Ruggieri and Ricci, with the help of a young catechumen, chose to use *Tianzhu* (天主), the “Master of Heaven,” as the name of God.⁹⁴ This name for God is similar but different to the Chinese name for God which is Heaven (天) or Shangdai (上帝). Charbonnier said that “the young Chinese catechumens had resolved the thorny question of how to translate the name of God. Tian (天) ‘heaven’, the term in current use in China was too impersonal and too close to the idea of ‘nature’. *Tianzhu* (天主), the ‘Master of heaven’, was the name for God later adopted by Catholics.”⁹⁵ Ricci realized that inculturation is not just adoption or translation; it is a mutual transformation. In his Chinese book, *The True Meaning of the Master of Heaven*, Ricci said that “our ‘Master of Heaven’ is the one in the ancient book whose name is Shangdi” (Ricci 1:2).⁹⁶ Ricci quotes from various Chinese ancient books about Shangdi, such as *The Book of Mean* (中庸), *Shangxong* (商颂), *Ya* (雅), *The Change I* (易经), *Tangshi* (汤誓) and *Jinteng* (金縢). The ability to quote from all these ancient books won Ricci a warm welcome and respect from other Confucian scholars. Chinese scholars, Wan Junren pointed out, by choosing Confucianism as their dialogue partner the Jesuits, “on the one hand, were respected by the masses, and on the other hand, they were trusted by the royal court.”⁹⁷ The Confucian scholars loved Ricci “because Ricci

⁹⁴ Some English versions translate the term as “the Lord of heaven.”

⁹⁵ Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 145.

⁹⁶ Ricci wrote in his book: 吾天主乃古经书所称上帝也。天主实义，上卷，第二篇。

⁹⁷ Ruokanen and Huang, *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, 92.

found his inspiration in Heaven, which is to be found in each and every one of us,” and so “he spontaneously found himself in agreement with the ancient Sages of China.”⁹⁸ Ricci stood together with Confucian scholars and spoke with them using the ancient Chinese Confucian teachings to communicate the Christian faith. Ricci’s strategy was an example of today’s inculturation. By using Chinese Confucian culture to articulate Christian faith, Ricci actually used a pastoral language to express Christian faith.

Ruggieri and Ricci found an effective way to help the Chinese people, especially Confucian scholars, to understand and to accept Christian faith. Ruggieri published his first Chinese book of Catechism as Tianzh Shilu (天主实录 *True Record of the Lord of Heaven*) in 1584. In one of his letters, he wrote: “I think that we shall open no more churches, but instead a preaching house and we will say Mass in private in another chapel, although the hall where we receive visitors may serve this purpose for the moment: for one preaches better and more fruitfully through conversation than through sermons.”⁹⁹ Ruggieri and Ricci understood that the first step of evangelization is dialogue. Through dialoguing with Confucianism and Confucian scholars, Ruggieri and Ricci became friends of these scholars, and helped them become friends of Jesus Christ.

Pope John Paul II praised Matteo Ricci when the Catholic Church celebrated the four hundredth anniversary of Ricci’s arrival in Beijing: “for he achieved in

⁹⁸Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, 35.

⁹⁹Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, 17.

himself an extraordinary inner harmony between priest and scholar, between Catholic and orientalist, between Italian and Chinese.”¹⁰⁰ The Pope continued,

Father Ricci based his entire scientific and apostolic methodology upon two pillars, to which he remained faithful until his death, despite many difficulties and misunderstandings, both internal and external: first, Chinese neophytes, in embracing Christianity, did not in any way have to renounce loyalty to their country; second, the Christian revelation of the mystery of God in no way destroyed but in fact enriched and complemented everything beautiful and good, just and holy, in what had been produced and handed down by the ancient Chinese tradition.¹⁰¹

In praising Ricci, John Paul II agreed with his idea that an authentically Chinese Christian should be loyal to both Chinese culture and Christian revelation. This is the approach of inculturation which John Paul II emphasized in many of his teachings (as discussed in Chapter two).

Matteo Ricci’s vision was for Christianity to be rooted in the Chinese context in order to make it possible to be both authentic Christian and Chinese. Ricci’s approach not only made Christianity welcome among Confucian scholars, but also

¹⁰⁰John Paul II, “Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Fourth Centenary of the arrival in Beijing of the great missionary and scientist Matteo Ricci, S.J.” last modified October 24, 2001, accessed April 2, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2001/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20011024_matteo-ricci_en.html

¹⁰¹Ibid.

bore good fruit in the form of the Confucian Christians: Xu Guangqi, Li Zhicao and Yang Tingyun.¹⁰²

The Models of Being Chinese Christians

Arriving in Beijing was a very important symbolic success for Ricci's evangelistic method. After a long journey, Matteo Ricci at last arrived in Beijing in 1601 and stayed there until he rested in the Lord in 1610.¹⁰³ This journey was also a process by which Christianity began to take root in Chinese culture and society as the missionaries first made friends with Chinese people and then helped them become friends of Jesus Christ. Among the Confucian scholars reached in this way, Xu Guangqi, Li Zhicao and Yang Tingyun are the three most famous Confucian Christians.

Xu Guangqi was born in Shanghai in 1562. Following the state examinations, at age thirty, Xu Guanqi (徐光启) became a Juren (举人), and then a Jinshi (进士). Then he entered Hanlin Academy (翰林院) which was the highest institute for Confucian scholars. In 1600, when Xu Guangqi was passing through Nanjing, he met Matteo Ricci, who gave him the Gospel and his book, Tianzh Shi Yi (天主实义 The True Meaning of the Master of Heaven). From then on they became friends. In 1603, after reading the books from Fr. Ricci, he asked to be baptized by Fr. Joao da Rocha, S.J., and took the name Paul.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² A Confucian Christian is one who has had a good Confucian education and Christianity study. The difference between "Confucian Christian" and "authentically Chinese Christian" is that the term "Confucian Christian" is pointing to a specific group of people, whereas the term "authentically Chinese Christian" includes all who are influenced by Confucian teachings and Christian faith.

¹⁰³ Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 155.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 162.

Xu Guangqi was trained in the traditional Confucian teachings of filial piety. Xiao dao (孝道 Filial piety) evokes the idea of sharing the best with one's families and friends. After his baptism, he thought of sharing this great gift with his whole family. Later on, when he went back to Shanghai, he invited the missionaries to his hometown and converted his whole family, more than 200 people, to Christianity. From 1604-1607, he worked with Ricci, learning from him about Christian faith and Western science. He helped Ricci translate Western books about mathematics, astronomy, geography and hydraulics into Chinese. Xu Guangqi built the first Christian church of Shanghai in his hometown, Xujiahui (徐家匯), which was named after his family. He and his family supported and protected the missionaries for many generations. He also wrote poetry to express his faith. Charbonnier argues that Xu Guangqi "fulfilled his duty as a Christian in a typically Confucian way, with due concern for a conscientious observance of the Commandments and of the ritual and with attentive care for the spiritual welfare of those around him."¹⁰⁵ Xu Guangqi understood his Christian faith and duty in the spirit of Confucian teachings. Today, Xu Guanqi is well respected by those both inside and outside of the Church; many places and church missions are named after his name 光启 (Guangqi).

Another Confucian Christian was Li Zhizao (李之藻). Li Zhizao was born in Hangzhou in 1565. He was a great friend and colleague of Xu Guangqi, through whom he met and became friends with Matteo Ricci. He and his family converted to Christianity. Li Zhicao helped the missionaries write prefaces to their publications. He admired Ricci and other missionaries so much that he considered Ricci as a father who

¹⁰⁵ Charbonnier, *Christians in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 163.

gave him new life, a life from Jesus Christ. Through his intercession the Emperor granted the Jesuits a piece of land to be used as a cemetery for Ricci and his colleagues.

In 1625, Li Zhizao received a copy of the Syrian Christian inscription on the Xi'an Nestorian Stele, which had been recently discovered in Shaanxi (陕西), from a disciple of Matteo Ricci. The discovery of the Nestorian Stele was great news for Ricci and other missionaries, as well as for the Confucian scholars. At that time, the missionaries were facing some criticism for transmitting a new religion into China and the Syrian Christian Stele showed that about one thousand years ago, Christianity had already been in Xi'an, then the capital of China.¹⁰⁶ Li Zhicao published this very important document immediately. As a Confucian Christian, Li Zhicao not only arranged for missionaries to go to Hangzhou to preach the Gospel, but he also edited a book, *Tianxue Chuhan* (天学初函 First Letters in the Science of Heaven), which contained religious teachings and scientific writing. For Li Zhicao and his friend Xu Guagnqi, science leads people to God and God is the foundation of all science. Li Zhicao is called the first apostle of the Church in Hongzhou.

The third major Confucian Christian was Yang Tingyun (杨廷筠).¹⁰⁷ Yang Tingyun was a friend of Li Zhicao, an outstanding scholar in Hangzhou. Under the influence of Li Zhicao, Yang Tingyun changed his life and chose to be baptized in 1615, taking the name of Michael. Yang Tingyun had a deep connection with Buddhism, so he emphasized interior rectitude. He practiced a daily examination of conscience. The

¹⁰⁶ Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 22.

¹⁰⁷ For more information about Yang, see: Standaert Nicolas, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christianity in Late Ming China* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1988).

examination of self is also a tradition of Confucian teachings, taught in *The Analects*.¹⁰⁸

As a Confucian scholar, Yang Tingyun used all his knowledge to reflect and present the Christian message to his family and friends. He wrote many articles and books explaining the Christian faith, such as *Daiyibian* (代疑编 Treatise for Dissipating Doubts).¹⁰⁹ He and his son built the first church and a residence for the missionaries in Hongzhou in 1627.

Xu Guangqi, Li Zhicao and Yang Tingyun are called the Three Pillars of the Church in China. They represent the characteristics of Chinese Confucian Catholics who were formed in Confucian teachings and became open to the Christian faith as the revelation of the Lord of Heaven (天主). Following the Tian ming (天命 mission of Heaven), they were faithful to Confucian teachings and devoted in their Christian faith. The Confucian teaching of Xiao dao (filial piety) encouraged them to share the good news of the Gospel with their families, friends and fellow Chinese. In their lives one can see clearly the embodiment of Confucian teachings focused on cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, governing the state and making peace for the whole world.¹¹⁰ One also can see in their lives the essential teaching of Christian faith: to love God above all things and love one another. Love of God and others is always connected with one's concrete duties to oneself, one's family, one's country and the whole world. Xu Guagnqi, Li Zhicao and Yang Tingyun are just three examples of Confucian Christians among the Confucian scholars. They are also prominent products of Ricci's approach to evangelization, which offers a positive experience of being Christian in Chinese

¹⁰⁸ Confucius, *Analects* (论语) (Jilin: Jilin Wenshi Publisher, 2006), 1.

¹⁰⁹ Charbonnier, *Christians in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 172.

¹¹⁰ Confucius, *大学和中庸 [Daxue and Zhongrong]* (China, Jilin: Jilin Wenshi Publisher, 2006), 1.

Confucian context, an experience that should be valued in future practice. These examples of Confucian Christians show that Confucianism and Christianity are not mutually exclusive or competitive, but instead are compatible and mutually supportive in helping Chinese Christians become both authentically Chinese and Christian.

During the time when the Jesuits were in China, many other missionaries from other orders, such as the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the *Societe des Missions Etrangères de Paris*, also came to China. Most of them used the strategy of speaking about God directly to people in order to preach the Gospel to Chinese people, especially to the poor peasants. They did not understand and did not cherish Chinese culture; their strategy caused great tensions about what it means to be Chinese Christian among themselves and among Chinese Christians.

The Tensions of Being Christians among Missionaries

The different understandings of Chinese Confucian cultural values caused tensions among missionaries which in turn contributed to the tensions of becoming Chinese Christian. While Ricci and his Jesuit companions were using the accommodational approach to evangelize from the top down, the Dominican missionaries were preaching the Gospel focusing on personal conversion in different areas of China, especially to uneducated people. Ricci's approach was to use the framework of Confucian culture and teachings to preach the Gospel, creating Chinese Christians as a result, while Dominicans used a direct preaching approach to teach a Western understanding of Christian faith to Chinese people in ignoring the context of their culture. The latter approach focused directly on the teachings of Jesus and his disciples and advocated immediate conversion, disregarding the strong Chinese cultural ties to Confucianism. The

Gospel of Jesus Christ was brand new for Chinese people. Preaching the Gospel directly to them was equivalent to using doctrinal language directly in the practice of pastoral work.¹¹¹ The Jesuits and other missionaries were all preaching about the same Lord Jesus Christ to Chinese people, but they used different languages. The Jesuits used “pastoral language”—expressing Christian faith through Confucian teachings—thus trying to relate Christian teachings to the local culture for Christian practice; other missionaries used “doctrinal language”—a Western understanding of being Christian—thus trying to express Christian faith in the only way they perceived as correct because of their formal training. The tension between these different strategies of preaching the Gospel resulted in the tension in being Chinese Christian.

In 1633, the Chinese missionaries opened various missionary services. Following the arrival of the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Franciscans and the *Societe des Missions Etrangeres de Paris* (MEP) came to China and went into many different areas. During this time, the missionaries’ purpose was to convert more people, to train Christian communities and to build more churches. In the Fujian province, the Dominican missionaries gave the local people single-minded and uncompromising teachings of faith which ignored their cultural background. This strategy of training Christians was an attempt to give them a “pure faith,” and to protect these new Christians from outside influence. But it led to an unthinking, unquestioning acceptance of the new faith that left no room for outside influences and in fact turned them into a community of outsiders isolated from the rest of China.

¹¹¹ The danger of using doctrinal language is discussed in chapter two.

The Chinese Rites Controversy

One of the major conflicts between missionaries was about whether to treat the Confucian rites as cultural practice or as superstition. Dominicans, who adhered to the latter belief¹¹², wanted the Chinese to accept a Western style Christianity. For example, after baptism almost every Christian had a Western name, “because it sounded more Catholic.”¹¹³ For the Jesuits, the Confucian Rite was just a kind of civil rite. These different interpretations of Chinese culture and evangelization were the beginning of the tension in being an authentically Chinese Christian in the Chinese context. The apex of this tension was the Chinese Rites Controversy.

The Chinese Rites Controversy was a consequence of the differences among missionary groups in their understanding of local cultural values and strategies for evangelization. Ricci and his followers realized that the Confucian culture had profoundly influenced the Chinese people so they tried to use the approach of dialoguing with Confucianism to express Christian faith. The other missionaries, such as Dominicans and the Franciscans, focused on conversion and direct teaching of Western Christianity with total disregard for local culture. Their strategy caused great tensions between the Chinese emperor and the Holy See, among the missionaries, and between Confucian scholars and Chinese Christians.

The Chinese Rites Controversy first arose among the Jesuit missionaries. After Matteo Ricci rested in God, Nicolo Longobardo (龍華民, 1565-1655) succeeded Ricci in 1610 as the leader of the Jesuits in China. Longobardo arrived in China in 1597 and

¹¹² Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 221.

¹¹³ Ibid., 229-230. Here the Western name is not one's baptized name, but a Western name like any other. Also see: Kejia Yan (晏可佳), *Catholic Church in China (中国天主教)* (Beijing: Wuzhou Chuanbo Publilsher, 2004),7.

preached the Gospel in Shaozhou, Guangdong province. During his pastoral life, he spent two years studying Confucianism and learning from the local people in order to understand their concept of Heaven and the rites of the veneration of Confucius and one's ancestors. His first converts were mostly common people who lacked a solid Confucian education. As a result of his research, it became very clear to him that the Confucians did not recognize the divinity of Heaven. So, he concluded that it was not suitable to use the word Tian (天Heaven,) as God's name, insisting on the Latin word "Deus" instead. He further emphasized that in order to preserve the integrity of the Christian faith Chinese Christians should not practice the traditional Chinese Confucian rites, especially the rites of veneration of Confucius and one's ancestors. This meant that Chinese Christians could not practice Xiao dao (filial piety) which had always been a valued personal belief.

In 1628, Logobardo led a meeting of Jesuit missionaries and four Chinese Confucian Christian scholars in Jiading, Shanghai, to discuss Ricci's approach. Fortunately, they decided to continue using Ricci's approach and allow Christians to practice Chinese rites. However, Logobardo chose to use the pronunciation of "Deus" as God's name in China, which was Dewusi (陡斯).¹¹⁴

The famous Chinese Rites Controversy then extended to the Jesuits and other missionaries. The Dominican Juan Bautista de Morales (1597–1664 黎玉范) had done pastoral work among the common people in Fu'an, Fujian. He considered Chinese rites superstitious because of the offerings of incense, wine, fruits, and flowers to Confucius and to ancestors and was surprised at the Jesuits' acceptance of these practices. He went

¹¹⁴Dewusi 陡斯, actually is an empty word for Chinese people. Older Catholics made the sign of the Cross using the Latin pronunciation when, such as, 因巴得乐, 及菲乐, 及思贝瑞多三多, 阿门。

to Rome to ask for guidance in 1640. In 1645, the *Propaganda Fide* issued a condemnation of the practice of Chinese rites. When the Jesuits heard of this condemnation from Rome in 1651, they sent Martino Martini (1614–1661) to Rome to express their understanding of the subject and their experiences. After hearing Martini’s report, Pope Alexander VII allowed the Jesuits to continue their strategy of allowing Chinese Christians to practice veneration of both Confucius and ancestors.

The tension between being Chinese and being Christian was becoming more pronounced. On March 19, 1715, Pope Clement XI issued a Papal bull *Ex illa die*, which officially condemned the practice of Chinese rites. This decision not only divided Christians and alienated them from their families and communities, but placed them in a dangerous position as well. Furthermore, this decree caused the Emperor to have a misunderstanding about Christians. From the viewpoint of the Chinese Emperor, “Catholics who rejected these basic rituals participating in a hierarchical cosmos that rivaled rather than complemented that ritually presided over by the Emperor.”¹¹⁵ This decree caused the Emperor to think that Catholics would undermine his imperial authority. In 1721, the Emperor Kangxi issued a decree: “From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble.”¹¹⁶ So, in addition to isolating Chinese Christians from their social network by denying them the sharing of time honored family practices, the Chinese Rites Controversy had ultimately caused the uprooting of Christianity from Chinese soil. And the decree from Rome made it impossible for a Christian to be a Confucian scholar as well, effectively preventing

¹¹⁵Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1998), 30.

¹¹⁶Dun Jen Li, *China in Transition, 1517-1911* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969), 22.

Christians from holding positions of influence and effecting change in Chinese society. The Confucian scholars dared not become Christians because they would not be able to practice Xiao dao or venerate Confucius and their ancestors. This situation did not change until two hundred years later, when Pope Pius XII issued a decree on December 8, 1939, which clarified that Catholics were permitted to celebrate the ceremonies in honor of Confucius in Confucian temples or in schools.

The Chinese Rites Controversy resulted from misunderstandings of the Chinese culture by missionaries who also seem to have misinterpreted the lessons of history. When Christianity encountered Roman culture, the Christians tried to keep their distance from the pagan customs and rites, particularly their view of the Roman Emperor as a god in obvious conflict with Christian beliefs¹¹⁷. In Chinese tradition, by contrast, Confucius and one's ancestors are honored according to the practice of Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety), rather than viewed as deities. Offering incense, wine, fruits, and flowers to Confucius and one's ancestors are ways to show respect and to connect with one's ancestors and esteemed ones, not treat them as "gods."

Confucianism is a philosophy, not a religion. Missionaries and decision makers should have tried to study and understand rather than judge Chinese culture.

Jacques Gernet raises another point that is helpful for understanding the reasons for the tensions:

There were two kinds of men among the missionaries—the optimists, who put their trust in 'natural reason' and were ready to believe that the Chinese disposition was favorable to the Christian faith, and the pessimists, who

¹¹⁷Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), 81-82.

could see nothing but superstition and atheism in China—similarly, on the Chinese side the missionaries found both sympathizers and enemies, the former marveling at finding similarities between their own traditions and the teaching of these men from so far away, the latter condemning everything in the ‘doctrine of the Master of Heaven’ which stood in manifest contradiction to the social, political and moral order of China and also to the dominant concepts of China.¹¹⁸

These words illustrate how different approaches to evangelization and different perceptions of the impact of these approaches on local culture lead to the tensions experienced by Chinese Christians.

The Chinese Rites Controversy ought to have been debated and decided within the Chinese Christian community. Unfortunately the voice of Chinese Confucian Catholics, who should have been the primary source of consultation, was not heard in this debate, which remained limited to missionaries. Although the Jesuits were on the right side of this controversy, they made the mistake of asking for political support from the Emperor,¹¹⁹ who should not have been involved in a debate between Christian brothers and sisters. Paul had already warned Christians to resolve disagreements within their own community (The First Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-6). But in view of the lack of expected support from Rome, they turned to secular authority for help, with disastrous results.

¹¹⁸Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, 5.

¹¹⁹In January 1721, the Jesuits translated the documents from Rome related to forbidding the practice of Chinese Rites and asked the Emperor to give an opinion. In response, the Emperor issued the decree banning missionaries in China.

Almost five hundred years later, in this new millennium, Christians still face similar challenges and tensions in regard to being authentically Chinese Christians. In order to be both authentically Chinese and Christian, one has to value one's cultural contribution highly, while remaining faithful to Christianity. Based on the lessons of the missionaries, there is an urgent calling for cherishing both Chinese Confucian teachings and Christian faith in order to bridge the tension and enable people to become authentically Chinese Christians.

During this second stage of Christianity in China, one can see that there were positive experiences and examples of being Confucian Christian which were the fruits of Ricci's approach. There were still significant tensions regarding how to be an authentically Chinese Christian, primarily caused by a misjudgment of Confucian contributions to Chinese culture that resulted in their exclusion from the process of evangelization, which ultimately caused a recurring tension for Chinese Christians.

The Third Stage of Christianity in China

The third stage of Christianity in China took place from 1840 to 1949. This was a very fruitful time for the missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, but it was also a tragic time because of some of the approaches used. This stage is a time for opportunities as well as a time of difficulties. The tension involved in being an authentically Chinese Christian during this stage arose mainly from attempts to subject the Chinese culture and political system, which missionaries deemed inferior, to foreign customs and authority, subordinationism.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Subordinationism is a Trinitarian theological term. Here, cultural subordinationism is used to define the attitude of treating one culture as subordinate to another.

Being Chinese Christians in the Colonial Period

For a long time after the Emperor Kangxi banned Christianity in China in 1721, missionaries could not preach the Gospel in China. From 1840 to 1911, the main difficulty in being Christian in China was due to Western political and cultural subordinationism. In 1840, the Opium war forced China to open her doors to Western colonizers. This change also brought missionaries back to China and gave the different Christian communities freedom to preach the Gospel. Missionaries did a great deal of work which benefited not only Chinese Christians but society in general, such as building schools, orphanages and hospitals. But the Christianity of this time was characterized as “foreign Christians with a Chinese face.” Because most of the missionaries considered themselves to be from a so-called high civilization and had Imperial support, they did not value Chinese culture as a way to help Chinese people to be Christians. Some of the missionaries used the support of their country’s empires to convert people. Jean-Pierre Charbonnier tells a story about how the village of Donglu, Hebei, became Catholic.¹²¹ Two families went to see a priest to be baptized in order to be protected from the Church. The Chinese saw missionaries as representatives of the wealthy and powerful Western nations rather than messengers of Jesus Christ. And since they preached a Westernized Christianity, being Christian in China during that period was almost like being part of a Western society.

Many different reasons contributed to the tension of being an authentically Chinese Christian during this time. Chinese priests all received a Western Christian education, which resulted in a lack of engagement with Chinese Confucian culture.

¹²¹Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 338-340.

Missionaries built many Christian villages in different places such as Hebei, Shaanxi, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia, in order to form and to protect these Christian converts from the outside world. The reason for building the “Christian village” was “the missionaries of the late nineteenth century found themselves caught in the following dilemma: to make Christianity accessible to the Chinese, they had to either suppress the novelty of its message or else modify the nature of Chinese society. As they could do neither, they set up ‘Christian villages.’”¹²² By setting up Christian villages, the missionaries essentially separated Chinese Christians from their culture and real world, and they became Western Christians in a Chinese context. Unfortunately, during this time, with the protection of Western governments, the missionaries did not need to learn Chinese Confucian culture to preach the gospel. The political support offered some convenience for missionaries to preach the Gospel; it also seems to have numbed any sensitivity towards the values and contributions of local people and their culture. The other possible reason that the missionaries ignored the importance of Chinese culture was that there was a May Fourth movement in China, which favored Western culture and techniques and tried to abandon Chinese traditional culture.¹²³

The Colonial period provided many opportunities for missionaries to preach the Gospel in many places in China, but it also caused deeper tension between Chinese people and Christianity. Kwok Pui-lan points out, “for, sadly, theological training in Asia at the time continued the process of colonizing Asian minds, even long after the

¹²²Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, 2.

¹²³Tse-tung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). The May Fourth movement of 1919 tried to abandon Confucian teachings because they thought traditional Chinese philosophy could not save China from the invaders. So, some Chinese people sought to make China “rich and strong” through a new culture, the Western tradition.

colonizers had packed up and gone home. Asian theology should have emerged from and responded to Asian realities, rather than reflect someone else's theological puzzles conceived in the faraway Western academy."¹²⁴ The missionaries during this time just copied a Western way of being Christian to form Christians in the Confucian cultural context. They created tensions about being both Chinese and Christian among Chinese Christians. In fact, if these missionaries had studied Chinese culture following the cultural tradition of Matteo Ricci and the Christian tradition of Jesus Christ the incarnated God who used Jewish history and custom to preach the kingdom of God, they could have found a better way of cherishing Christian faith and Chinese culture simultaneously. According to this lesson from history, Chinese Christians should value their cultural contributions and the Christian Tradition as they try to be Christians in a concrete situation. When Christians value their culture and open to its revelations, Christians can become authentic in every cultural context.

Turning Point

Pope Benedict XV on November 1919 issued an apostolic letter, *Maximum Illud*, in which he explained the necessity for native priests and bishops to be responsible for missionary territories.¹²⁵ This was a turning point for Chinese Christians; it enabled a positive experience of being Chinese Christians. During this time, Chinese Christians also had some influence on social life. There were Chinese Christian magazines, hospitals and universities in different places. Through these services, Chinese Christians had a

¹²⁴Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2005), 41.

¹²⁵ Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 391; Benedict XV, "*Maximum Illud (On the Propagation throughout the World)*" last modified November 30, 1919, accessed September 26, 2012, <http://www.svdcuria.org/public/mission/docs/encycl/mi-en.htm>

connection to and influence over people in their society. A profound event for the Church in China took place when Pope Pius XI sent the first Apostolic delegate Archbishop Celso Benigno Luigi Costantini (April 3, 1876---October 17, 1958) to China in 1922. He followed the teachings of Pope Benedict XV by promoting local Church leadership and encouraging Chinese Christians to value Chinese culture and serve all of society.

Constantini, following Ricci's approach, appreciated the importance of Chinese culture and local people's values in building local churches and serving society. His purpose was to train Chinese priests and Church leaders to build local churches and to establish a new image of Christianity which would be different from that of the colonial period. He wanted to bridge the tension between being Christians and being Chinese that had been caused by political and cultural subordinationism. On May 15, 1924, he led the first assembly of the Church in China in Shanghai. This meeting set five aims for the future of the Church in China.¹²⁶ After this meeting, Constantini accompanied the six new Chinese bishop candidates to Rome. On October 28, 1924, on the feast of Christ the King, they were ordained as Chinese bishops by Pope Pius XI in St. Peter's Basilica.¹²⁷ This was a new page for Christians in China; Chinese bishops would know how to help Chinese Christians value both Chinese culture and Christian faith. Constantini also built the first Chinese congregation, the *Congregatio Discipulorum Domini* (主徒会), for

¹²⁶Shanghai Diocese, "Zhonghua Zhujiao Huiyi Zhuanhao (中華全國主教會議專號)," *Shengjiao Zhazhi* (聖教雜誌) 7 (July, 1924):65-67; Guopeng, Liu(劉國鵬), "Diyijie Zhongguo Zhujiao Huiyi de Kaishi, Chengxu yu Jieguo (第一屆中國主教會議的召開、程序與結果)" August 15, 2011, accessed September 26, 2012, http://iwr.cass.cn/zj/zjxz/lgp/zxwz/201108/t20110815_7782.htm

¹²⁷ Here are the six new Chinese bishops: 赵怀义 (河北宣化教区)、孙德楨 (河北安国教区)、陈国砥 (山西汾阳教区)、朱开敏 (江苏海门教区)、胡若山 (浙江台州教区)、成和德 (湖北蒲圻教区)。

Chinese Christians. Constantini understood that only well-educated Chinese priests would be able to use better ways, especially traditional Confucian teachings, to explain the Gospel to their own people. Through this congregation, he wanted to change the image of the Church among Chinese people, and to train well-educated Chinese priests to serve the Christian community. At the same time, he also encouraged priests to get college degrees. He urged missionaries to follow Ricci's method of using Chinese Confucian cultural contributions to preach the Gospel to and with Chinese people.

Constantini realized that the Church needed more apologists and priests who had mastered the core of Christian teachings and Chinese cultural teachings. Even today, this is also one of the crucial works for the Church in China. On September 26, 1927, Constantini presided over the inauguration of Furen University (辅仁大学) in Beijing. And later on, in 1935, the *Collegium Sinicum* was created in Furen University for priests to get a higher education.¹²⁸ Constantini encouraged the Catholic Church to integrate more fully with Chinese society and culture.

1939 was a special year for Catholics in China. The Church realized the importance of cultural values for being Christian. On December 8th, Pope Pius XII issued a decree, the *Plane Compertum Est*, in which he lifted the ban on the Chinese Rites and gave permission to Catholics to participate in the traditional rites in honor of Confucius and their ancestors. Although it was a quite delayed document for missionaries and Chinese Christians, it was a welcome clarification. This decree reminded all Christians that when they preach the Gospel to a certain people, they are not delivering a “pure Gospel” to a group of people without any cultural influence. Culture is an instrument to

¹²⁸For information please see: John Shujie Chen, *The Rise and Fall of Fu Ren University, Beijing: Catholic Higher Education in China* (Florence, KY: Taylor & Francis, 2007).

convey the Good News of Jesus Christ through history; culture can also be a tool that Christians can use to understand and proclaim the Gospel to people in that culture. Gerald Arbuckle points out that “religions have their own cultures, influence other cultures, and are influenced by them.”¹²⁹ Valuing Chinese culture is very important for being a Chinese Christian.

In summary, being Christians in the Chinese context was a process of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and finding God’s presence in Chinese culture.¹³⁰ From the very beginning of Christianity in China, the missionaries tried to find the most effective model for new Christians. The Nestorians tried to use Buddhism and Daoism to express Christian faith; the Jesuits tried to baptize Chinese people and their culture; subsequent missionaries tried to give Chinese people a “pure faith.” Unfortunately, because of the Chinese Rites Controversy, after 1840, the majority of missionaries did not cherish the Chinese culture and tried to change it by imposing their version of Westernized Catholicism. Things would have been better if all the missionaries had entered into dialogue with and utilized Confucian teachings, especially the concept of being an ideal human person, Junzi.

The reason that they did not usually do so could possibly be, as Richard Madsen points out, that the missionaries, whether Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans or the *Societe des Missions Etrangeres de Paris* (MEP), were reacting to the Reformation,¹³¹ so “they brought to China a faith that emphasized even more than medieval Christianity the

¹²⁹ Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians*, 123.

¹³⁰ Bevens, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 56.

¹³¹ One may not agree with Madsen’s opinion that the missionary work was a reaction to the Reformation, but he is right in pointing out that the missionaries brought a medieval understanding of being Christian into the Chinese context.

hierarchical structure of the Church.”¹³² Although the missionaries meant to help Catholics in China, they missed the opportunity to engage with the Chinese culture to integrate Confucian teachings into the teaching of Christian faith. At the same time, their strategies also caused the separation of Catholics from public social life, especially from the Confucian scholars. Being Chinese and being Christian fell into a tension. This tension would extend to contemporary Chinese. Pope Benedict XV realized the complicated situation in China and sent Archbishop Celso Benigno Luigi Costantini to China to turn a new page for Christian Catholics in China. Costantini’s work was a turning point for the Church in China, enabling it to be loyal to both Chinese culture and Christian faith. But with the coming of the Communist regime, Christians in China would experience new tensions regarding being Chinese Christians. The next section analyzes the experiences of contemporary Catholics in the Chinese context.

Contemporary Experiences of Being Chinese Christians

The fourth stage of Christianity in China is the contemporary period. During this time, Chinese Christians have had an experience of death and resurrection, and have a hunger for a new identity and the meaning of life. The tensions in this stage arise from communism, which not only rejects other wisdoms, but has also abandoned Chinese traditional cultural values. The tensions regarding being a Chinese Christian are now about how to be Chinese as well as how to be Chinese Christian during this time.

The Difficulties of Being Chinese and Being Christians

There are two tensions involved in being Chinese and Christians during this time. One involves being Chinese according to traditional Confucian teachings and being

¹³²Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1998), 29.

Chinese according to Communist ideals; the other entails being Chinese Christians in the Communist political ideal and being Chinese Christians in balancing the values of Confucian cultural contributions and Christian faith. Contemporary Christians in China, whether Protestant or Catholic, experienced a life “from death to resurrection” between 1960 and 1980. This was a difficult time to be Chinese as well as to be Chinese Christian. Not long after Communists took power in China, “all missionaries had either left China, were in jail, or were under house arrest. In sixteen years not a single Christian church was opened in that vast land.”¹³³ That was a tragic time for all Chinese people.

During this time, China also closed her doors to the outside world and all religion was considered illegal by the government. This time was one of martyrdom for Christians in China. “The Church was a prime target of the repressive religious policies.”¹³⁴ Especially during the “cultural revolution” (1966–1976), all the missionaries were expelled, almost all the bishops, priests and nuns were put into jail, and all the churches were either destroyed or occupied for other uses. The “Cultural Revolution” tried to disconnect the Chinese people from their traditional cultural values and religious faith in addition to attempting to force acceptance of communist ideals.

This was a time of suffering for all Chinese people. The connection between Chinese Christians and the universal Church was cut off for more than thirty years. On the one hand, the political situation made it very difficult to be Christian in China; on the other hand, in order to promote Communist ideas, the government also abandoned the traditional Confucian culture and labeled Confucianism as feudalism, a political strategy

¹³³ Brown, *Christianity in the People's Republic of China*, 10.

¹³⁴ Alan Hunter & Kim-Kwong Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 237.

that made it difficult for Chinese people to be Chinese. The “cultural revolution” destroyed the traditional meaning of being Chinese. The government tried to impose a new version of Chinese culture according to Communist ideals. During this period, the “spiritual guidance” of Chinese people derived from the interpretation of Marxism and Leninism by Mao Zedong (1893-1976). During this time, the definition of being Chinese actually was to live according to the ideals of Western Marxism. During this time, some of the European scholars misread what was happening inside China under Mao Zedong’s revolution; they compared his teachings to Christian doctrines and portrayed Mao as a “Chinese sage,” a modern Moses.¹³⁵ Such ideas were primarily based on press reports rather than personal experiences and dialogue, as advocated by practical theology.

After 1982, in order to heal society from many wounds and to enhance the economy, the government adopted an open policy towards the world. Christianity and other religions then had an opportunity to survive and to begin a new life day by day.

Seeking to Bridge the Tensions

Following the reform of 1982 which established a new policy regarding religion in China, Christians and intellectuals sought to bridge the tensions between being authentically Chinese and authentically Christians. Christians tried both to value Confucian contributions and to be faithful to Christian teachings. Intellectuals and Christians had been trying to retrieve a dialogue between Chinese Confucian teachings and Christianity.¹³⁶ This time marks the beginning of a new period of seeking a new meaning and a new direction of life. In the meantime, many of the so called “cultural

¹³⁵Peter Hebblethwaite, *The Christian-Marxist Dialogue* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977), 77-78.

¹³⁶Ruokanen and Huang, *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, 100.

Christians,” who are Chinese intellectuals, had found a passion for bridging the tensions of being Chinese in this new era.¹³⁷ They strive to give new hope to China through the discourse of traditional Confucianism and the Western cultural foundations of Christianity. These intellectuals appreciate Matteo Ricci’s approach and call for a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and Christianity.¹³⁸ They have translated Western books of Christian theology, philosophy and history into Chinese. They also have published some books and articles to introduce Christianity to Chinese people.¹³⁹ They have started a dialogue between Chinese culture and Christianity and think that “through comparison and judgment, the universal truth of Christianity should be able to find access into Chinese culture.”¹⁴⁰ This is a calling for valuing Chinese culture as well as Christianity.

In Chinese Christian circles, several works have been published that seek a mutual understanding between Christianity and Confucianism.¹⁴¹ One of these Christian scholars, He Shiming (何世明) offers a comparison between Christianity and Chinese

¹³⁷ Cultural Christians is a term that defines intellectuals who identify with Christian culture, although they may not belong to any religious denomination. In a political context, since the government bans officials from practicing religion, they are also known as “anonymous Christians.”

See Cunfu Chen and Edwin Hsu, “Wenhua jidutu xianxiang de zonglan yu fansi”(“An overview and Reflection on the Phenomenon of Cultural Christians”), *Regent Journal* (1998: 2-3; Zhuo Xingping, “discussion of Cultural Christians in China,” in S. Uhalley Jr. and Xiaoxin Wu, eds., *Chinese Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future* (Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), 382-300.

¹³⁸ Ruokanen and Huang, *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, 97.

¹³⁹ Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule*, 56-57.

¹⁴⁰ Ruokanen and Huang, *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, 185.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

culture.¹⁴² Chinese scholar Zhuo Xingping (卓新平) summaries his comparison of Christianity and Chinese culture and said that

God occupies a main position in the former and human beings occupy a main position in the latter; the former emphasizes transcendence and the latter immanence; the former knows both life and death and has a clear distinction between this and the other world, but the latter knows only life and avoids facing the problems of death and the issues related to the other world.¹⁴³

This scholar's insights about Christianity and Chinese culture express Chinese Christians' feelings of cherishing both Confucian cultural teachings and Christianity's revelation and illustrate the importance of preserving cultural openness to Christianity. Chinese culture and Christianity are in a relationship of mutual assessment and nurturing. Christianity will help Chinese people to fulfill the meaning of being authentic human beings; Confucianism will help Christians to practice the meaning of being authentically Christians.¹⁴⁴ This search for mutual understanding is the response to the call to be vividly Chinese and Christian in the new Chinese situation.

Historically, the Christian village sustained the Catholic faith during times of suffering; now, as China turns from an agricultural lifestyle to an industrial country, what

¹⁴²Shingming He (Ho Sai Ming, 何世明1911-1996) published several books in this area: *A Dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism* (基督徒与儒学对谈) (Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe 宗教文化出版社, 1999); *Four Lectures on Christianity and Confucianism* (基督徒儒学四讲, 1986); *A Perspective on Chinese Filial Piety in the Light of Christianity* (从基督教看中国的孝道).

¹⁴³Ruokanen and Huang, *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, 191.

¹⁴⁴The Second Vatican Council also taught the importance of culture in forming the individual *Gaudium et Spes*, 53. "*Gaudium et Spes*" last modified n.d., accessed July 15, 2012. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

will the new way of becoming Chinese Christians be? A new situation calls for a re-thinking of the Christian identity and mission. Gerald Arbuckle argues that “identity is always a process of ‘being’ or ‘becoming’, never a final or settled issue... There is no such thing as a ‘pure identity’ abstracted from social relations and history.”¹⁴⁵ Chinese Christians can never ignore their cultural roots in Confucian teachings. For Catholics, the rebuilding of Christian identity cannot just follow the teachings of the documents of the Second Vatican Council or other modern theological reflections; they have to go back to the foundation and essence of Christianity, which is the Trinitarian theological understanding of the Triune God and also provides the model for being an authentic Christian. Thus, engaging with Confucian teachings and embodying the foundations of Christian faith will be a way to find new Christian identity and mission, and a way to bridge the tensions of being Chinese as well as being Chinese Christians in the contemporary Chinese context.

A Call to Bridge the Tension

Chinese Christians throughout history have always experienced a tension between being Chinese and Christians. The tension in the first stage of Christianity in China arose because the missionaries did not engage the best dialogue partner, Confucianism. During the second stage, it was caused primarily by the different perceptions of the value of Chinese culture among missionaries. Some missionaries appreciated Confucian cultural values while others misunderstood them. The tension in the third stage arose from cultural and political subordinationism. Most of the missionaries believed that Western culture and political systems were superior to Chinese culture, and therefore ignored

¹⁴⁵Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*, 66-67.

them. The tension in the fourth stage stemmed from the Communist government's rejection of all other wisdoms and repudiation of traditional Confucian cultural teachings. From these four stages, one can see the tensions between being Christian and being Chinese throughout the history of Christianity in China. These tensions are the negative experience of being Chinese and Christian, and they should be bridged for future Christian practice.

Among the positive experiences during these periods, it is important to highlight the efforts of Matteo Ricci and Archbishop Celso Benigno Luigi Costantinito engage in dialogue with Confucianism in order to preach the Gospel to Chinese people in a Chinese way. These missionaries appreciated the contributions and value of both Chinese Confucian culture and Christian revelation. Their approach also produced some notable examples of Chinese Christians who deeply influenced the Christian community and Chinese society. This positive experience demonstrates that Christianity and Confucianism are not mutually exclusive or competitive, but are mutually inclusive and supportive. This lesson should be valued and advanced by those who seek to be authentically Chinese Christians.

Today, the tension between being authentically Chinese and Christian remains in Chinese Christian practices; efforts to bridge it should be continually renewed through appreciating and engaging both Confucian cultural contributions and Christian teachings. To be a Chinese Christian requires keeping the balance between being encouraged by Confucian teachings to be Junzi and valuing the core Christian teachings, especially its Trinitarian theology of the Triune God. Jean-Pierre Charbonnier reminds Chinese Christians that "if the Chinese are to develop the characteristic features of their church,

they must become more aware of her roots.”¹⁴⁶ The roots of Chinese culture are the teachings of Confucianism.¹⁴⁷ To be a Chinese Christian, first of all, one should understand what it means to be an ideal human person as understood in the Chinese cultural context. In spite of their erudition and efforts, Ricci and Costantini’s understanding of Confucianism and its potential contributions to Christianity needs to be expanded by Chinese scholars with a deeper understanding of this philosophy. On the one hand, a Chinese Christian will know the right way of being Junzi according to Confucian teachings. On the other hand a true understanding of becoming Christian requires, beyond a basis in Christology, Pneumatology, or any one Christian theology, the solid foundation of the core of Christian faith which is the teaching of Trinitarian theology. Nor is it reasonable to impose an outdated concept of authentic Christianity on contemporary culture. In order to be an authentic Christian, one has to go back to the core revelation and teachings of Christianity, which are the Trinitarian theological insights about the Triune God. The tension of being an authentically Chinese and Christian needs to be bridged by cherishing both Confucianism and Trinitarian theological contributions.

After exploring the experience of being Chinese Christian, the next two chapters analyze the core teachings of Confucianism and Christianity in relation to being authentically Chinese and being authentically Christian.

¹⁴⁶Charbonnier, *Christian in China: A.D 600 to 2000*, 11.

¹⁴⁷ On January 11, 2011, a thirty one foot bronze statue of the ancient Chinese sage, Confucius, was set in Tiananmen Square to the surprise of people used to the promotion of communism as the only acceptable line of thought since 1949. In spite of years of denunciation, Confucianism remains the main influence in Chinese life. Accessed September 12, 2012, <http://news.163.com/11/0112/07/6Q6BN6RO0001124J.html>. Interestingly enough, just three months later, the statue of Confucius in the Tiananmen Square disappeared with no explanation. “Confucius. Statue Vanishes Near Tiananmen Square,” September 12, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/23/world/asia/23confucius.html>.

CHAPTER FOUR: BEING CHINESE CONFUCIAN JUNZI

Introduction

Being authentically Chinese is based on the concept of Junzi.¹⁴⁸ Chapter three delineates the historical experience of being Christian in China as well as the tension of being Chinese Christian that resulted from a lack of understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture, especially Confucianism, which is the dominant Chinese philosophy. In order to bridge this tension, it is necessary to engage Confucianism and to find a way of being an authentically Chinese person. First, this chapter presents a historical view of the development of Confucianism. Secondly, it reviews the main teachings of Confucianism about being an ideal person or Junzi, which is at the core of being authentically Chinese.¹⁴⁹ Thirdly, it examines the characteristics of the concept of Junzi in three different life circles which are the family, society, and Heaven and earth; these circles are associated with three Confucian categories: Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety), Li (禮 rite) and Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven).¹⁵⁰ Finally, it examines the limitations of Confucian teachings about becoming a Junzi and seeks new contributions to this concept from other wisdoms.

Being an authentically Chinese is becoming Junzi according to Confucianism, the Chinese philosophy that has remained the primary influence in the culture of Chinese people and surrounding countries, such as Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Singapore for

¹⁴⁸ Junzi means gentleperson as well as the ideal person in Confucius teachings. Junzi is a both a definition of a person and a quality of his character.

¹⁴⁹ Authentically Chinese means being embracing the Chinese culture rooted in Confucianism.

¹⁵⁰ Throughout this chapter, Chinese terms are used to express the core concepts of Confucianism, such as Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety), Li (禮 rite) and Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven) to avoid the inaccuracies of terms that do not convey the original meaning of the Confucian terms.

thousands of years. Confucius' teachings were the accumulation and reinterpretation of ancient Chinese wisdom for his time and contemporaries.¹⁵¹ Confucius offered the notion of an ideal person, Junzi in the Chinese cultural context, for renewing human life, family, society, and the whole world. Being Junzi is a Chinese model of being an exemplary person; it is also the quality of such a person. Chinese culture is a family-centered culture, and it extends and connects to society as well as to Heaven and earth.¹⁵² So, being Junzi means being in three simultaneous life circles and having responsibilities for each of these circles which are family, society, and Heaven and earth. Becoming Junzi entails practicing Xiao dao (filial piety) and becoming filial-pious children.¹⁵³ In the first circle, Xiao dao (filial piety) plays an exceptionally important role in the relationship with one's parents and one's blood brothers and sisters. In the second circle, the Li (rite) expresses the relationship of the Junzi to others in society. In the third circle, the Junzi practices Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) between Heaven and Earth. Tian ming expresses the connection and relationship of the Junzi with Heaven and all creatures on earth. This third circle, especially the relationship with Heaven, is the zenith and foundation of the other two life circles.¹⁵⁴

There are many classic works on Confucian philosophy: *the Analects* (论语) of Confucius is the most widely accepted expression of the thoughts of Confucius and the

¹⁵¹*Analects* 7:1.

¹⁵²Heaven indicates the Chinese understanding of God; earth indicates all of creation. Although the word "Heaven" in Chinese does not convey the Christian meaning of God, it is a natural way for the Chinese to understand God. In Chinese thought, Heaven and Earth are in one body.

¹⁵³Becoming Junzi is maintaining a relationship with one's parents and family. Filial pious children are the ones who practice filial piety to one's parents and beyond.

¹⁵⁴Confucius tells his disciples that without knowing the mission of Heaven, one could not becoming Junzi. See *Analects* 20:3.

meaning of becoming Junzi. Other Confucian ancient classics include *the Great Learning* (大学), *The Doctrine of Mean* (中庸) and *Menzi* (孟子). All of these collect and reflect on the wisdom of ancient Chinese culture. Among them the *Analects* plays an immensely important role. One of the best known Confucian scholars, Chichung Huang, argues that “in the long river of human history, if one single person can represent the civilization of a whole nation, it is perhaps Master Kong [i.e. Confucius]; if one single book can be helpful as the common code of a whole people, it is perhaps Lun Yu, or the *Analects* of Confucius.”¹⁵⁵ Through the *Analects*, readers can grasp the spirit of Confucianism and best understand Confucius teachings about Junzi.

From the Confucian teachings about being Junzi, in turn, one will understand the cultural foundation of being a Chinese Christian. Becoming Junzi is a first and inseparable step for being a Chinese Christian.

Confucius and Confucianism

Confucius (孔子, 551 B.C. – 479 B.C.) was born in 551 B.C. in the Lu State (now, Shangdong Province), China. Confucius is the founder of Confucianism, whose teachings about the individual, education, the moral life, social order, and liturgy have all deeply influenced Asian cultures, including those of China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Singapore.¹⁵⁶ Confucius is a the Latinized name of Kong Fuzi (孔夫子), a title of respect for Kong Qiu (孔丘), also known as Kong Zhongni (孔仲尼), the master of Confucianism. Confucius is widely known in the West through the commentary of

¹⁵⁵Chichung Huang, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4.

¹⁵⁶Suping Li (李甦平) *The History of Confucianism in Korea (韩国儒学史)* (Beijing: Renming Publishing, 2009). Here Li offers important information about how Korea has been influenced by Confucianism for thousands of years.

Christian missionaries.¹⁵⁷ In China, people normally call Confucius Kong Zi (孔子), which means the Master Kong.

Confucius lived during the Spring and Autumn periods (771 B.C. - 481 B.C.)¹⁵⁸ of the Zhou (周) Dynasty, one of the most chaotic times in Chinese history. Confucius lost his father when he was three years old and was raised by his mother Yan Zhengzai (顏徵在). Confucius lived in poverty through his childhood. With the support and encouragement of his mother, Confucius was very diligent in his studies.¹⁵⁹ At the age of thirty, he left his family to strive for his ideals of rebuilding the order of life and society. He felt passionately about retrieving and reviving ancient Chinese civilization and to build a harmonious and humanistic society. His most important teaching is about being Junzi, namely a person who is authentically Chinese and strives to rebuild the order of family, society, and the whole world.

The Context for Confucius

Confucius experienced a difficult and painful situation in his life-time: political chaos, social disorder, and moral decay.¹⁶⁰ During Confucius' time, the Zhou dynasty had lost its day-to-day control of the country; there were military conflicts between different kings and power struggles within the country.¹⁶¹ There was political chaos. The old order of the state was destroyed, while family life and personal life also suffered in determining the right way of living. The crises permeated the whole of society. Human life lost its visions of responsibility to family and society. Facing such chaos, many thinkers tried to

¹⁵⁷ See Oxford English Dictionary (London: Oxford University Press 1971), 815.

¹⁵⁸ Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 2005, 25.

¹⁵⁹ Yutang Lin, *The Wisdom of Confucius* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1943), 49.

¹⁶⁰ Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 25.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

find reasons and offer solutions for recovering family life and order within society; Confucius was among them. The hundred schools of thought (百家争鸣), such as the Confucians, Legist (法家), Taoist (道家), Moist (墨家), and Yinyangist (阴阳家) thrived in this vibrant period of Chinese history. This time was often regarded as the most exciting period for Chinese intellectuals since they could offer their different thoughts for renewing society freely.¹⁶² Like other founders of different schools of thought, Confucius also felt that it was his responsibility to find a way out of crisis of political chaos, social disorder, and moral decay.

Confucius did not create many new ideas in philosophy; rather, he learned from Chinese ancient teachings and tried to retrieve the traditional Chinese wisdom for becoming an authentic person, which is a concept that would play an essential the role in rebuilding the order of life. Confucius thought that helping everyone to become Junzi was the way to renew family life, the order of society, and peace in the whole world. This is also a special method which Confucius used in response to the crisis of his world; forming authentic persons seemed the right way to renew the world.¹⁶³ Confucianism emerged from his recovery and teaching of ancient Chinese wisdom to become the dominant philosophy influencing the whole of China and its surrounding countries for thousands of years.

What is Confucianism?

¹⁶² For more information about “the hundred schools of thought”, please see, Xiaofeng, Zhang (张小峰), *The hundred schools of thought* (百家争鸣) (Shanghai, China: Shanghai Guji publisher, 2010). Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 25.

¹⁶³ Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 2005, 36.

Confucianism is a Chinese philosophy which retrieves the ancient Chinese wisdom for renewing contemporary life as understood by Confucius and his followers.¹⁶⁴ Confucianism is considered the fullest expression of Chinese philosophy.¹⁶⁵ Confucianism is not a religion in Chinese culture but a philosophy. One contemporary Confucian scholar, Xingzhong Yao, argues that “in fact, what is meant by ‘Confucianism’ is more a tradition generally rooted in Chinese culture and nurtured by Confucius and Confucians rather than a new religion created, or a new system initiated, by Confucius himself alone.”¹⁶⁶ Yao’s argument that Confucianism is a philosophy, not a religion, is clear to Chinese people. Although scholar Julia Ching considers Confucianism a religion, he also acknowledged that distinctions “between religion and philosophy are not so clear in Chinese tradition.”¹⁶⁷ He realizes that there is a difference understanding of Confucianism between Chinese people and Western scholars. Ching furthermore points out that Confucius, like Socrates, instructed youth in his ideals, but “he seldom touched on religious matter. He is known as a humanist, and today’s secular society tends to understand all humanists as secularist or at least religious agnostics.”¹⁶⁸ Ching clarifies this understanding of Confucianism and defines Confucius as humanist. In the Chinese context, seeing Confucianism as a philosophy rather than a religion is a sign

¹⁶⁴ The Jesuits of the sixteen century translated and transmuted the Chinese intellectual life, “Ju [i. e. Ru (儒)] or Chinese ‘scholars’ into an ‘ism,’ Confucianism.” Paul A. Rule, *K’ung-Tzu or Confucius-The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987), 2, 195.

¹⁶⁵ Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 32.

¹⁶⁶ Xingzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4, 17.

¹⁶⁷ Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 8.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

of respect.¹⁶⁹ Few contemporary scholars want to revive Confucianism as “a living tradition and a living religion,”¹⁷⁰ for responding to the contemporary “bankruptcy of morality” in Chinese society,¹⁷¹ and those who do misunderstand the teachings of Confucius. The core teaching of Confucius is becoming an authentic person, a Junzi, not emphasizing the meaning of Heaven or God the way religion would. Although Confucianism has its classics about Confucius’ teachings and Confucians emphasize the practicing of Li (rite) and seeking Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), the majority of Chinese people and Western scholars consider Confucianism a philosophy, the dominant one in Chinese culture.

During the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD220), Confucian scholar Zhoushu Dong (董仲舒 179 BC-104 BC), made Confucianism the official philosophy in China.¹⁷² From then on, anyone who wanted to become an official and work in the government had to take an examination of Confucian teachings. Since the Han Dynasty, Confucianism has become the dominant Chinese culture and deeply influenced Chinese people’s life. As discussed in Chapter three, when the Jesuits came to China during the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644), “they discovered that in fact it was Confucius scholars who were the true social elite of Chinese society.”¹⁷³ The Jesuit missionaries realized that Confucianism was the dominant philosophy in China, so they chose Confucianism as their dialogue partner. But other missionaries failed to realize the value of dialoguing

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁷⁰ Yong Chen, “Renewing Confucianism as a Living Tradition in 21st Century China: Reciting Classics, Reviving Academies and Restoring Rituals,” in *Mapping Religion and Spirituality in a Postsecular World* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2012), 83.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 66.

¹⁷² Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 50.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 1.

with Confucianism in helping Chinese people become Christians. One contemporary Confucian scholar, Weiming Tu, argues that “the Master [i.e. Confucius] never instructed his students to follow him in order to find the Way; he merely offered a standard of inspiration for those who were encouraged to pursue the way by realizing humanity [charity] in themselves.”¹⁷⁴ Tu explained that the center of Confucian teachings is not Confucius but rather a practice of wisdom which stresses the definition of Confucianism as wisdom and philosophy rather than religion. Another contemporary Confucian scholar, Jinshui Lin (林金水), also argues that “Confucius was an educator, a philosopher, but not a man of religion; the teachings of Kong were based on practice, not faith.”¹⁷⁵ Lin clearly distinguishes Confucianism from religion. In the Chinese understanding a religion is lower than a philosophy but higher than superstitions.¹⁷⁶

Confucius’ philosophy is, furthermore, not an invention but a retrieval and re-interpretation of the ancient Chinese wisdom for his contemporaries. Confucianism shows a process of development through its history.¹⁷⁷ The development of Confucianism describes how as a philosophy Confucianism reinterprets itself in different periods and contexts in dialogue with other wisdoms. The center of Confucianism is the person not God. The core teaching of Confucius is to be an ideal person, a Junzi (君子, a gentleperson). Renewing the individual is the essential part of Confucius’ philosophy for

¹⁷⁴ Wei Ming Tu, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1998), XXIV.

¹⁷⁵ Mungello, D.E. ed., *The Chinese Rite Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, 103.

¹⁷⁶ Ching, *Chinese Religions*, 52. Matteo Ricci also realized that the religion and the religious monks do not have an important position in Chinese culture context and this is the reason they chose to dialogue with Confucianism.

¹⁷⁷ Youlan Fung, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1953), 2; Weiming Tu, *Way, Learning and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectuals* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 141-160; Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 7-9.

renewing one's family, society and the whole world. In Confucius' teachings, as noted, he emphasized the primary importance of being Junzi. The next generation of his disciples, such as Mengzi (371 B.C. -289 B.C.) and Xunzi (310 B.C. -211B.C.), developed Confucius' teachings and reinterpreted them for their contemporaries.

The purpose of Confucianism is becoming Junzi in order to assume responsibilities to one's family, society and then the whole world. Confucius and his disciples will not refuse to take a position as politicians to promote their understanding of rebuilding a new world.¹⁷⁸ The Confucians are not hermits who try to separate themselves from social life; rather, Confucians always try to practice Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) for the benefit of the whole world.¹⁷⁹ Tian (Heaven) is a word from ancient Chinese to call God. The authority of ruling a family or a country comes from Tian ming (the mission of Heaven).¹⁸⁰ Confucianism acknowledges that the pupil hermit may choose to live in the mountain, while the master hermit lives in the midst of the city and still carries the solitude and silence of the mountain.¹⁸¹ When the missionaries separated Chinese Christians from their social life, they closed the door for Confucian scholars to become Christians and caused the tension in being an authentically Chinese Christian. Although Confucius did not change the society of his time as a politician, he did deeply influence the whole Chinese world and its surrounding countries as a philosopher. Confucius never gave up his passion for helping others and the world. He told his

¹⁷⁸ Confucius, *The Teachings of Confucius*, trans. James Legge (El Paso, TX: El Paso Norte Press, 2011), 114; "The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an officer" (*Analects* 19:15).

¹⁷⁹ About Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) and the meaning of Heaven will have a detailed discuss later one in this chapter.

¹⁸⁰ Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 23.

¹⁸¹ My cohort Rev. Jonathan Roach gives this beautiful translation of Chinese proverb: 大隱在鬧市，小隱在山林。

disciples that “the kingdom has long been without the principles of truth and righteousness; Heaven is going to use your master as a bell with its wooden tongue”.¹⁸² He realized that all his responsibilities derived from the Tian ming (天命), the mission of Heaven.

Heaven is the foundation and ultimate purpose of becoming Junzi in Confucianism. Confucius had a relationship with Heaven; he prayed to Heaven and participated in the sacrificial celebration of Heaven.¹⁸³ The life of Confucius was dedicated to seek the will of Heaven and to follow Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven). The presence of Heaven (God) for Confucianism is natural. In Chinese culture, Heaven, and the whole world are in one integrated body. Confucius was a realistic person, who taught what he learned from ancient wisdom and his experiences, not from imagination. Based on this realistic attitude, Confucianism claimed that Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is human nature,¹⁸⁴ following nature is the way of life, and following the way of life is the meaning of teaching in general.¹⁸⁵ Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is the foundation of human person. The purpose of learning and practice for a Junzi is to pursue the supreme Good.¹⁸⁶ This understanding of pursuing the “supreme Good” in Chinese Confucian culture will prepare Chinese people to understand Christian

¹⁸² Jame Legge and James H. Ford, ed., *The Teachings of Confucius*, (El Paso, TX: El Paso Norte Press, 2011), 18; *Analects* 3:24.

¹⁸³ *Analects* 3:12, 13; 7:35. In this kind of celebration, people normally will offer flowers, fruit, wine and incense.

¹⁸⁴ Here the word nature (性) means essential meaning of being human man. The human nature has a connection with the nature of Heaven (God), but there is a fundamental difference.

¹⁸⁵ Confucius, *The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean* 大学和中庸 (Jilin, China: Jilin Wenshi Publisher, 2006), 45.

¹⁸⁶ *The Great Learning*, 1:1. In Chinese culture, this supreme good is not very clear. This concept is an opportunity of Chinese culture opening to Christianity.

teaching about God who alone is good (The Gospel of Luke 18:19).¹⁸⁷ Chinese Confucian culture has the potential for preparing its followers to accept Christian revelation about God and God's relationship with humans.

The Core Teachings of Confucius -- Junzi

Becoming Junzi is the foundational response of Confucius to his contemporary chaos. A Junzi is a person who assumes the responsibilities of renewing the moral life of one's family, the order of society, and the relationship with Heaven and earth. The center of Chinese culture is the individual.¹⁸⁸

Junzi is a word Confucius chose from ancient Chinese thought and reinterpreted it. The word "Junzi" (君子) had been used long before Confucius' time.¹⁸⁹ In ancient times, Junzi meant, in its literal meaning, the son of the king (君之子). Then, the meaning of Junzi was extended to the royal man. Confucius used Junzi as a moral person who personifies the ideal role model for all Chinese.¹⁹⁰ In the *Analects* of Confucius (论语), the word Junzi appears 107 times. William Theodore de Bary writes that "the *Analects* as a whole...has a central focus in the chun-tzu [i.e. Junzi] and may best be

¹⁸⁷ The Catholic Study bible (New York: Oxford University, 2006)

¹⁸⁸ Dongmei Fang (方东美), *The Original Philosophy of Confucianism and Daoism* (原始儒家道家哲学), 40.

¹⁸⁹ Junzi, such as: *The book of History (Shang Jing or Shang Shu); The Book of Changes (Yi Jing), The book of Odes (Shi Jing)*.

¹⁹⁰ Yizheng Lin (林義正, 1984) and Guichang Lin (林贵长, 2008), have different interpretations about the history and understanding of Junzi. Yizheng Lin, "The Idea Junzi of Confucius (论孔子的'君子'概念)," Taiwan: Wenshizhexuebao, (1984): 33; Guichang Li, "Confucius and the Change of the Junzi Idea" ("孔子与'君子'观念的转化"), last modified May 8, 2012, accessed September 12, 2012, <http://www.ica.org.cn/yanjiu.php?ac=view&id=8729>

understood from this vantage point.”¹⁹¹ In the *Analects*, Junzi indicates a person of integrity. For Confucius, Junzi is a person who has the qualities of nobility, as opposed to a Xiaoren (小人), one who is a childish person.¹⁹² A Xiaoren does not understand the value of the human virtues that provide quality to life and seeks only immediate gains. Confucius called for becoming Junzi and warned against becoming Xiaoren. It should be noted that although China was a male-dominated culture during the time of Confucius, he never indicated that Junzi is just for males.¹⁹³ Because Junzi is an ideal human person in Confucius’ teachings, it can be both male and female. So, in English, one may understand Junzi as a gentleperson.

¹⁹¹ William Theodore de Bary, *East Asian Civilizations: A Dialogue in Five Stages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 27-28.

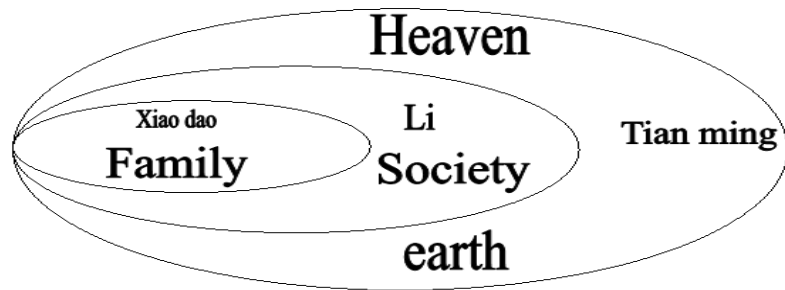
¹⁹² *Analects* 2:14; 4:11, 16; 13:23; 14:23; 15:21.

¹⁹³ Some of the scholars believed that Confucius is prejudiced against women and conclude that the concept of Junzi must therefore exclude women. This analysis is frequently based on one sentence in the *Analects*, (17:25), which is interpreted out of context the teachings of Confucius as a whole. In the *Analects* 17:25, Confucius said that of all others, women and children are hardest to relate to: if you become close to them they become insolent; if you remain distant they will grumble. (子曰：唯女子与小人为难养也，近之则不孙，远之则怨). It is possible that Confucius was referring to a particular group or situation. However, the sentence is more likely to be a product of its time and the strong patriarchal nature of Chinese society. According to Confucianism, everyone is equal in a family but has different responsibilities. This is similar to his view of the individual’s place in society. Chapter IV includes further analysis of how different interpretations of Confucian teachings contributed to the development of patriarchal society. This need not be so in the 21st century. In the spirit of Confucius’s own method of retrieval and reinterpretation of Chinese ancient wisdom for his contemporaries, today’s Confucian scholar can retrieve and to reinterpret Confucian teachings for contemporary Chinese people. Even though the term Junzi is masculine in form, may be applied fruitfully to the lives of women in an analogous way to describe the new ideal person all Chinese people, male and female, are called to become. For further analysis of the application of the term Confucian Junzi to women, see Geng Song, *The Fragile Scholar: Power and Masculinity in Chinese Culture*, (Hong Kong, China, Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 90; and Kam Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 45-46.

Junzi is the foundation for a harmonious family and society in Confucius' vision which calls for "research" in order to gain "knowledge," have "sincere intentions," and a "pure heart" and so become a Junzi who can transform one's family, society and the world.¹⁹⁴ Confucian understanding of Junzi is never limited to the individual because a Junzi always is always an integral part of family, society, and Heaven and Earth. A Junzi always participates in three circles of life, which are family, society, and Heaven and Earth. These are the three mutually dynamic connected life circles. This Junzi, first of all, practices Xiao dao (filial piety) in a family circle. The practice of Xiao dao includes four cardinal virtues which are the Ren (仁charity), Yi (義righteousness), Zhi (知/智wisdom/knowledge) and Yong (勇Courage). The Junzi also displays his life in social circles through the practice of the Li (rite). The third life circle of the Junzi is Heaven and earth, which requires following Tian ming (the mission of Heaven). These continually spiraling circles help the Junzi undergird the relationship with and responsibilities to one's family, society, and Heaven and earth.

Chart 2: The Life Circles of Junzi

¹⁹⁴Confucius, *The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean* (大学和中庸), 1. 格物, 致知, 诚意, 正心, 修身, 齐家, 治国, 平天下



Xiao dao (孝道)

The Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety) practice is the foundation of being Junzi in one's family circle. Xiao dao means being filial-pious towards one's parents and being fraternal to one's brothers and sisters in the family and beyond. According to the Confucian *Book of Filial Piety* (孝经) "Xiao dao is the root of all virtues and education."¹⁹⁵ The practice of Xiao dao is the foundation of being authentically Chinese within the family but also within the individual and beyond the individual. One of Confucius' disciples, Youruo (有若) writes that "Junzi bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission, ---are they not the root of all charity?"¹⁹⁶ Youruo emphasizes that the practice of Xiao dao is the foundation for becoming Junzi. Weiming Tu, a contemporary Confucian scholar, asks "how can a person who does not even love his [or her] parents and his wife talk about love [for] one's neighbors?"¹⁹⁷ Love begins at home; the practice of the Xiao dao is the primary concern of Junzi at home. All Confucian teachings are based on the

¹⁹⁵ "孝经Xiao Jing," last modified 2002, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.njmuseum.com/rbbook/gb/13/10/xiaojing001.htm>

¹⁹⁶ Legge, *The Teachings of Confucius*, 5. Although Legge's translation is used for this dissertation some a modified version of some of his original terms is used, such as Xiao dao (filial piety) and Junzi (as related to being authentically Chinese). *Analects* 1:2.

¹⁹⁷ Tu, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought*, 11.

understanding and practice of the Xiao dao. Junzi is one who practices Xiao dao in one's family and beyond. The main characteristic of Junzi is becoming a filial-pious son or daughter and thus being in the right order at home while fulfilling one's responsibilities to others in society and to Heaven and all creatures. By calling everyone to be a filial-pious son or daughter, Confucius tried to restore the order of life, the order of family, and order of society. Confucius thought the disorder of life was a major problem for human beings and contemporary society. When one becomes a filial-pious son or daughter, one will approach the truth of Dao (道 the way of life), and becomes a charitable person (仁者). A charitable person is one who hopes to help others and also hopes to be successful himself or herself.¹⁹⁸ For Confucius, the life of Junzi is based on the practice of Xiao dao.

Xiao dao is an understanding and practice of being a human from human experience.¹⁹⁹ Confucius would never begin his teachings from an abstract idea, but always from a concrete human experience. Confucius told his disciples that:

Our body, our hair and skin are all received from our parents; we cannot injure or wound them. This is the beginning of practicing the Xiao dao (filial piety). When we have established our status in practicing the way of life and made our names famous for the future ages, it would be by honoring our parents. This is the last meaning of Xiao dao.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ *Analects* 6:30.

¹⁹⁹ Confucius' teaching about being Junzi actually resembles some of the western tradition of the practical wisdom from Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas to Hume, Kant and American pragmatists, such as William James. See Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 2.

²⁰⁰ *The Book of Filial Piety* 1:1. “身体发肤，受之父母，不敢毁伤，孝之始也。立身行道，扬名于后世，以显父母，孝之终也。”

The practice of Xiao dao is a natural response to the love of one's parents and extends to one's brothers and sisters in the family circle. Confucius taught his disciples how to practice the Xiao dao by saying "while one's father is alive, look at the bent of his will; when one's father is dead, look at his conduct. If for three years one does not alter from the way of one's father, one may be called filial."²⁰¹ Following one's father's life is a way of practicing Xiao dao (filial piety). Practicing Xiao dao in one's daily life is a way of being Junzi. If a person does not practice filial piety, for Confucius, that person is an inauthentic human. How could a person who expressed love for his parents for three years after their death not practice the three years' of universal mourning!²⁰² Practicing three years' of mourning is part of practicing Xiao dao. The practice of Xiao dao is a response to one's parents' love. For Confucius, the practice of Xiao dao is not an abstract idea, but an understanding of human life based upon experience. Xiao dao practice is a natural part of human life.

The practice of Xiao dao is an organic family love for elders, youth, and beyond. It is also the foundation of the order for rebuilding family, state, and the whole world. Confucius told his disciples that "a youth, when at home, should be filial, and, abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good. When he has time and opportunity, after performance of these things, he should employ them in polite studies."²⁰³ For Confucius, the practice of the Xiao dao is the starting point to love others and to serve the whole of

²⁰¹ *Analects* 1:11.

²⁰² *Analects* 17:21.

²⁰³ Legge, *The Teachings of Confucius*, 6; *Analects* 1:6.

society. Xiao dao begins with one's parents, and naturally extends to one's brothers and sisters in a family circle, and ultimately to all people.

The practice of the Li (rite) is also an extension of Xiao dao practices. Confucius tells his disciples "that parents, when alive, be served according to propriety [i. e. Li, rite]; that when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and that they should be sacrificed to according to prosperity."²⁰⁴ Here Confucius reminds his disciples that Xiao dao should be practiced not only when one's parents are alive but also after they die. Offering sacrifice to one's parents when they have passed away is also part of the filial piety practice.²⁰⁵ The veneration of parents and ancestors is a celebration of the continuity of parents' life and a connection with ancestors in one's own lifeline.

Forbidding Chinese Christians to practice the Li (rite) to fulfill their responsibilities of filial piety caused Chinese Christians great distress during the Chinese Rites Controversy (discussed in chapter three).

Confucius also criticizes his contemporaries for practicing Xiao dao (filial piety) in a way he considers inappropriate when he states that "filial piety nowadays means support of one's parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of support; --- without reverence, where is there to distinguish the one support given from the other?"²⁰⁶ Confucius emphasizes that being respectful or reverent is the right attitude in the practice Xiao dao (filial piety) through the Li (rite). For Chinese people, the practice of Xiao dao (filial piety) is a very important characteristic of being Junzi in

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 10; *Analects* 2:5.

²⁰⁵ *Analects* 1:9.

²⁰⁶ Legge, *The Teachings of Confucius*, 10; *Analects* 2:7.

one's family circle. Without the practice Xiao dao (filial piety), one would be considered as Xiaoren, which means inauthentically Chinese.

The practice of Xiao dao includes four very important virtues which are Ren (仁, charity), Yi (義, righteousness), Zhi (知/智, knowledge / wisdom) and Yong (勇, courage). These virtues make clearer the meaning of practicing Xiao dao. Although Confucius did not just focus on these four virtues, he did discuss them many times in different places in the book of the *Analects* and other teachings. Confucius told his disciples that “Junzi holds Yi (righteousness) to be of highest importance,”²⁰⁷ which means the Yi is the first criterion to guide the Junzi's action. Confucius also said that “the way of Junzi has three virtues, I am incapable of them; the person of charity is free from anxiety, the person of wisdom is free from delusion, and the person of courage is free from fear.”²⁰⁸ Ren (Charity), Zhi (wisdom) and Yong (courage) are the other important virtues for a Junzi. In the *Doctrine of Mean*, Confucius mentions that “wisdom, charity and courage, the three are supreme virtues.”²⁰⁹ So, Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (wisdom) and Yong (courage) are the cardinal virtues for being Junzi. All these virtues make a Junzi a filial-pious gentleperson in a family circle. The practice of Xiao dao contains the practice of all four these virtues. Each of these virtues merits examination.

Ren (仁)

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 106; *Analects* 17:23.

²⁰⁸ Huang, *The Analects of Confucius*, 147; *Analects* 14:28.

²⁰⁹ Confucius, *The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean* 大学和中庸, 80. The Doctrine of Mean 20. “知，仁，勇三者，天下之达德也，所以，行之者一也。”

Confucius never gives a definition for Ren (仁charity), but he always connects Ren (charity) with human action. In order to help Western readers understand this Confucian concept, Ren (charity) is defined in this work as the virtue of loving oneself and others and maturing in all dimensions of life. The virtues of Junzi are not simply theoretical but rather imply action. Confucius is a thinker who focuses on practice, not just understanding. In Chinese, 仁 (Ren) literally refers to two persons, i.e. “two” (二) and “person” (人), which means a person is always in a relationship with others. The Junzi practices the virtue of charity for renewing one’s life and for taking responsibilities toward others with reverence.²¹⁰ Even learning is also part of practicing Ren (charity).²¹¹ Ren for Confucius is not knowledge but action. Ren (charity) is the core virtue which flows from ones’ life. The practice of Ren (charity) does not need commandments from others or above; everyone can practice Ren (charity), if he or she wants to do so. Ren (charity) is part of the nature of being human.

The next generation disciple of Confucius, Mencius (孟子Mengzi) interprets Ren, as “loving person”²¹² when he states “Ren is the heart of a human.”²¹³ Menzi reminds people that the love of others is the nature of being human. With Ren in his heart the Junzi can renew himself or herself as well as others. Zhuxi (朱熹), a Neo-Confucianist, represents the summit of understanding the Ren in Confucianism.²¹⁴ For Zhuxi, this is

²¹⁰ *Analects* 12:1, 2; 14:42.

²¹¹ *Analects* 15:10.

²¹² Huang, *The Analects of Confucius*, 131; *Analects* 12:22.

²¹³ Mencius, *Mengcius* (Hefei, China: Huanshan, 2005), 179. “仁者, 人心也”.

²¹⁴ Wing-tsit Chan, *Neo-Confucianism Etc.: Essay by Wing-tsit Chan* (Hanover: Oriental Society, 1969), 31.

the “spring of all virtues and the root of all good deeds.”²¹⁵ Zhuxi reminds people that practicing Ren is the first step towards practicing Xiao dao Ren, from Confucius to the interpreters of Neo-Confucianists, is always the cardinal virtue in becoming a filial-pious child. Xiao dao is the way people practice Ren (charity). The one who practices Ren has to walk on the right way of life, which is Yi (義), righteousness. For Confucianism, Ren and Yi always go hand in hand.

Yi (義)

Yi (義Righteousness) is the right and moral way of becoming Junzi. Yi is a criterion for becoming Junzi.²¹⁶ For Confucius, without practicing Yi, any success of life is useless and meaningless. Confucius tells his disciples that “riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud.”²¹⁷ Without the Yi, any success of life is useless and meaningless. A Junzi, first of all, should walk on the right way of life which is Yi. Mengzi explained that “Yi is the way of the human person.”²¹⁸ Being a human person, one has to practice Yi; without the practice of Yi one would be considered as a Xiaoren. The Yi, according to both Cheng Yi (A. D. 1033-1107) and Cheng Xi (A. D. 1032-1085), is the right way and right principle under Heaven.²¹⁹ Only if one walks on the right way of life can one become a filial-pious person and help others. For Confucianism, if everyone walks on the right way according to Yi to fulfill responsibilities, there will be a united family, a harmonious society and a peaceful world.

²¹⁵ Zhu Xi, “A Treatise on Ren.” In *a Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Wing-tsit chan, (New Haven, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 594.

²¹⁶ *Analects* 4:10; 17:23; *The Doctrine of Mean* 20.

²¹⁷ Legge, *The Teachings of Confucius*, 36; *Analects* 7:16.

²¹⁸ Mencius, *Mengcius*, 179. “義, 人路也。”

²¹⁹ Hao Cheng, *Chengsi Yishu, Er Chen Ji* (Vol. 7), (程氏遗书·卷七, 二程集·上), (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2004), 100.

So, for a Junzi, any position is good if it is in agreement with Yi (righteousness).²²⁰ The practice of the Yi must also follow Li (rite) in the spirit of respect.²²¹ Yi is the right way of being a filial-pious child. For Confucius, practice of all the virtues has to be enlightened by Zhi (knowledge and wisdom) which is another cardinal virtue.

Zhi (知/智)

Zhi (知/智 wisdom) indicates knowledge and wisdom. Zhi is a passion for opening to others by learning from them. In Chinese, 知 (Zhi) knowledge and 智 (Zhi) wisdom have the same pronunciation, and the root of knowledge is wisdom. For Confucius, both knowledge and wisdom are very important.

Learning is a way to approach knowledge and wisdom. Learning from the ancient wisdom is an essential way to acquire contemporary wisdoms.²²² Learning from both ancient wisdoms and one's contemporaries helps the Junzi to know others and their wisdom. In order to respond to the crisis of his times, Confucius did not, first of all, create a new theory, rather he learned from the ancient wisdom and reinterpreted them for his contemporaries. This openness to learn from other wisdoms makes Chinese culture richer and becomes one of the characteristics of being Chinese. Learning is not only a way to approach wisdom but also a way to practice others' virtues. Confucius told his disciples that learning is important in all dimensions of life.²²³ Learning from others enriches Chinese people and encourages them to be open to other peoples and wisdoms. So, opening to Christianity is a natural choice for Chinese culture.

²²⁰ *Analects* 14:26.

²²¹ *Analects* 15:18

²²² *Analects* 7:20.

²²³ *Analects* 17:8.

One pursues wisdom through various learning, prudent inquiring, critical thinking, sensible discerning, and perseverant practicing.²²⁴ Confucianism places perseverant practice above all the processes of hermeneutics (interpreting the ancient wisdom) in defining the virtue of wisdom. The first step in pursuing wisdom in Confucianism is “various learning” which means being open to all wisdoms. This attitude towards learning will help the Junzi connect with all dimensions of life and learn from every person, wisdom and culture. It will help Chinese people keep their minds and hearts open to other wisdoms and traditions that enrich Chinese culture. Neo-Confucianist Zhuxi, speaking about other wisdoms, explains that “various learning means one should learn the principle of the Heaven and earth, the method of cultivating oneself and the way of leading others.”²²⁵ Learning from other people, and above all, learning from Heaven is the meaning of seeking wisdom in Confucianism. Learning is a way to help the Junzi drink from the traditional wisdom river and be open to one’s contemporaries in order to know people and relate to them. Being open to Christianity should be, therefore, a natural way of learning for the Chinese people and their culture.

The ultimate purpose of wisdom in Confucianism is to know Tian ming (天命, the mission of Heaven), to know others and to know oneself.²²⁶ In Confucianism everything connects with others in a process of mutual influence. Mengzi explains that the full purpose of learning is to know Heaven and to serve Heaven.²²⁷ Zhuxi explains the mandate to know Heaven, oneself and others by saying “knowing Heaven is the

²²⁴ *The Doctrine of Mean* 20.

²²⁵ Zhuxi, *Zhuzi Yulei* (朱子语类), Vols, I-4, 64.

²²⁶ *Analects* 20:3; *The Doctrine of Mean* 20.

²²⁷ Mengzi, *Menzi*, 183. “知其性，则知天。存其心，养其性，所以事天也。”

beginning, if one can know Heaven, one will know oneself.”²²⁸ Knowing Heaven is the purpose and foundation of becoming Junzi. For Confucianism, knowing Heaven is to have a relationship with Heaven and to pray to Heaven without doubting.²²⁹ Knowing Heaven can help the Junzi know others and himself or herself. For Confucius, one should learn from anyone and at anytime. He told his disciples that “when three men walk together, I can surely find my teachers. I choose their merits to follow and their imperfections to correct.”²³⁰ Confucius encourages people to learn from everyone. According to Zhuxi, one can learn from both the good and the bad.²³¹ Knowing oneself is a foundation to cultivate during one’s life. In order to know oneself, daily reflection is one of the most important methods. The ultimate purpose of knowing oneself is to approach the sincerity which is the way of Heaven, to choose what is good, and to hold it fast.²³²

The virtue of Zhi (wisdom) in Confucianism concerns knowing oneself, knowing others, and knowing Heaven and is like a spiral in which every good part will influence every other part. Through learning from one’s ancestors and from surrounding wisdoms, the Junzi realize the relationship with a broad circle of life and being filial-pious children in a new sense. All knowledge should help a person become a virtuous Junzi. On the one hand, the virtue of Zhi will help the Junzi to renew his or her life by learning from others, and above all, from Heaven; the understanding of Heaven, on the other hand, will help one to become Junzi. In order to practice all these virtues, Ren (charity), Yi

²²⁸ Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi Yulei* (朱子语类), Vols, I-4 , 64.

²²⁹ *The Doctrine of Mean*, 29.

²³⁰ Huang, *The Analects of Confucius*, 91.

²³¹ Daniel K. Gardner, *Zhu Xi’s Reading of the Analects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 134.

²³² *The Doctrine of Mean*, 20.

(righteousness), and Zhi (wisdom), the Junzi also needs another virtue which is Yong (勇), courage.

Yong (勇)

Yong (勇 courage) is the spirit of becoming Junzi. Yong is one of the most important virtues for Junzi to practice. Zhi Ren and Yong, the three cardinal virtues for becoming Junzi,²³³ are mutually influenced in practice. With Yong, the Junzi can practice Xiao dao at home and in society, without being even afraid of death.²³⁴ Confucius separates the Yong courage of the Junzi and the Yong of the Xiaoren. Yong should be practiced according to Yi (righteousness).²³⁵ Yong cannot be separated from other cardinal virtues in being filial-pious children. Mengzi also cherishes the virtue Yong. He made a distinction between small Yong (小勇 courage) and great Yong (大勇 courage), the small Yong can win one person; the great Yong (courage) can bring peace to the whole world.²³⁶ For Mengzi, Yong is the virtue which would bring people's inner Ren and Zhi into practice. Furthermore, Mengzi develops the Confucian concept of Yong into another concept: Qi (氣). Qi is inner strength; Mengzi's term "Hao ran zhi qi (浩然之氣)," which is the noble spirit, expresses the dynamic of Yong.²³⁷ According to Mengzi, the noble spirit is not only a virtue of a person, but it is also a strength which is full of heaven and earth. This noble spirit becomes the source of life. Human Yong actually is part of the noble spirit of heaven and earth. For Mengzi, the concept of Yong always goes hand in hand with Qi: Yong Qi (勇氣 the spirit of courage). This

²³³ *Analects* 9:29; *The Doctrine of Mean*, 20.

²³⁴ *Analects* 4:8.

²³⁵ *Analects* 17:23.

²³⁶ Mengzi, *Mengzi*, 26.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

development by Mengzi connects the human virtue of Yong with the virtue of a Heavenly Yong.²³⁸

Yong is a virtue of faithfulness. Becoming Junzi is being faithful to oneself, to one's family, to one's responsibilities in society and above all, to Tian ming (the mission of Heaven). Being filial-pious children does not mean blindly following one's parents or an authoritative leader but rather being faithful to Tian ming, the foundation of human life.²³⁹ Yong helps the Junzi make the right decisions, especially in difficult situations. Without Yong, the Junzi would not become an authentic person. That is how important Yong is to being a person and specifically to being Christian.²⁴⁰ Yong is the virtue that helps the Junzi practice the other three virtues needed to become filial-pious children.

In summary, becoming Junzi is being a filial-pious child who has four cardinal virtues which are Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (wisdom), and Yong (courage). These virtues are the four cornerstones to help the Junzi practice the Xiao dao and become a Junzi in one's family first.²⁴¹ The practice of the Xiao dao, a priority for a Junzi, extends to one's ancestors, to one's family, and beyond. So, for Confucians, the practice of "Li (禮rite)" and the following of "Tian ming (天命the mission of Heaven)" are the ultimate extensions of the practice of Xiao dao. Exploring the first circle leads to an examination of the social circle life for the Junzi.

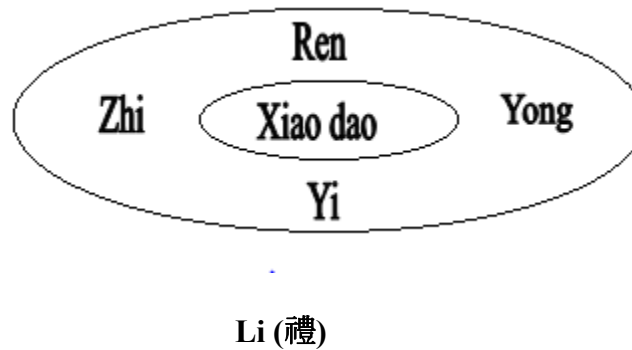
²³⁸ Sr. Lai Kuen, Kwong (龐麗娟), from Hangkong, writes her dissertation about the relationship between Qi and the Holy Spirit. *Qi Chinois et Anthropologie Chretienne* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 2000).

²³⁹ See the later explanation about Tian Ming (the mission of Heaven).

²⁴⁰ See: Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009); Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

²⁴¹ Qiuping Liu, "To Become a Filial Son, a Loyal Subject, or a Humane Person?---On the Confucian Ideas about Humanity," *Asian Philosophy* Vol. 19, No. 2, (July 2009): 173-188

Chart 3: The Practice of Xiao Dao (filial piety) in the Family.²⁴²



The Li (禮rite) is the way in which a Junzi practicing Xiao dao exists in the social circle of life. The Chinese word 禮 (Li) literally means offering sacrifice to Heaven [i.e. God]. Li (rite) is the principle of harmony. The practice of Li has a long history in Chinese culture.²⁴³ Confucius mentions that all his teachings are the retrieval and expression of the old civilization.²⁴⁴ Throughout Chinese history, communities in every time have had their special Li (rite) based on the traditional Li, such as the Li of Xia (夏禮), the Li of Yin (殷禮) and the Li of Zhou (周禮).²⁴⁵ The original *Book of Li* (禮记) was a work edited by Confucius in which he aims to retrieve and reinterpret all these Li to his contemporaries. The social life of Junzi consists in practicing the Li in the spirit of the Xiao dao. Confucianism considers the whole world as one family, “under the sky one family.”²⁴⁶ So Confucius encourages people to practice the Xiao dao in society by treating people as great guests.²⁴⁷ This attitude towards people is one of the meanings of

²⁴² Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (wisdom), and Yong (courage) are the different ways of practicing Xiao dao (filial piety).

²⁴³ Thomas Andrew Radice explored the history of filial piety in his dissertation in 2006. *The Ways of Filial Piety in Early China*.

²⁴⁴ *Analects* 7:1.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:9.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 12:5.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 12:2.

practicing Li. Li relates to being an individual in the social world.²⁴⁸ Confucius tells his disciples that without learning the Li, one cannot establish oneself in society.²⁴⁹ The social life of a Junzi is the practice of Li. Confucius called everyone to “bring oneself in line with li,”²⁵⁰ which is the criterion of Chinese people’s social life. The practice of Li is also a process of humanization when the Junzi starts to take responsibility in society.

The spirit of Li involves respect. The Li is the expression of the relationship between people in society. The practice of the Li not only entails following given rules of action, but is also based on Xiao dao (filial piety) and the virtues of Ren, Yi, Zhi and Yong. An attitude of respect is essential to the spirit of practicing Li. Respect is important to the Confucian concept of Junzi cultivation, treatment of him or herself and others, and offering sacrifice to Heaven.²⁵¹ Without respect, Li is meaningless flaunting. Li The *Book of Li* (禮記) explains the practice of Li in detail. This work focuses on the spirit of Li, which is respect. According to Archbishop Guang Luo (罗光), respect has two dimensions, Nei jing (内敬 inner respect) and Wai jing (外敬 practical respect).²⁵² Nei jing and Wai jing, however, are inseparable in practice. Luo’s contribution to articulating the basic idea of respect as it relates to Li is significant.

Wai jing (外敬)

All Li is involved the practice of the Xiao dao (filial piety) in respect one’s social life. Respect throughout Chinese history has been viewed as flowing from their life

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 12:1, 22.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 16:13.

²⁵⁰ Tu, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought*, 6; *Analects* 12:1.

²⁵¹ *Analects* 5:16, 17; 12:2; 13:19; 14:42; 17:6

²⁵² Guang Luo (罗光), *The Confucian Living Philosophy (儒家生命哲学)* (Taiwan: The Student Press, 1995), 353.

nourished by practicing the Xiao dao. Respect is a cultural product and becomes a habit of life.²⁵³ *Habitus*, from Confucian perspective, is part of the continuity of the practice of Xiao dao in all dimensions of the Junzi's life in. The life of the Junzi, whether inside one's family or outside in society, is always guided by the spirit of the Li.²⁵⁴ For Confucius, any action of a Junzi should follow the guidance of Li which is the right way of being an individual in one's social life.

Cherishing one's dignity and elegance is the first manner of Wai jing (practical respect) in practicing of Li.²⁵⁵ In Confucianism, all dimensions of life should be practiced according to the Li, from having meal or walking on the road to sleeping.²⁵⁶ For Confucius, even if one disagrees with someone's words or actions, one should always show respect. Accordingly, when the prefecture minister was performing an exorcism although Confucius did not believe in this practice, he would dress in his court robe and stand in sign of respect.²⁵⁷ This spirit of respect permeates all of Chinese society. Matteo Ricci mentioned his experience on this matter when he commented,

that [the] image of Madonna and Child that we placed on the altar was worshipped by all the mandarins and other men of letters and the common people, as well as the ministers of the idols [i.e. the Buddhist monks] who came to visit the Jesuit Fathers – and they all genuflected, bowing right down to the ground with great respect.²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Out of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 82, 95.

²⁵⁴ Legge, *The Teachings of Confucius*, 65; *Analects* 12:1.

²⁵⁵ Luo, *The Confucian living Philosophy*, 355.

²⁵⁶ *Analects* 10:12, 13.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 10:14.

²⁵⁸ Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, 85.

Although they did not believe in Jesus Christ, these Chinese people showed respect to Ricci and his friends, and practicing Li rather than practicing adoration, a religious action. For the Chinese people, according to Confucius' teachings, all holy things deserve respect²⁵⁹ and showing respect is crucial to the practice of the Li in the social life. One of the Jesuit missionary priests in China, Father Le Comte, mentioned the good attitude of profound respect of the Chinese people in religious ceremonies. He writes that "the Chinese behave much better at Mass than the people of Europe. The fact is that they enjoyed ritual and were accustomed to it from childhood."²⁶⁰ The missionaries were surprised to see that although Chinese people might not have a good education about Christian liturgy, they had a good Confucian education in the Li practice of showing respect during the celebration. Practicing Li in respect is the way of traditional Chinese life. This is perhaps a reason that the contemporary Church in China is more conservative in liturgical practice than in other places.

Being prudent in speech is another manner of Wai jing (practical respect) in practicing of Li (rite).²⁶¹ Respect in speech has two dimensions, one is the manner of speaking, and the other is the content of the speech.²⁶² Words are the voices of the heart. The Junzi should always be cautious in his or her speech.²⁶³ Both the content and the manner of speaking should follow the spirit of Li.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Luo, *The Confucian Living Philosophy*, 356.

²⁶² Ibid., 356.

²⁶³ Huang, *The Analects of Confucius*, 156; *Analects* 15:27.

Being patient is the third practice of Wai jing.²⁶⁴ Since traditionally Chinese families of several generations live together in one home, patience is particularly important for members of a large family. For Confucius, patience is choosing to respect and love people.²⁶⁵ The first dimension of respect, Wai jing, is the appearance of the Nei jing, the second dimension of this element is Nei jing.

Nei jing (内敬)

Nei jing (inner respect) comes from filial-pious children's peaceful heart. The peaceful heart brings respect to action. Confucius reminded his disciples that "if one's heart is not present, one will look but cannot see; one will listen but cannot understand; one will taste but not know the flavor."²⁶⁶ Confucius calls for a peaceful heart to guide actions. With a peaceful heart, one will find all the meanings of life. Nei jing, according to Archbishop Luo, also includes reflecting on one's life and correcting one's mistakes.²⁶⁷ Through reflection, one understands personal mistakes and begins to correct them. Confucius was very happy when someone pointed out his mistakes²⁶⁸ because he believed this helped him to become Junzi. Through reflection and correction, one can understand the importance of respecting others in the practice Li.

Respect stands in the practice of all the virtues. Neo-Confucianist Zhuxi, notes there are two kinds of respect: one is Si jing (死敬blind respect), and the other is Huo jing (活敬critical respect).²⁶⁹ Si jing is limited to following rules for respecting other

²⁶⁴ Luo, *The Confucian Living Philosophy*, 358.

²⁶⁵ See, *Analects* 16:7; 14:35.

²⁶⁶ *The Great Learning*, 7. "心不在焉，视而不见，听而不闻，食而不知其味".

²⁶⁷ *Analects* 1:4.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7:31.

²⁶⁹ Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi Yulei* (朱子语类), Vols, 1-4, 12.

people; Huo jing is nourished by Yi (righteousness) and other virtues. Confucius reminded his disciples that when “confronting an action of humanity [i.e. charity], do not yield the precedence even to your teacher.”²⁷⁰ Although in the Chinese cultural context a teacher is highly respect, Confucius explained to his disciples that if one’s teacher is wrong, one need not follow him or her. Confucius emphasized that respect cannot simply submit to authority. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that Confucianism caused the negative hierarchical order in society or encouraged a blind following of authority.

Offering sacrifice to Heaven, to the spirits and to one’s ancestors, is the apex of the Li. Concentration on sacrificing with reverence is important because it is not just a ritual action but a sacred offering to Heaven and to one’s ancestors who are considered present in the liturgy. Offering sacrifice to one’s parents and ancestors is also part of the practice of Xiao dao it is not a superstition.²⁷¹ The different views of the practice of Li by missionaries in the past are discussed in chapter three. Matteo Ricci allowed Chinese converts to practice Li to show respect to their ancestors and to Confucius. Understanding that this was part of the practice of Xiao dao, Ricci explained this aspect of Chinese Confucian culture to his European critics by saying that “such rituals were not superstitious acts, nor did they contain any religious implications; they were merely symbolic expressions of Xiao dao.”²⁷² In his research on China’s Catholic history, Richard Madsen found the following:

Many other Catholics spoke of the heritage of their faith not just as an abstract legacy of ideas but as a concrete connection in blood, through their

²⁷⁰ Huang, *The Analects of Confucius*, 158; *Analects*15:36;

²⁷¹ *Analects* 2:5.

²⁷² Mungello, *The Chinese Rite Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, 92.

ancestors to the beginnings of history. This vision of identity is hierarchical as well as historical. Traditions of ancestor worship give ordinary Chinese, especially peasants, a strong sense of continuity with preceding generations. Chinese Catholicism builds on this vision. It tells its followers that they are connected not only with their blood ancestors, but with a lineage of great people.²⁷³

Madsen realized that Chinese people understand the connection with others in a larger family through the practice of the Confucian rite and Christian liturgy. China has about five thousand years' history of offering sacrifice to Heaven and to other spirits according to the *Oracle Bone Scripts* and other written materials.²⁷⁴ Chinese people's offering of sacrifice is different from Western religious sacrifice because it is part of the practice of Xiao dao as an offering to Heaven, to one's ancestors, or to famous individuals such as Confucius. It is a way of showing respect. Historically, every year, the emperor would lead all the officials in offering a sacrifice to Heaven. Unfortunately, after 1911, the Chinese government stopped this rite. The imperial Vault of Heaven in Beijing became a relic of this tradition. After the Second Vatican Council, in the spirit of cherishing local cultures, Cardinal Bin Yu (于斌 April, 13, 1901- August, 16, 1978) started the Li of worshipping Heaven and venerating ancestors in Taiwan. With the practice of offering sacrifice to one's ancestor and to Heaven, the life of Junzi expresses communion with one's families, with other people, and with Heaven and is therefore fundamental to Chinese culture. Banning Chinese Christians from practicing the Li is keeping them from

²⁷³Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics*, 26.

²⁷⁴Kejia Lu, "The Heavenly Learning (Tian Xue) in Late Ming Dynasty and the Ideas of Tian in Early Confucianism." *Asia Journal of Theology*, 20, No. 1 (April 2006):173.

being Chinese. Offering sacrifice is a celebration of the continuity of the life of one's ancestors in one's life as well as a communal action with one's ancestors and with Heaven here and now. All the acts of offering sacrifice to Heaven, to one's ancestors and to Confucius are rooted in the Chinese thought that views Heaven, humanity and all creation as deeply connected parts of an integrated family, past, present and future.²⁷⁵

In summary, the practice of Li is the way in which a Junzi exists in the social circle of life. Li practice actually flows from one's family practice of Xiao dao to practice in a social family. The practice of the Li helps people become authentic persons alongside others in society. According to the *Great Learning*, there are four stages of social practice: cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, being a leader in society, and bringing peace to the whole world.²⁷⁶ These four stages form a process of practicing Li from oneself to family and the world. Because the life of the Junzi always includes the dimensions of one's family, society and the world, the practice of Li always comprises a variety of characteristics. The basis of the teachings of Confucius is to become a Junzi. And being Junzi always has a social dimension; a Junzi is always in relationship with others. In this sense, there is no individualism in Confucianism; everyone connects with others in a family in society and with Heaven and earth. The life of Junzi is a process of practicing Xiao dao from one's family circle to a wider social circle and ultimately to a circle of Heaven and the earth. The next section examines the third circle of Junzi life, the practice Tian ming (the mission of Heaven).

Tian ming (天命)

²⁷⁵ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, 4.

²⁷⁶ *The Great Learning*, 1.

The practice of Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven) is the way of being Junzi in the third circle of life, which includes Heaven, humanity, and all creatures. This third life circle is the extension of the family circle and the social circle; it also nourishes the meaning of life in the family and social circles of Junzi. 天命 (Tian Ming) in Chinese literally means the “life of Heaven” or the “mission of Heaven.” Both of the translations express that it is something humans have received from Heaven, whether it is life or mission. Life can be considered a mission if one believes every life has a purpose in this world. The life of Heaven is the gift humans have received from Heaven. Tian ming is the dynamic foundation of human life to be practiced in daily life.

The practice of Tian ming is the ultimate purpose and the largest life circle of being Junzi. From one’s family to society and to Heaven and earth, the horizon of Junzi is continually opened. From practicing Xiao dao in one’s family, Li in society and Tian ming between Heaven and earth, the Junzi is fulfilling responsibilities and seeking the ultimate purpose of life. The ultimate purpose of life for a Junzi is “approaching the supreme good,”²⁷⁷ and experiencing the “Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human)” as a great person. Being in the “oneness between Heaven and human” is a communion in life with Heaven, with humanity and with all creatures.

Following Tian ming is a crucial way to become Junzi. In order to understand the meaning of Tian ming one has to understand how Chinese people understand Heaven and God. In ancient Chinese books such as the *Book of Odes* (詩經 Shijing), and *Ancient History* (尚書 Shangshu), there are many names for spirits, but above all, there is one who

²⁷⁷ *The Great Learning*, 1. “止于至善”.

is called Heaven (天Tian) or Shen (神) or Shangdi (上帝).²⁷⁸ The *Book of Li* notes that during the Yin Dynasty people revered Shen and were counseled to serve him²⁷⁹ which illustrates the ancient relationship between God and the Chinese people. The relationship between heaven and human, contemporary Confucian scholar Shiyong Zhang (张世英) argues, is the relationship between God and humans.²⁸⁰

Zhongshu Dong (董仲舒 179 B.C.-104 B.C.), who made Confucianism the dominant philosophy in China, said that “Heaven is the great Lord of all spirits. Without serving Heaven, it is useless to serve other spirits.”²⁸¹ To Dong, Heaven was the name of God for the ancient Chinese people. Heaven is the head of all other spirits in the Chinese understanding. After the Zhou Dynasty collapsed there was a social and moral crisis. Many schools of thought tried to recover the moral life and the order of society, “among them, arose a philosophical thought that put vehement efforts to restore the holy power of Tian [i.e. Heaven]. Such a pioneering mission was one of Confucius.”²⁸² Confucius also tried to help Chinese people to know Heaven and to follow the mission of Heaven. Confucius wanted to rebuild the order of family, the order of the society and the order between Heaven and humans. Although Confucius did not discuss about Tian ming at

²⁷⁸ Kejia Lu, “The Heavenly Learning (Tian Xue) in the Late Ming Dynasty and the Ideas of Tian in Early Confucianism,” *Asia Journal of Theology* 20 no 1 (April 2006):173.

²⁷⁹ “The Book of Rite· Biao ji 32,” last modified 2002, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.njmuseum.com/rbbook/gb/13/6/liji032.htm> The Yin dynasty ruled in China during the second millennium before Christ.

²⁸⁰ Shiyong, Zhang (张世英) “The Ancient Chinese Thought of ‘oneness between Heaven and human’”(中国古代的“天人合一”思想), last modified April 2, 2007, accessed April 2, 2012,

<http://www.wenhua.cn.com/zhexue/article.asp?classid=23&articleid=7626>

²⁸¹ Zhongshu Dong, *Chunqiu Fanlu 春秋繁露* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1992); 郊語, 65.

²⁸² Kejia, Lu, “The Heavenly Learning (Tian Xue) in Late Ming Dynasty and the Ideas of Tian in Early Cofucianism,” *Asia Journal of Theology* 20 no 1 (April 2006): 175.

length in his teachings, it does play a very important role in Confucianism. Confucius told his disciples that Heaven chose him as a bell to awaken people who were walking on the wrong way of life;²⁸³ that having a mission of Heaven is his realization of Tian ming. Confucius praised the ancient King Yao who followed Heaven above everything and said “how great was Yao as a sovereign! How loft! Heaven alone is the greatest for him! Yao alone could imitate it.”²⁸⁴ Yao set an example for his people to follow Heaven. Confucians claimed that ancient Chinese people had a good relationship with Heaven. For Confucius, Heaven is personal. Confucius not only sought and followed Tian ming, he also prayed to Heaven.²⁸⁵

In the *Doctrine of Mean*, Confucius describes the relationship between Heaven and humans by saying “the virtue of Gui (鬼)²⁸⁶ and spirits was so rich! Although one cannot see them, one cannot hear them, one cannot touch them, but the whole people under the sky should dress well to offer sacrifice to them, who were richly present above and on the right and on the left of human person”.²⁸⁷ Confucius’ words also showed that the Chinese understanding of Heaven and spirits had transcendent dimensions beyond human understanding.²⁸⁸ The Chinese understanding of the relationship between humans

²⁸³ *Analects* 2:4; 3:12, 13, 24; 7:23, 35; 8:24; 9:5; 17:19.

²⁸⁴ Huang, *The Analects of Confucius*, 99; *Analects* 8:19;

²⁸⁵ *Analects* 7:35.

²⁸⁶ One’s parents or ancestors, who passed away and went back to Heaven, are called Gui (鬼). Because Gui is different from ghost, the Chinese pronunciation word for spirit is used to differentiate them. For further information on deification in Chinese culture, see: Shiguang Chen (成世光), *Approaching the Supreme Good (止于至善)* (Taiwan: Catholic Window Press, 1983), 26. “鬼者，归也。”

²⁸⁷ *The Doctrine of Mean*, 16. “鬼神之為德，其盛矣乎！視之而弗見，聽之而弗聞，體物而不可遺。使天下之人，齊明盛服，以承祭祀，洋洋乎如在其上，如在其左右。”

²⁸⁸ Judith A. Berling in her research found that in Chinese understanding, Dao, Heaven, the Way and truth are different names for God, who is “both utterly transcendent and

and Heaven is not pantheism which considers the world is God,²⁸⁹ but rather panentheism is a belief that everything comes from God and everything is in the divine, not is divine.²⁹⁰ Panentheism is a natural way to understand the relationship between human and Heaven / God. This understanding needs to be enlightened by Christian supernatural revelation through the incarnated God Jesus Christ. E. R. Naughton argues that “for Christian theists, panentheism needs to be developed further if it is to be reconcilable with the doctrine of the Trinity.”²⁹¹ Panentheism should be understood in light of the Christian core teachings of Trinitarian theology. Opening up to Christianity is one more for the Confucian Junzi to develop a full understanding of Heaven and human life.

After comparing the Heaven of Confucianism and the God of the Bible, Chinese Biblical scholar Zhirong Fang (房志榮) concludes that “there is no conflict between the Heaven of Confucianism and the God of the Bible. They should be integrated in one...I truly believe, based on the belief of Heaven, if we are open to the God of the Bible, and receive Jesus Christ whom God sent to our world, not only will the Chinese people be more happy, and Chinese culture more resplendent, but also the whole world would

ineffable, and at the same time is everywhere.” Judith A. Berling, *A Pilgrim in Chinese Culture: Negotiating Religious Diversity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 79.

²⁸⁹ Bernard L. Marthaler, ed. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition* (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2002), 825. The New Catholic Encyclopedia defines pantheism as “a view of reality that tends to identify the world with God or God with the world.”

²⁹⁰ Fang, *The Original Philosophy of Confucianism and Daoism* 原始儒家道家哲学, 112. The world in relation to the Divine does not equal pantheism In Confucianism, all creation, because it’s from Heaven, is divine. The New Catholic Encyclopedia defines panentheism as “the view that the world is in God, but God is not the world.” Bernard L. Marthaler, ed. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition* (Detroit: Gale, 2002), 820.

²⁹¹ Bernard L. Marthaler, ed. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 822.

benefit.”²⁹² Fang claims that the Chinese understanding of Heaven and the Christian understanding of God are both founded in the same God of all creation. So a dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity is not only possible, but should be encouraged in the Confucian spirit of learning. Knowing Heaven is the prerequisite for following the Tian ming.

Everyone has the same the mission of Heaven, but different responsibilities.²⁹³ Everyone, from one’s being, has the same Tian ming in the sense of both life and the mission of Heaven; this is the foundation of equality in the human person. Confucius interpreted Tian ming as not just for kings and their families, nor for someone who has been chosen by Heaven. For Confucius, everyone receives the same life and same mission from Heaven, but with different responsibilities.²⁹⁴ Whether one lives at any time or in any situation, whether one belongs to any race or community, everyone is equal because everyone has the same nature which is the life and mission of Heaven. Everyone could become a Junzi in following Tian ming to fulfill one’s responsibilities in the three life circles by practicing the Xiao dao and the Li and Tian ming. A clear understanding of Tian ming will help people overcome the negative hierarchical understanding of different classes or social positions. Because everyone cherishes people’s one Tian ming and their different responsibilities simultaneously, Confucius does not risk overemphasizing that everyone is equal in all dimensions of life or everyone has different classes. One should

²⁹² Zhirong Fang 房志荣, “Comparison of Heaven in Confucianism and God in the Bible, 儒家思想的天与圣经中的上帝之比较,” Shen Xue Lun Ji 神学论集 Vol. 31 (1977): 15-41.

²⁹³ *The Doctrine of Mean* 1,17; *Analects* 14:26.

²⁹⁴ *The Doctrine of Mean* 17.

realize that everyone is equal in his or her ability to follow Tian ming, but responsibilities change in different times and situations.

The *Doctrine of Mean* explains that “Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is the essential human nature; following the essential nature is the Dao (the way of life);²⁹⁵ and following the Dao is the meaning of teaching.”²⁹⁶ Tian ming is the way of being human, the foundation and meaning of being human. Every human has the same essential nature which should be the way of human life.

Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is human nature and the way of human life. All Confucian teachings are primarily about following the way of life, Tian ming, to become Junzi. For this reason Confucianism acclaims that the human nature is good and everyone has the same nature from the one Heaven According to Confucius, bad behavior exists because of different human practices²⁹⁷ and is actually contrary to one’s nature. Following Confucius, Mengzi argues bad actions do not result from one’s essence, for everyone has the same inner spirits of the heart, but because humans have lost their heart.²⁹⁸ The heart means the foundation and essence of being human. The right way of life in Confucianism is to follow the Tian ming. Some Neo-Confucians, influenced by

²⁹⁵ Confucian Dao is not as the same as the “Dao” in Daoism as a philosophy. Confucian “Dao” is the practice of one’s nature which is based on the “mission of Heaven.” All virtues, such as charity, righteousness, wisdom and courage are part of the nature of human beings. The Dao in Daoism is a principle of the whole being. This Dao is not based on a personal being, but on nature. See, Lao Zi, *Dao De Jing: The Book of the Way*. Translated by Moss Roberts (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 52-53.

²⁹⁶ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, 1. “天命之为性, 率性之谓道, 修道之为教。” Based on the belief that all humans come from Tian ming (the life and mission of Heaven), Confucius emphasizes that original human nature is good. This understanding of human nature is compatible with the Christian understanding of human nature before the Fall of humans, which is the original holiness. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 385-412.

²⁹⁷ *Analects* 17:2.

²⁹⁸ Mengzi, *Mengzi*, 172. “恻隐之心,人皆有之...”

Daoism and Buddhism, instead of seeking the “Tian ming,” have focused on seeking an abstract theory behind all things.²⁹⁹ Among the Confucian scholars, there was a new Donglin movement that appeared during the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644) in Nanchang (南昌).³⁰⁰ The purpose of this movement was “to restore the orthodox Confucian teachings that had been ‘ruined’ by the neo-Confucian movement”³⁰¹ and follow the original Confucian teachings. When Matteo Ricci arrived in China during this time, he also realized the problems of the Neo-Confucianism. After careful study of ancient Confucian books, Ricci argued that Neo-Confucianism reduced the ancient Confucian understanding of Heaven (天) into an abstract theory. Neo-Confucianism argues that, behind all of creation, there is a Li (理), the Supreme Ultimate. Ricci explained the following,

If the Supreme Ultimate is truly the originator of the Lord-on-High and other things, why did the ancient sages not say so? ... The explanation [currently given] regarding the Supreme Ultimate is beyond reason. I have examined the diagrams on how it came from wuji [ultimateless]. Supposedly this diagram [by Zhou Dunyi] was derived from xiang

²⁹⁹ Fang, *The Original Philosophy of Confucianism and Daoism* 原始儒家道家哲学, 44. W. Scott Morton also mentions that because of the influence of Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism “was by no means the same as in the days of Confucius and Mencius.” Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 113. Willard J. Peterson, *Confucian Learning in Late Ming Thought*. In the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644. Part II. *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 8. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, eds. 708-788 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 710.

³⁰⁰ This movement was established in 1604, by Gu Xiancheng and Gao Panlong.

³⁰¹ Chung-yan Joyce Chan, “Commands from Heaven: Matteo Ricci’s Christianity in the Eyes of Ming Confucian Officials,” *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3, (July, 2003). 272.

[emblems], but where is this xiang now? Thus we know for certain that the Supreme Ultimate did not create Heaven and earth.³⁰²

Ricci argued that Neo-Confucianism misunderstood the teachings of Confucius and issued a calling to follow the ancient teachings about Heaven. In following their interpretation, Chinese people would be guided to a God without personhood. Since this concept deviates significantly from catholic doctrine, retrieving and reinterpreting ancient teachings for today's China can be a valuable mission for Chinese Christians.³⁰³

Tian Ren He Yi (天人合一)

The end of human life in Confucianism is the Tian Ren He Yi (天人合一 oneness between Heaven and human).³⁰⁴ Tian Ren He Yi means human life participating in the life of Heaven and becoming the life of Heaven in unity with Heaven but have distinction. This understanding of Tian Ren He Yi begins with ancient Chinese practice;³⁰⁵ Confucius retrieved and accepted this tradition and reinterpreted it for his contemporaries. In Confucianism, serving Heaven and loving humans are the inseparable. Heaven has a personhood that permeates all dimensions of human life, which means

³⁰² Mungello, *The Chinese Rite Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, 90.

See also: Tian Zhu Shi Yi, Shang Juan, 14b.

³⁰³ In response to contemporary social crisis, many scholars also choose to retrieve and revive Confucian teachings. See: Yong Chen, "Renewing Confucianism as a Living Tradition in 21st Century China: Reciting Classics, Reviving Academies and Restoring Rituals," in *Mapping Religion and Spirituality in a Postsecular World* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2012). Retrieving and reinterpreting Confucian teachings is also one of the missions of contemporary Chinese Christians.

³⁰⁴ Daoism, the other philosophy of Chinese culture, also, has this idea of the oneness between Heaven and earth. But their understanding of Heaven and earth are just the natural being which does not have a personal characteristic, see Dao De Jing (道德经) 25; Zhuang zi (庄子)2.

³⁰⁵ "The Book of Rite 32," last modified 2002, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.njmuseum.com/rbbook/gb/13/6/lijj032.htm>

Heaven has a relationship with every human and creature.³⁰⁶ The practice of Tian ming is a way of seeking the unity with Heaven but have distinction between human and Heaven. The final purpose of seeking Tian Ren He Yi is to be a great person (大人). In the *Book of Changes* (易经Yi) Confucius explains the meaning of becoming a great person,

The great person is the one who has the oneness of virtue with Heaven and earth; who has the oneness of light with the Sun and the Moon; who has the oneness of the order with the four seasons; who has the oneness of the favor and the hate of the Gui and spirits.³⁰⁷ If this person acted before the signs of Heaven, this person would not contradict with the will of Heaven. If this person acts after the signs of Heaven, this person will just follow the teachings of Heaven.³⁰⁸

This teaches that being great person is the ultimate purpose of becoming Junzi; this is, in fact, the model of becoming Junzi. This unity with Heaven and with all creatures is the communion life of Junzi, Tian Ren He Yi.

For Confucianism, Tian Ren He Yi is not only a relationship between Heaven and human, but it also includes the earth and all creation. It is a way to express the relationship of the human person and all creation with Heaven. Creation comes from Heaven and should follow Heaven and become one with Heaven. In this Chinese vision of the Tian Ren He Yi, one would realize that “everyone is my sibling, everything is part

³⁰⁶ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, 201.

The original quote is from Gao zi yi shu, III, Zhi Tian Shuo (Comments of the Knowledge of Heaven), 16b-17b.

³⁰⁷ Chinese people call one’s ancestors “Gui” (鬼=归) when they passed away and went back to Heaven.

³⁰⁸ “Zhou Yi Wen Yan,” last modified 2002, accessed April 2, 2012, http://www.njmuseum.com/rbbook/gb/13/1/zy_001.htm “夫大人者, 与天地合其德, 与日月合其明, 与四时合其序, 与鬼神合其吉凶, 先天而天弗违, 后天而奉天时。”

of me.”³⁰⁹ Through Tian ming, every person has relationship and communion with Heaven and with every other human and every creature. The Tian Ren He Yi helps people understand that Heaven, human, and earth are in one body; the life of the Junzi participates in the life of Heaven, of humanity and of all creatures. Participating in the life and work of Heaven makes the Junzi a co-worker with Heaven. Working together with Heaven led Confucius to say that “my way is the one in an all-pervading unity”.³¹⁰ This “one” for Confucius is Tian ming. In Tian Ren He Yi, all human life enters into a broad horizon and vision, past, present and future, and is deeply connected in its relationship with Heaven. Through this vision of the oneness between Heaven and human, Chinese people can better understand that the salvation of Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, is for all humans and for all creation.

In summary, Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is human nature; it is in human nature to walk on the right way of life, to practice the mission of Heaven and to teach others about this mission. Every human receives the “life of Heaven” (天命) which is also the “mission of Heaven” (天命); hence, humans always have a mission in this world. The ultimate purpose of being Junzi is in Tian Ren He Yi, oneness between Heaven and human, and becoming a great person (大人). Tian ming, the mission of Heaven, will help the Junzi to understand that Xiao dao, filial piety, flows from one’s being and nature which is the life of Heaven. Xiao dao is not only a virtue, but the essence of the human person whose life derives from the life and mission of Heaven. Practicing Xiao dao through the Li, rite, in social circles is as important as practicing it in one’s family.

³⁰⁹“Zheng meng·Qian cheng 17, 正蒙·乾称,” last modified October 30, 2007, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.culcn.cn/info/shownews.asp?newsid=18904> *Analects* 12:5.

³¹⁰ *Analects* 4:15. “吾道以一贯之。”

Practicing the filial piety in one's family circle and practicing the Li in the social circle are also different ways of practicing the mission of Heaven. Through offering sacrifice to Heaven, the entire world becomes a world divine. The practice of Tian ming fosters the oneness of the individual with his or her family as well as with others in society and with all of creation.

The Limitations of Confucius' Understanding of Junzi

Being Junzi is becoming authentically Chinese in a culture based on Confucianism. Confucius has a reasonable and effective vision to rebuild the family, society and the world. Becoming Junzi was Confucius' solution to the crisis of his contemporary situations. Confucianism, like other philosophies, has made significant contributions but also has limitations, particularly in its understanding of being Junzi. The first limitation is that there is not a clear foundation for being a Junzi in Confucianism. The methodology of Confucianism is "learning things from below, perceiving things about the above,"³¹¹ which occurs through reflecting on human experience to understand a broader world and Heaven. Confucianism reflects on human life from human experience and calls everyone to become a filial-pious child within one's family, in society and in the whole world. Because this understanding of becoming Junzi does not have a foundation, the extension of one's family love to a broader world is difficult to justify and seems overly idealistic. Without a foundation, the Confucian mandate to become a Junzi remains an unfounded theory. So, seeking a foundation for becoming Junzi is an urgent mission for contemporary Chinese people.³¹²

³¹¹ *Analects* 14:36.

³¹² The Chinese president Hu Jintao recently also calls for learning from other wisdoms and cultures for building Chinese culture. See, "Hu Jintao's 18th Party Congress Speech,"

The second limitation of Confucianism is the authoritative Confucian culture which risks losing the human personality of the Junzi. This authoritative culture dictates that people follow the orders of parents or community leaders in the name of practicing filial piety. The Junzi needs an essential understanding of being human to practice Xiao dao and Li in the light of Tian ming. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Confucianism can also risk dehumanizing the life of the Junzi. Confucianism needs a new understanding of being human in terms of cherishing one's personality in relation others.

The third limitation is that there is not an eschatological future for Junzi in Confucius' teachings. The method of Confucianism shows that the understanding of Heaven and the mission of Heaven is also from below to above. It is possible that this way of thinking made Tian ming seem obscure. Confucians do have an understanding of Heaven, but the fact that it is not, clearly defined could have lead Confucius to limit his discussion of the topic. Yang En Cheng, a Chinese Christian scholar, after exploring the concept of Tian [i.e. Heaven] in Chinese ancient documents, said that "there are never personal encounters between Tian and mankind. What I mean by 'personal' here is mutual communication and a relationship of dialogue."³¹³ Cheng is right in that the relationship between Junzi and Heaven is a one-way pattern for seeking God from below to above. Chinese Confucian culture does not have an understanding of mutual communication between Heaven and human, this understanding would have caused which could lead to difficulties in practicing Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven) and the Tian Ren He Yi (天人合一 oneness between Heaven and human). Yang Tingyun

last modified November 8, 2012, accessed November 12, 2012,
<http://cn.ibtimes.com/artnews/16230/20121108/shibada-hu-jintao.htm>

³¹³ En Cheng Yan, "The Idea of Tien-Ming in the Book of Historical Documents." *Ching Feng* Vol. 29, No. 4 (December 1986): 213.

(杨廷筠), a Confucian Christian and Matteo Ricci's student, mentions that the ancient books taught people to revere Heaven, to serve Heaven, to understand Heaven and to approach Heaven, but they did not explain who Heaven is.³¹⁴ Yang, as a Confucian scholar, points out the limitations of Chinese culture concerning knowledge of Heaven and called for learning about Heaven from different sources through another way. Evolving through Chinese history, where the emperors had deprived ordinary people of their right to worship Heaven,³¹⁵ the vision of Junzi and the connection with Heaven in one's daily life become unclear. In his research about the Chinese belief of Di (帝) and Heaven (天), Archbishop Guang Luo (罗光) claims that "from the beginning of Chinese history, Chinese people have believed in a supreme God, we call this God Heaven (天) or Di (帝); in terms of this history, the more one goes back to the ancient times, the more one would find the deeper and more faithful belief. But after the Han Dynasty (202 B. C.-A.D. 220), the belief of God was destroyed gradually."³¹⁶ Archbishop Luo argues that it was this constant reinterpretation which caused Chinese people to have a vague understanding of Heaven (God). That is the reason it is necessary to retrieve the ancient Chinese understanding of becoming an authentic human and to comprehend the full meaning of Heaven through the contributions of Confucianism. Confucius, because he

³¹⁴ In his book, *Dai Yi Xu Bian* 代疑续编, Yang tried to compare Confucianism with Christianity.

³¹⁵ In a famous ancient Chinese book *Shuoyuan* (说苑), the author Liu Xiang (刘向 77 BC – 6BC) said that "the son of heaven (*the emperor*) scarifies to Shangdi, the high officials scarifies to all the Spirits, under the local officials, all just can sacrifies to their ancestors in their family circle"

"非其族类，则绍其同位，是故天子祠上帝，公侯祠百神，自卿以下不过其族".

³¹⁶ Guang Luo, "Chinese belief of Di-Heaven (中国对帝-天的信仰)" *Shen Xue Lun Ji* 神学论集 Vol. 31 (October 1977): 78.

did not receive a special revelation from Heaven, honestly refused to talk in detail about Heaven. Without a clear understanding of Heaven, the Junzi does not have clear future; the life of a Junzi is limited from birth to death. Furthermore, if life is just life in this world, without an ultimate meaning and future, no matter how profound or successful it is, a person loses the meaning and strength of life; and human life becomes an illusion.

Confucian understanding of being Junzi just focuses on life in this world and does not have a transcendental foundation and future. These limitations of Confucianism are not problems; instead, they offer an opportunity to be open to other wisdoms about understanding what it means to be human and how to rebuild human life, society and the world with a new horizon and vision. An openness of Chineseness will constantly call for dialogue with other wisdoms in contemporary world.

From this point, Chinese people seek a profound and influential way to transform the life of Junzi. And the way which has transformed thousands of people over the course of history and which continues to benefit more people, is the way of Christianity, being an authentic Christian as another model for being human in the light of Trinitarian theological insights about the Triune God who is the model for being authentically Christians. The Trinitarian way of being Christian in Catherine M. LaCugna's insights is explored in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Being authentically Chinese is being Junzi. Confucianism is the main Chinese philosophy which offers an ideal person, Junzi, in a Chinese cultural context for renewing family life, society and the whole world. Becoming Junzi is a Chinese model for being a human person. Chinese culture is a family-centered culture in which the Junzi practices

Xiao dao (filial piety) through Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (Knowledge / wisdom), Yong (courage). The Junzi extends the practice of Xiao dao (filial piety) to social life and to Heaven and to earth.

Confucian understanding of becoming Junzi has three fundamental life circles. The first is one's family circle. In this circle the Junzi experiences the organic love and practices Xiao dao. Family is the first community in which a Junzi has the immediate relationship with one's parents, brothers and sisters. Practicing Xiao dao includes practicing the virtues of Ren, Yi, Zhi, and Yong. These virtues are cornerstones that will help one become Junzi to fulfill responsibilities to one's families and beyond.

The second life circle is one's society. In this circle the Junzi practices Li (rite) in a spirit of respect. Respect is the way to cherish one's dignity and other people's values. It is through the practice of Li that the Junzi extends one's organic love of filial piety to the social circle.

The third life circle is Heaven and earth. In this circle, the Junzi practices Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), seeking the will of Heaven and working together with Heaven. The Junzi continues to extend Xiao dao filial piety to Heaven and to all creatures. In this third life circle, a Junzi realizes that all the foundations of Xiao dao and the practice of Li in society derive from Heaven. A person receives the life and mission of Heaven in this world. Practicing the Xiao dao to Heaven is a way of following Tian ming. Practicing Li in honor of Heaven is a way to respect Heaven. Tian ming includes one's responsibilities to one's immediate family, to one's friends in society, to all creatures under Heaven, and above all to Heaven who is the head of all.

This expansion from family circle to social circle and finally to the circle of Heaven and earth is the process of becoming Junzi and of fulfilling one's responsibilities from the love of one's blood family to one's social family, and to the family of Heaven and earth. The summit of the life of Junzi is in Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human) and thus becoming a great person (大人).

From family to society and to Heaven and earth, the Junzi understands that all human persons and creatures belong to one family of Heaven. All persons have the same life and the mission of Heaven but different responsibilities.

The method of Confucianism is learning things from below and perceiving things about the above. The starting point of Confucianism is reflecting on one's life experience within one's family to understand the whole world and to seek the life and mission of Heaven. The Confucian philosophical method is a dynamic circle of mutual understanding and practicing. The practice of the Xiao dao helps the Junzi realize his or her responsibilities to other people and to Heaven and to earth; the practice of Li helps the Junzi practice Xiao dao and Tian ming with respect; the practice of Tian ming, which is the foundation of being human, will enlighten a Junzi about the meaning of loving one's families and friends. This is a spiral life circle for the Junzi who is always in mutual nourishment with and in the continuous practice of Xiao dao, Li and Tian ming. The Junzi practices filial piety from family to community and to the community of Heaven and earth, fulfilling different responsibilities and keeping a desire or hunger for seeking a relationship and communion with others, with Heaven and with all creatures. This desire leads to entering into the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human). It also drives Chinese people to follow Confucian teachings about becoming Junzi and at the

same time follow their heart in seeking a deeper understanding of Heaven and communication with Heaven in a personal way.

Confucianism, as a philosophy which flourishes from Chinese ancient wisdom and learns from other wisdoms, has nourished Chinese people and the surrounding cultures for thousands of years. Confucianism has such a dynamic power not only because it is rooted in human experience, namely, the organic love in one's family, but also because it values the understanding from above, namely, Heaven, and its life and mission for humans person. As a philosophy, Confucianism contributes to human life and the wisdom of all humans. The life of the Junzi is based on one's essential nature which is Tian ming, in the understanding from below, and the practice of daily life.

Confucianism has a thoughtful understanding of being human but does not have a clear understanding of Heaven. This ambiguous understanding of Heaven affects the horizon and passion of becoming Junzi. The limitations of Confucianism, however, can open the door of Chinese culture to seek a deeper and clearer understanding of Heaven from above.

Christian teaching is another way of being human and exercising the relationship between Heaven (God), humanity and all creatures. The next chapter turns to the teachings of Christianity with special emphasis on the understanding of being an authentic Christian in light of Catherine M. LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights about the Triune God and God's relationship with humanity and the potential contributions of this concept to becoming authentically Chinese Christians.

CHAPTER FIVE: BEING TRINITARIAN CHRISTIANS

Introduction

Being an authentic Christian means participating in the divine life of the Trinitarian God and becoming a Trinitarian Christian. A fundamental teaching of Christianity is the doctrine of the Triune God. The Trinitarian God, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the center of Christian faith and practice.³¹⁷ Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means being joined to Christ and participating in the life of the Trinity.. However, understanding the Trinitarian God is also a way to understand the way to become an authentic Christian. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the insights of Catherine Mowry LaCugna's Trinitarian Theology as a resource for becoming an authentic Christian Based on the Bible, liturgy, the creeds, and the Christian tradition, LaCugna's Trinitarian theology helps contemporary Christians to live in and with the Father, Son, and Spirit through their context. LaCugna's understanding of the Trinity deeply connects with the becoming an authentic Christian. A significant Christian theme understands humanity, and all of creation, to be grounded in the three divine persons and as on a mission to work with God which will lead back to God in Eternity. This is the movement *a Patre ad Patrem* (from Father to the Father). LaCugna's Trinitarian Theology is particularly helpful for those who want to understand the life of the Trinitarian God as a way of becoming an authentic Christian. Being an authentic Christian is essential for being an authentic Confucian Junzi and for becoming an authentically Chinese Christian.

³¹⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 198.

This chapter introduces the works of LaCugna on the Trinity. It focuses on her work, *God for Us* and explores LaCugna's specific insights on the Triune God and God's relation with human persons. It especially focuses on her understanding of personhood, relation, and deification. Her presentation of these three categories shed new light on the understanding of the Triune God and on a new way of being Christian. This chapter gives a background to understanding LaCugna and her *magnus opus* on the Trinity and Christian life. LaCugna's contribution to Trinitarian theology and understanding being authentic Christian is crucial for the foundation for becoming an authentically Chinese Christian.

Catherine Mowry LaCugna

Catherine Mowry LaCugna (August 6, 1952–May 3, 1997) is a feminist Catholic theologian and author of the book, *God for Us: The Trinity and ChristianLife*. LaCugna's work tries to reset Trinitarian theology in the center of Christian faith and makes the doctrine of the Trinity relevant for the everyday life of modern Christians, which is finding a way of becoming Trinitarian Christians.

The Augustine approach certainly broke the back of Arianism once and for all...But a heavy price was paid. More and more the doctrine of the Trinity was detached from ordinary Christian life (liturgy, prayer) and came to be viewed *only* as a speculative and purely formal doctrine ...Small wonder, then, that not terribly long after the western medieval tradition had accomplished the ultimate refinement of trinitarian metaphysics, Schleiermacher should find that he could

make much better sense of Christianity (and of salvation) by relegating the doctrine to a brief appendix.³¹⁸

Here, LaCugna argues that the history of Trinitarian theology separates God from daily Christian life. She calls for restoring Trinitarian theology to the center of the Christian life. LaCugna's passion is to bridge the divide between the doctrine of the Trinity and modern Christian life. LaCugna's famous contribution, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, offers a new way to understand the Triune God.

Catherine M. LaCugna's Work

The doctrine of the Triune God is the foundational understanding of the Christian God and Christian life. LaCugna argues that the doctrine of the Trinity is the affirmation of God's intimate communion with human persons through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.³¹⁹ The action of God, in the Son and through the Holy Spirit, is a self-manifestation and a self-communication of God's ineffable being.³²⁰ LaCugna's understanding of God is the God of communion; the God who opens God's self to all creatures.

The doctrine of God cannot be a theory that does not relate to the life of Christian practices; rather it should be a practical doctrine for Christian life. Christian history has long separated the history of salvation from the being of God *per se*. In the process of Christian history, the doctrine of God became only an abstract theory to argue the inner

³¹⁸ Catherine M. LaCugna, "Philosophers and Theologians on the Trinity," *Modern Theology* 2/3 (April 1986): 174

³¹⁹ Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), ix

³²⁰ William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 1982), 29.

life of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.³²¹ The question of God's being and God's self-communication in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, is intrinsically connected.³²² Therefore, LaCugna asserts that "*theologia* and *oikonomia*, the mystery of God and the mystery of salvation, are inseparable."³²³ Thus, the doctrine of Trinity is a practical doctrine which shapes Christian life and the Trinitarian God is a model of being Christian. LaCugna explains,

The doctrine of the Trinity is in fact the most practical of all doctrines. Among other things, it helps us to articulate our understanding of the gospel's demands; how personal conversion is related to social transformation; what constitutes 'right relationship' within the Christian community and in society at large; how best to praise and worship God; and what it means to confess faith in and be baptized into the life of the God of Jesus Christ.³²⁴

The doctrine of God is the foundation and model for being a Christian and for being in relationship with others in the community and in the whole world. The understanding of the life of God must always connect with the understanding of Christian life. For LaCugna, the experience of salvation, which is also the experience of being saved by God through the incarnation of Jesus Christ in the

³²¹ Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 6.

³²² William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation*, 6.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 4. This concept is explained in her parabolic model of the life of the Trinity God and human life.

³²⁴ Catherine M. LaCugna, "The Practical Trinity," *Christian Century* 109/22 (July 15-22, 1992): 679.

power of the Holy Spirit, is the starting point for understanding the mystery of God.³²⁵

LaCugna divides *God for Us* into two parts: “Emergence and Defeat of the Doctrine of the Trinity” and “Re-conceiving the Doctrine of the Trinity in Light of the Mystery of Salvation.” In her review of the overall history of the doctrine of the Trinity, she restores the understanding of the Trinity to the center of Christian life. LaCugna argues that “the central theme of Trinitarian theology is the relationship between this economy and the eternal being of God.”³²⁶ The economy of redemption through Jesus Christ is the way to understand the eternal mystery of God. The first part of her work delineates the shift in the question about God from Christological and Soteriological to ontological and from God’s relationship with Jesus of Nazareth to the Father’s relationship to the Son. This shift draws out the connection between *oikonomia* and *theologia*, and the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.³²⁷ Such a shift was a reaction to Arianism. The reactions to Arianism tried to solve the problem on the pastoral level, but caused another problem of the separation of the economy of salvation from theology.³²⁸ This separation of *oikonomia* from *theologia* caused the doctrine of the Trinity to become more abstract and irrelevant to Christian life.

In the second part of her work, LaCugna reconstructs the relationship between *oikonomia* and *theologia* by bridging the tension between the Eastern and Western

³²⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 3. Salvation, for LaCugna, means being in right relationship and in genuine communion at every level of life. This is the meaning of deification. See, LaCugna, *God for Us*, 284.

³²⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 23. The meaning of the *oikonomia* and *theologia* will be explained later on.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

Trinitarian theological insights.³²⁹ She reinterprets these terms for her contemporaries and demonstrates what it means to live a Trinitarian Christian life. This new understanding of God is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in everyday Christian practices. LaCugna begins with a historical survey tracing the doctrine of the Trinity, especially the terms of *oikonomia* and *theologia*. She argues that Christian theologians, by the end of the fourth century asserted that “God exists eternally as Father, Son and Spirit, and this eternal triune life is what is given in the economy of redemption.”³³⁰ Salvation is an action of Trinitarian redemption. Through the salvation human beings understand the life of the Triune God. Although there is not a developed doctrine of the Trinity either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, the presence and action of the Triune God permeates in the whole history of revelation and salvation.³³¹ Biblical texts, especially the Letter to the Ephesians 1:3-14, summarize the economy that advances through the movement *a Patre ad Patrem*, which demonstrates that all things originate within God the Father, take place through the Son, Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Further, it is through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the deification in the Holy Spirit that all things will return to God.³³²

The Historical understanding of the Trinitarian God

The doctrine of the Trinity emerged as a response to questions regarding who Jesus Christ is and as a way of reflecting on the Christian faith. Arianism and Eunomianism claim that God is transcendent, incommunicable and this kind of God will

³²⁹ Ibid., 13.

³³⁰ Ibid., 23.

³³¹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 70.

³³² LaCugna, *God for Us*, 25.

not come in contacting with human beings. For. Arianism and Eunomianism, between God and human beings, there are some intermediaries. Arius, the originator of Arianism believed that the Logos is subordinated to the Father, and that Jesus Christ has a different substance than God the Father, and that he is a creature.³³³ Following Arius, Eunomius believed that God is “unbegotten” and Jesus Christ is “begotten,”³³⁴ thus, Jesus Christ cannot have the same essence as God.³³⁵ Arianism led to the idea that Jesus Christ does not have the same divinity with God and Jesus is not God.³³⁶ This conclusion is contradictory to the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Bible as found among early Christian practices.³³⁷ This way of possibly abandoning the divinity of Jesus Christ and emphasizing the oneness of God is known as *subordinationism*.³³⁸ The other misunderstanding and expression of the Trinitarian God was represented by Sabellius who claimed that the one God takes three modes of appearances. This expression is to be found as modalism.³³⁹

In order to respond to these heresies and explain the Christian faith in dialogue with contemporary culture, the Church fathers, both in Greek and Latin traditions, offered their contributions on the doctrine of the Triune God. The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325),

³³³ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 227-228.

³³⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 60.

³³⁵ “The controversy was swirling on just how Jesus was divine. Was he ‘subordinate’ to God (*homo-i-ousios*) or ‘of the same substance’ as God (*homo-ousios*)? That *i*, the iota, raised important issues not just for Christ’s identity and power, but for the identity and power of baptized Christians who became partakers of Christ’s divinity.” Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008), 107-108

³³⁶ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 229.

³³⁷ See, Mark1: 11; Matthew 11:27; John10:30. Rome1:4, 9:5; 1Timothy1:1.

³³⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: the Doctrine of God*, Translated by Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 132.

³³⁹ Bernard L. Marthaler, ed. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia, Second Edition*, 750-751.

under the leadership of Athanasius, proclaimed that Jesus Christ, the Son, has the same substance (*homoousious*) with God the Father and is consubstantial with the Father.³⁴⁰ Later, Chalcedon (A.D. 451) claimed that Jesus Christ is one person with two natures: a divine nature and a human nature.³⁴¹ The response to Arianism and the interpretation of Nicaea is a turning point of the doctrine of Trinity in both Greek and Latin traditions. Throughout Christian history, both the Greek and Latin traditions articulate the understanding of God in ways that have their own contributions and limitations. The Greek traditional understanding of Trinitarian theology relates the action of God in real history and people's life.³⁴² The Cappadocian Fathers, Basil (A. D. 379), Gregory of Nazianzus (A. D. 390), and Gregory of Nyssa (A. D. 394), formulated Trinitarian doctrine as: God is one substance, but in three persons (*mia ousia, treis hypostases*).³⁴³ Greek Trinitarian theology understands God as one who retains the biblical emphasis on the economy of salvation.³⁴⁴ The Greek Fathers always had in mind the persons in the economy of salvation when they wrote about the divine persons in relation to each other.³⁴⁵ Their understanding of the persons of the Triune God always has a relationship with humans through the salvation of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This contribution helps Christians to understand the true union between God and creatures.

³⁴⁰ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 232.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 340.

³⁴² Luis Gutheinz, (谷寒松) SJ, *The Mystery of God: Heaven-Earth-Man* (Taipei: Kuangchi Cultural Group, 2002), 266.

³⁴³ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 265.

³⁴⁴ Catherine M. LaCugna, "The Trinitarian Mystery of God," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, volume I, edited by Francis Schussler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 168.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

The Latin tradition's understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, in the interpretation of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, had a new understanding and articulation. Augustine gives the Latin tradition a matured expression about the Trinitarian God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are distinct and co-essential simultaneously.³⁴⁶ He claims that the soul is a reflection of its creator, the Trinity God. By knowing itself, the soul knows God.³⁴⁷ This understanding is Augustine's psychological approach for understanding the Triune God. The starting point of Augustine is the one divine substance, which is shared by the three persons in common.³⁴⁸ For Augustine's theology, the true economy of the individual soul discloses the reality of the Trinity. Augustine's contribution tries to solve the danger of subordinationism in Arianism by emphasizing that each divine person fully shares the same divine essence. But Augustine has a problem of expressing the meaning of personhood.³⁴⁹ Augustine focuses on the interior illumination of the soul to reflect the life of the Triune God, which has a danger of moving the doctrine of the Trinity away from salvation history, away from other areas of theology, and away from liturgy.³⁵⁰ This understanding of the Trinity resulted in Christians focusing only on the oneness of God, and ignoring the three persons in Christian practices. Focusing on the inner life of the Triune God in articulating the doctrine of God is Augustine's difference from the Cappadocian fathers. The division in understanding God both in the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity term has

³⁴⁶ Augustine, *The Trinity*, 1:7.

³⁴⁷ LaCugna, "The Trinitarian Mystery of God," 169.

³⁴⁸ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 272.

³⁴⁹ Hill, *The Three-Personed God*, 61.

³⁵⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 170.

caused a shift of the Trinitarian theology from the center and foundation of Christian life and theology to become an appendix in Christian life.³⁵¹

In elaborating Augustine's theology, Thomas Aquinas develops a sophisticated ontology of person and relation. The definition of person in Aquinas is "subsistent relation."³⁵² Aquinas elevated relation to the level of the transcendental, which focuses on the inner-relationality of God.³⁵³ This understanding of God does not have a real relationship with creation; the life of the Triune God is separated from the life of human persons.

Greek theology emphasizes the divine *hypostases*--persons, while Latin theology emphasizes the divine substance. Eastern (Greek) Trinitarian theology's starting point is the distinction of persons, which has a danger of subordinationism; Western (Latin) theology emphasizes the unity of the divine substance, which has a danger of modalism. Luis Gutheinz points out that for the Greek tradition of Christian life, "the Triune God lives around people's life vividly, this is an experience in which Christians live in the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, toward God the Father."³⁵⁴ Christians have relations with the Triune God in their life. For the Latin tradition, their understanding of God is too abstract, and not much related to the real Christian life.³⁵⁵

The emphasis on the inner life of the Triune God happened in both Greek and Latin

³⁵¹ Friedrich Schleiermacher relegated the doctrine of Trinity to an appendix in his work: Friedrich Schleiermacher, H R Mackintosh and James Stuart Stewart, Eds. *The Christian faith* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999).

³⁵² Thomas Aquinas, *Summar Theologiae* Ia, q. 40, a. 2.

³⁵³ Hill, *The Three-Personed God*, 73.

³⁵⁴ Luis Gutheinz, *The Mystery of God*, 266.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 267.

tradition which turned the Trinitarian doctrine of God in practice as Unitarian God.³⁵⁶

Trinitarian theology is not only a way of understanding God, but also a way to understand God's relationship with humans, and a way of being authentically Christian. In response to Arianism and Eunomianism, Christian theologians separate the triune God *ad intra* and *ad extra*, which was the division between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, and just concentrated on the *theologia*. The division between *theologia* and *oikonomia* was also the reason for the division between the doctrine of the Trinity and Christian life in history and in contemporary theology.

LaCugna's narrative of history shows that pre-Nicene theological reflection was focused on the *oikonomia*, which means the salvation history and the eternal plan of redemption are one action. During that time, Church theologians and Christian experience viewed *theologia* and *oikonomia* as essentially one.³⁵⁷ God gives human beings God-self in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit as the true God.³⁵⁸ The watershed was the response to Arianism in the Council of Nicea (A. D. 325). The heart of the Arian question was the salvation of human beings through Jesus Christ and the suffering of God; it was Christological and soteriological, not an ontological question.³⁵⁹ Arianism forced Christian thinkers to conclude that the Son is *homoousios* with God, and at the same time, had to say that the logos could not be said to suffer because they chose to understand God and human life separately. After the Council of Nicea, Trinitarian theology began to emphasize on the oneness of God rather than the threeness of persons

³⁵⁶ Catherine M. LaCugna, *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 90.

³⁵⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*. 16.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

which has a strong biblical foundation. The separation between *theologia* and *oikonomia* caused the division of the doctrine of the Trinitarian God from Christian life.

By the end of the fourth century, the idea that God exists as three persons in one nature (*mia ousia, treis hypostaseis*) was replaced by the emphasis on the *theologia*.³⁶⁰ The Cappadocian fathers tried to clarify God's relationship between human beings. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in the economy of incarnation and deification reveal the essential unity and equality of Father, Son and Spirit.³⁶¹ They emphasized that God exists as three persons. Their concern was soteriology. Augustine, on the other hand, emphasized the unity of the divine essence.³⁶² The emphasis of Augustine articulated the essence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but has a danger of ignoring the three persons.³⁶³ LaCugna summarizes these two traditions of Trinitarian theology by saying that "the Greek doctrine of the Trinity emphasizes person over nature, Trinity over Unity, whereas Latin theology emphasizes nature over person, Unity over Trinity."³⁶⁴ As Greek and Latin traditions have different concerns, they have different emphases. The result of these different emphases was the separation between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.

LaCugna's Contributions

Given this background, the second part of LaCugna's work tries to reunite *oikonomia* and *theologia* by bridging the tensions between Greek and Latin Trinitarian theologies based on the history of salvation and contemporary understandings.³⁶⁵

LaCugna sees her work as "the effort to re-imagine the Christian doctrine of God along

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 42-43.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 10.

³⁶² Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 272.

³⁶³ Ibid., 275.

³⁶⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 11.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 13.

the lines of biblical, early creedal, and liturgical patterns, as well as to think through the full implications of Cappadocian theology minus the Nicene and post-Nicene breach between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.³⁶⁶ LaCugna does her Trinitarian theology by following Biblical revelation and Christian practice before the Council of Nicaea, and then inherits the contributions both Greek and Latin theologies for bridging the separation between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.³⁶⁷

LaCugna's departure point is her mentor Karl Rahner's axiom that "the 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity."³⁶⁸ The same God of Eternity acts in the history of salvation. Rahner explains his axiom thus,

God has given himself so fully in his absolute self-communication to the creature that the 'immanent' Trinity becomes the Trinity of the 'economy of salvation' and hence in turn the Trinity of salvation which we experience is the immanent Trinity. This means that the Trinity of God's relationship to us is the reality of God as he is in himself: a trinity of persons.³⁶⁹

Rahner argues that the God in salvation of history is the same God in Eternity.

LaCugna praises Rahner's insight and asserts that God truly and completely gives God's

³⁶⁶ Catherine M. LaCugna, "Author's Response," *Horizons* 20/1 (Spring 1993): 137.

³⁶⁷ Jürgen Moltmann also argues that the starting point of Trinitarian theology should be the New Testament and liturgy celebration. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: the Doctrine of God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 129. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 211.

³⁶⁸ Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 22.

³⁶⁹ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 4, 69.

self to the creature without remainder.³⁷⁰ She further argues that the central concern of the doctrine of the Trinity is to name the God who redeems humans in Jesus Christ and deifies humans in the Holy Spirit.³⁷¹ Rahner and LaCugna both argue that the Trinitarian God has an intimate relationship with human persons and all creatures.³⁷² Rahner states that “the treatise of the Trinity locks itself in even more splendid isolation, with the ensuing danger that the religious mind finds it devoid of interest.”³⁷³ A God who separates Godself from human beings is not the Christian God. Rahner calls Christians to relate Trinitarian theology with other areas of theology, with Christian life and with the whole creation.

Following Rahner, LaCugna challenges contemporary Catholic theology to not just stay in continuity with the Tradition, but to rethink and restate its essential truths in a contemporary idiom.³⁷⁴ This challenge is also another way of arguing that pastoral language expresses Christian faith for a cultural context and of resisting the temptation to use doctrinal language directly³⁷⁵. LaCugna argues that Rahner’s rule needs a radical revision. So she tries to go beyond the understanding and the speaking about God *ad extra* and *ad intra*, but in a new language. LaCugna argues that only through the *oikonomia* one could understand the mystery of *theologia* in time, space, and history.³⁷⁶ The articulation of the Trinitarian God is the experience of Christians through the revelation of Jesus Christ. God-in-eternity and God-in-salvation are inseparable. From

³⁷⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, xiv.

³⁷¹ LaCugna, “The Trinitarian Mystery of God,” 161.

³⁷² LaCugna, *God for Us*, 1; Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, 34-35

³⁷³ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 17.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, xvii.

³⁷⁵ This relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language has been discussed in chapter two, see page 16-24.

³⁷⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 223.

here, LaCugna tries to build her Trinitarian theology by defining new conceptions about *oikonomia* and *theologia*. She explains that,

Oikonomia is not the Trinity *ad extra* but the comprehensive plan of God reaching from creation to consummation, in which God and all creatures are destined to exist together in the mystery of love and communion.

Similarly, *theologia* is not the Trinity in *se*, but much more modestly and simply, the mystery of God. As we know from the experience of being redeemed by God through Jesus Christ, the mystery of God is the mystery of God with us.³⁷⁷

Oikonomia God's relationship with all creatures; *theologia* expresses the mystery of God and God's presence with creation. The mystery of God is not the inner life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but the mystery of being with creatures. In this understanding of *oikonomia* and *theologia*, LaCugna asserts that a radical consequence of the doctrine of the Trinity is for Christian life.³⁷⁸ Understanding God is inseparable from understanding of the meaning of being Christians. LaCugna further says that, "an 'immanent Trinitarian theology of God is nothing more than a theology of the economy of salvation," and "an immanent theology of the Trinity is thus ineluctably a theology of the 'internal' structure of the economy of redemption."³⁷⁹ Here LaCugna redefines the idea of immanent theology which is not the inner life of God, but the mystery of redemption. This interpretation of the immanent Trinity demonstrates a significant difference between LaCugna and Rahner. LaCugna's articulation of Trinitarian theology

³⁷⁷ Ibid.,223-224.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 224; 379.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.,224.

is revolutionary because it goes beyond both Greek and Latin traditional understandings of the Triune God and God's relationship with creatures. Her understanding is also one which has thick Biblical foundation and basis in early Christian practice. Although LaCugna's Trinitarian theology has a danger of articulating the Triune God without talking about the inner life of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, she does not want to articulate the inner life of God without relationship with humans and other creatures. The inner life of God and God's relationship with humanity will be expressed through her understanding of personhood, relationship, and deification, which will be discussed later in the chapter. The subject of Trinitarian theology is not just about the inner life of God, but God's relationship with humans and all creatures.

The Trinitarian life is also the life of Christians and all of creation.³⁸⁰ LaCugna explains that every human person and creature is part of the Trinitarian life in the new understanding of the relation between *oikonomia* and *theologia*. The understanding of the Triune God is based on the revelation of the incarnated Son, Jesus Christ in the Biblical texts and Christian practices. What humans experience and understand is the salvation of God from creation to consummation with the mystical presence of the Triune God. God gives Godself fully to humans to have a Trinitarian life. LaCugna claims that,

There is one life of the Triune God, a life in which we graciously have been included as patterns. Followers of Christ are made sharers in the very life of God, partakers of divinity as they are transformed and perfected by the Spirit of God.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 228.

The ‘motive’ of God’s self-communication is union with the creature through *theosis*.³⁸¹

There is not an separated relationship between the persons of the Trinity and human. Human persons, and all creatures, share the same life of the Trinitarian God and participate in the life of God. So, LaCugna points out that the doctrine of the Trinity is a teaching about God’s life with human persons and human life with each other. In this communion of life, God is in humanity, humanity is in God, all of human persons are in each other.³⁸² Christian theology speaks about God as well as humanity and the whole world. LaCugna argues that God, humans and all creatures are in a same movement *a Patre ad Patrem*.³⁸³ She explains this movement in her essay “The Trinitarian Mystery of God,”

The parabolic model (parabola: to throw outward) expresses the one ecstatic movement of God whereby all things originate with God and are returned to God. The model admits neither a Neo-Palamite nor a Neo-Scholastic separation between “God-for-us.” The subject matter of Trinitarian theology is the one dynamic movement of God, *a Patre ad Patrem* (from the Father, to the Father), in economy of incarnation and deification. There is no reason to single out one point as if it could be fixed or frozen in time. Christology is no more prominent than pneumatology; nor is the immanent Trinity conceived of as a reality separate from the economy of salvation. Rather, an immanent theology of

³⁸¹ Ibid., 228. *Theosis* means divinization or deification.

³⁸² Ibid., 228.

³⁸³ Ibid., 223.

God is a theology of the economy but from the point of view of its internal logic or its eternal ground.³⁸⁴

All of creation participates in the Son's movement from the Father and return to the Father. LaCugna's proposal not only helps Christian understand the mystery of salvation as of the mystery of God, but also helps people understand the life of the Trinity as the model of life for being Christian. LaCugna argues that both Orthodox and Latin theology agree that *oikonomia* truly expresses the mystery of *theologia*.³⁸⁵ Even for Gregory Palamas, there is an essential unity between the divine essence and divine energies which is through deification, human person participating in the life of the Trinitarian God in the divine energies.³⁸⁶ Ted Peters praises LaCugna's contribution to contemporary theology as "the LaCugna Corollary," which he states as "theology is inseparable from soteriology and vice versa."³⁸⁷

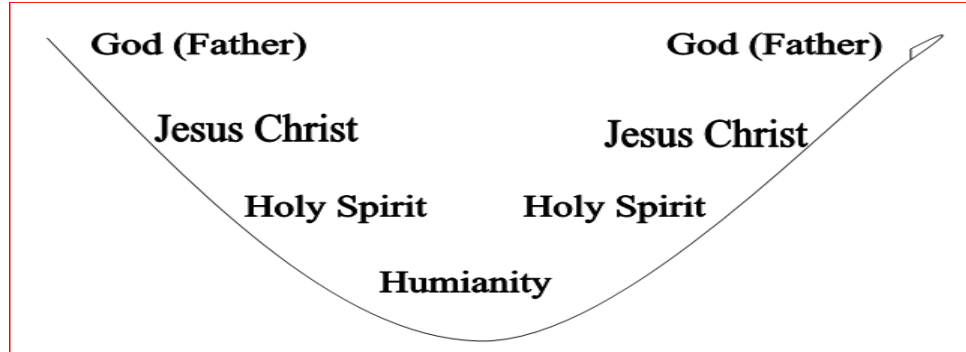
³⁸⁴ LaCugna, "The Trinitarian Mystery of God," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 177.

³⁸⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 221.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁸⁷ Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 124.

Chart 4: The Movement of a Patre ad Patrem.³⁸⁸



The LaCugna's corollary leads to a new way of doing Christian theology which opens to all dimensions of human life. She reminds Christians, "while theology stands to learn a great deal from cultural, anthropological, philosophical, and psychological approaches to personhood, the doctrine of the Trinity ultimately must measure its reflections on personhood by the revelation of divine personhood in the face of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit."³⁸⁹ The foundation and the model of human personhood is the divine personhood. Personhood plays a central role in LaCugna's theological study. Being saved by God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is a starting point for doing Christian theology. All Christian theologies have a Trinitarian characteristic. Articulating salvation experience is the starting point of understanding the mystery of God. In the contributions of Church traditions, the Bible and Christian practice, contemporary articulation of the doctrine of God should relate the Triune God to different people's lives and in their cultural languages. For LaCugna, what a Christian believes is not the

³⁸⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 223. This chart originally was LaCugna's work, but I adjust LaCugna's "world" as "humanity" which will have a clear relationship between the Triune God and the humans.

³⁸⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 292-293.

doctrines, but the experience of being saved, which is articulated in the doctrines.³⁹⁰

Doctrines are actually articulations of Christian experience about the economy of the Triune God in history. The development of the doctrine of the Trinity is first of all “a process of Hellenizing the kerygma,” which reminds Christians to follow the continuity in understanding and expressing of the doctrine of God in a new cultural context.³⁹¹

William J. Hill reminds people that all Christian dogmas are historically and culturally conditioned.³⁹² The understanding and expression of Christian faith always has a historical and cultural influence. So, helping Chinese Christians to understand the Christian faith continuously and culturally is the basic thrust of this work.

Trinitarian theology is not only about God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but also about every human person and every creature who participates in the life of the Trinitarian God. Jesus Christ discloses the true meaning of being fully a person, through the unity of his divinity and humanity. Becoming Christian means being incorporated into the body of Jesus Christ which is being in full communion with God. This union with God in the person of Jesus Christ also connects the human person with all of creation.³⁹³ LaCugna’s contribution allows the doctrine of the Triune God to serve as the center and model of Christian life. Her work offers an easier way, not only for Christians to participate in Trinitarian life, but also opens a new way for all human persons to participate in the communion of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, which is a new way of being human.

³⁹⁰ Catherine M. LaCugna, “Philosophers and Theologians on the Trinity,” *Modern Theology* 2/3 (April 1986):175.

³⁹¹ Hill, *The Three-Personed God*, 49.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁹³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 3.

While LaCugna's work has won praise among scholars and there are also some critiques. Her new work attracts some critiques for reducing God to a function of human experience and blurring the distinction between Creator and creature.³⁹⁴ It is true that one of the dangers of LaCugna's Trinitarian theology is articulating a God who is in human experience, which will lose the transcendent meaning and being of the Triune God. Her contribution needs more explanation and development. God is beyond human experience; humans experience God in their daily lives, especially through the revelation and sacraments of Jesus Christ in Christian life.

LaCugna's Trinitarian theology delineates a historical God. Traditional Trinitarian theologies articulate a God who is beyond human experience and also ignore the relationship of God with human people and other creatures. LaCugna goes beyond these limitations in understanding God's life and the integrity of God's relationship with humanity and other creatures. So, LaCugna's insights of the Triune God and God's relationship with all humans and creatures need to be cherished because that will help Christians to live good lives with God in their daily living.

LaCugna's work needs to be balanced with the contributions of Christian historical understanding of God which emphasizes the transcendence of God. The understanding of the transcendence of God will always remind Christians of an eschatological future, a future of eternity. Her work causes serious concerns for Stanley J. Grenz and other theologians. Grenz points out that, "in the end her Trinitarian theology of God-for-us leaves us without a God who is inherently triune apart from us."³⁹⁵ Grenz's

³⁹⁴ Barbara Finan, "Review Symposium: *God for Us*," *Horizons* 20/1 (1993):134-135.

³⁹⁵ Stanley J. Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: the Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 161-162.

concern about Trinitarian theology without a God is actually worried that such a Trinitarian God has too intimate relationship with humanity and all creatures. Actually the Christian understanding about God does not only have an intimate relationship with human persons, but also has an intimate relationship with all creatures.³⁹⁶

LaCugna rightly claims that humans can experience are the consequences of God's action in history.³⁹⁷ Concurring with this, Roger Haight declares, "*God for Us* is an extraordinary piece of theological scholarship."³⁹⁸ Ted Peters praised her work as "a real jewel among the works of current Trinity talk."³⁹⁹ Grenz also praises LaCugna by saying, "her work stands as a vivid indication that despite the ongoing influence of the focus on the divine subject championed by Hegel, Barth, and Ratzinger, apart from a few notable exceptions,"⁴⁰⁰ LaCugna's contribution on Trinitarian theology will offer more inspirations to understand God and God's relation with humanity.

Among contemporary Trinitarian theologians, LaCugna is an outstanding one. All in all, LaCugna's contribution offers a new way to understand the Trinitarian God, which is open to humanity and invites all creatures to participate in the dynamic movement *a Patre ad Patrem*. The Trinitarian God is also a model for being a Christian. LaCugna's special insights about person, relation, and deification help Christians to understand more deeply and broadly the being of the Triune God and the meaning of becoming a Trinitarian Christian. The next step will turn to these three categories one by one.

³⁹⁶ This understanding is from a Catholic perspective about the sacrament of the holy Eucharist which shows that even bread and wine can become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

³⁹⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 221-224. LaCugna argues that Oikonomia is theologia in which humans experience the action of God.

³⁹⁸ Roger Haight, "Review Symposium: God for us," *Horizons* 20/1 (Spring 1993): 129.

³⁹⁹ Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*, 122.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

Person

The meaning of the term “personhood” has changed many times over the history of Trinitarian theology. The Latin tradition’s understanding of “person” follows Augustine, Boethius and Aquinas.⁴⁰¹ Augustine establishes the Western viewpoint and takes the divine essence as his starting point for articulating the Trinitarian life; but he has a difficulty in maintaining the distinction of persons.⁴⁰² The Italian philosopher Boethius defines person as “individual substance of a rational nature” which means that the Trinitarian persons are individual.⁴⁰³ Thomas Aquinas is not satisfied with Boethius’ definition as it can also apply to the rational soul of man, but accepts it because the substance is complete and is separated from others. Boethius’ definition of “person” helps Aquinas to express the Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Spirit.⁴⁰⁴ Aquinas argues that person is the most perfect concept in the whole of nature.⁴⁰⁵ The soul is part of human nature; it is not a person. Aquinas’ understanding of person actually widens the gulf between the divine persons and human persons.⁴⁰⁶ “Person” in the Greek traditional understanding makes a profound contribution to understand the relation between Father, Son and Holy Spirit as well as God’s relation with humanity. The Cappadocians, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus, claim that person (*hypostasis*) is the mode of God’s *ousia*. For the Cappadocians, personhood is the essence of being, not

⁴⁰¹ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 247; Bernard L. Marthaler, Ed. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2003), 149.

⁴⁰² Augustine, *The Trinity* 7.4. 8 (PL 42, 941)

⁴⁰³ Boethius explained this definition in his book *Liber de Persona et Duabus Naturis*, chapter three. See: *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition (Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 2003), 146.

⁴⁰⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3a, 16.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 29, c.3.

⁴⁰⁶ David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: the Doctrine of the Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 80.

something added to it. Greek theology traditionally asserts that the origin and cause of all existence is one specific *hypostasis*: the Unoriginate Origin, God the Father.⁴⁰⁷ Latin theology, on the other hand, emphasizes that substance is the principle of personhood; divine nature exists as a Trinity of coequal persons.⁴⁰⁸

In modern theology, there are different thoughts about using the term “person” in Trinitarian theology. Karl Barth believes that the modern emphasis on human individuality requires that one ceases referring to Father, Son, and Spirit as persons.⁴⁰⁹ Karl Rahner attempts to reformulate the classical term “*hypostasis*” with “distinct manner of subsisting.”⁴¹⁰ Jürgen Moltmann criticizes Barth and Rahner who suggest changing traditional Trinitarian theological term “person” to other terms; he argues that both Barth and Rahner’s suggestions cause a danger of separating God from the world and of walking on the way of modalism.⁴¹¹ Moltmann argues that only persons can be in relation with each other, not modes of being or modes of subjectivity.⁴¹² He furthermore argues that “person” already has the characteristic of distinguishing Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁴¹³ In the same direction, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Walter Kasper both see the importance of using the traditional category “person.”⁴¹⁴ Building on this understanding of using “person”, LaCugna also argues for continued use of “person” in articulating the distinctions within God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and God’s relation with human

⁴⁰⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 247-248.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁴⁰⁹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1:411-413; II/1:296-297.

⁴¹⁰ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 110.

⁴¹¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*. Trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 148.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*,

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁴¹⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991–8), 1: 272). Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 154.

persons and all creatures. In line with the above Latin and Greek two Church traditions of understanding personhood, LaCugna holds that a person is a being in relation and God's being is being in relation with Father, Son and Holy Spirit and in relationship with human persons and all creatures., LaCugna interprets the understanding of "person" in a new way that attempts to bridge the Greek and Latin traditions through dialogue with contemporary scholars.⁴¹⁵

LaCugna's contribution to "person"

Persons are in relationship with God and with every creature. Following traditional contributions about person and based on her contemporaries' contributions about person, LaCugna articulates her insights about person. She takes her contemporaries' contributions from philosophers, Orthodox theologians, Latin American liberation theologians, Protestant theologians, Catholic moralists and Eastern Orthodox ethicists and so forth.⁴¹⁶ LaCugna uses their positive contributions on person to develop her theology. LaCugna develops her insights on "person" through eight dimensions.

First, "*Persons are essentially interpersonal, intersubjective.*"⁴¹⁷ LaCugna explains that the Christian experience of God is the experience of the God of Jesus Christ, who is personal. God the Father moves beyond self toward the Son and the Holy Spirit,

⁴¹⁵ Ted Peters praised LaCugna's contribution about person by saying that "the concept of person employed in this position is one of the most developed of the contemporary options." See, Peters, *God as Trinity*, 126.

⁴¹⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 259; John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 41-42; Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 61; Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (New York: Orbis, 1988), 146; Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 61; Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (New York: Orbis, 1988), 146; Jürgen Moltmann, *History and the Triune God: Contributions to Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 86.

⁴¹⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 288

and then toward human persons and the whole world. So, the Trinitarian God is essentially relational. This interpersonal and relational understanding of “person” helps people to understand the being of the Trinitarian God as well as the being of the Christian and human person. The relational person is the meaning of being God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The relational person of God is the foundation and quality of human persons and all creatures.

Second, “*a person is an ineffable, concrete, unique, and unrepeatable ecstasis of nature.*”⁴¹⁸ Every person is a unique being that refers to others and is not fully communicable. This understanding of “person” avoids modalism in its understanding of the Triune God. The human person, from its being, opens to others. No person should be swallowed in the other person or in a community; every person has his or her essential and indispensable meaning and value.⁴¹⁹

Third, “*the person is the foundation of nature.*”⁴²⁰ LaCugna explains that the achievement of personhood is the fulfillment of nature. She argues that “what is most ‘natural’ is what corresponds most fully to right relationship at all levels: the person to others, to the earth, to God and to itself.”⁴²¹ The human person has responsibilities to all of creation. This understanding of “person” opens the horizon of being a human person to following Jesus Christ who is “the way, the truth and life” (John 14:6) for all beings. So, the most important aspect of human personhood is being, not doing.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ This is a challenge of swallowing a person in an authoritative situation or community. This understanding helps Confucian culture to value the personhood of Junzi.

⁴²⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 288.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 289-290.

Fourth, “*the freedom of the deified human being consists in being free-for, free-toward others, poised in the balance between self-possession and other-obsessions.*”⁴²²

LaCugna explains that the true person is *theonomous*: the human person is named with reference to its origin and destiny.⁴²³ This *theonomous* person, namely Christian, not only understands that one’s originality is from God, with others as brothers and sisters, has a mission in the world, but also remembers one’s way of going back to God the Father. Being a human person means cherishing one’s values and dignity, and respecting others and all creatures, as we all have a center of life who is the Trinitarian God.

Fifth, “*persons are catholic.*”⁴²⁴ LaCugna explains, “First, persons are created to be inclusive of everything that exists. Personhood is the bridge between human persons and everything and everyone else, past, present and future. Second, the inclusive, catholic person expresses the totality of a nature; each human person uniquely exemplifies what it means to be human just as each divine person uniquely exemplifies what it is to be divine.”⁴²⁵ Every person, no matter where and when one lives, has a deep connection with others, past, present, and future. Zizioulas explains the meaning of being a catholic person is that every human person represents the whole of human nature and anyone destroys humanity who commits an act of murder against any human person.⁴²⁶ From this point, one easily understands the meaning of what Jesus meant when he said, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40) This understanding of personhood helps people realize that a human

⁴²² Ibid., 290.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 290.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 106.

person always lives in the presence of God in the horizon of being in connection with everyone and with all creatures.

Sixth, “*the achievement of personhood requires asceticism.*”⁴²⁷ Human persons need some discipline to keep his/her personhood because human beings exist in the tension of sin and grace, and in the process of being divinized. St. Paul reminds Christians to live a renewed life according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.⁴²⁸ Christians also live in a tension of sin and grace, so some discipline is necessary for accomplishing one’s personhood.⁴²⁹ Asceticism is also a way to respect and to value everyone and every creature.

Seventh, “*person is an exponential concept.*”⁴³⁰ LaCugna points out that “with each new relationship we ‘are’ in a new way, we ‘exist’ in a new way; we have our being from another.”⁴³¹ Every new relationship changes a person in a new way. From this point one can say that the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is not a static communion, but a dynamic being with always a new relationship with each other and with human beings and all creatures. The Trinitarian God is always a new God; every human person is always a new person. In this sense, one can say that God is changing. This understanding reminds people that any new relationship will change a person’s being in relation, and any new relationship can bring people to a new way of being with others and with God. Human persons are always becoming new beings and developing new relationships with God and others. The Christian, as well as other human persons, should always be new persons.

⁴²⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 291.

⁴²⁸ The Letter to the Ephesians 4:17-32.

⁴²⁹ The Letter to the Colossians 3:5-11

⁴³⁰ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 291.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

Eighth, “*living as person in communion, in right relationship, is the meaning of salvation and the ideal of Christian faith.*”⁴³² LaCugna reminds one that, “Human beings are created in the image of the relational God and gradually are being perfected in that image (*theosis*), making more and more real the communion of all creatures with one another.”⁴³³ A Christian, who participates in the life of Jesus Christ, has an authentic being with others in communion (in a process of being). This is a new way of being human in communion with the Trinitarian God and all creatures.

Through these understandings of person, LaCugna holds the unity and diversity of the Triune God together, and offers an understanding of the being of the Trinitarian God and of becoming a Trinitarian Christian. The contribution of LaCugna’s understanding of “person” helps Christians to resolve the tensions between the one God and three persons, and the life of the Triune God and the life of human beings.⁴³⁴ LaCugna also helps to understand that human personhood and communion have their origin and destiny in God’s personal existence. The history of divine and human personhood intersects in a process of the *a Patre ad Patrem*, through Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit.⁴³⁵ Pope John Paul II also reminds people that “being a person means striving towards self-realization, which can only be achieved through a sincere gift of self. The model for this interpretation of the person is the Godself as Trinity, as a communion of Persons.”⁴³⁶

⁴³² Ibid., 292.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 56.

⁴³⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 246.

⁴³⁶ John Paul II, “*Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women),” last modified August 15, 1988, accessed May 7, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_15081988_mulieris-dignitatem_en.html

John Paul II reminds Christians that the model of every person is the three persons of God in the relation with one another and with every creature. The three persons in relation of the triune God is the meaning of being Christians. A person in relationship is the way of being Christian in the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*. This leads to LaCugna's contribution on relation.

Relation

Relation is the way of being God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Trinitarian being is being in relation within the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and with human persons and all creatures. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit differ from each other by their mutual relations.⁴³⁷ The meaning of being a person is only in one's relationships. John Zizioulas argues that "since '*hypostasis*' is identical with personhood and not with substance, it is not in its 'self-existence' but in communion that this being is itself and thus is at all."⁴³⁸ Relation is how a person exists. Augustine expresses that the relation of the three divine persons are "in each and all in each, and each in all and all in all, and all are one."⁴³⁹ Aquinas followed Aristotle in claiming that relation does not affect a being's substance; it is an accidental category.⁴⁴⁰ For Aquinas, a relation which is on the side of the world is real, but on the side of God is logical.⁴⁴¹ Jürgen Moltamn argues for the openness of the Triune God who is in relation to all dimensions of human life.⁴⁴² Person

⁴³⁷ Hill, *The Three Personed God*, 49.

⁴³⁸ John D. Zizioulas, "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28/5 (October 1975): 409.

⁴³⁹ Augustine, *The Trinity*. 6, 12.

⁴⁴⁰ Aristotle, and J. L. Ackrill, *Categories, and De Interpretatione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), eBook Collection. 17.

⁴⁴¹ Aquinas, ST I.13.7; 45.3.

⁴⁴² See, Moltamn, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 4, 151, and 153.

in relation is the way of being the Triune God. The Trinitarian God is an open Trinity who is and who has relationship with all creatures. Based on the contributions of Greek and Latin traditions, LaCugna insists that relation is the most important category. Relation changes a person. For a person, relation is the very important category and affects person's essence. LaCugna goes further to argue that the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the foundation and model of being human and the Trinitarian relationship also includes human persons and all creatures.

LaCugna's contribution to "relation"

Relation is the way of being person. LaCugna's relational ontology argues that all reality is referred to its origin in personhood. Relational ontology means to exist is to exist in relation, and being is being in relation.⁴⁴³ In her essay, "Re-conceiving the Trinity as the Mystery of Salvation," she claims that "the Trinitarian model of God-in-relation...is the appropriate framework for explicating the Christian's experience of salvation by God through Jesus in the Spirit."⁴⁴⁴ God's being in relation is the model for being a Christian person. LaCugna argues that *oikonomia* is God's personal self-expression and concrete existence.⁴⁴⁵ God's personhood is being in relationship, God's way of being is in relationship with human persons and with all creatures. In this understanding of relation, LaCugna offers her famous insight that the histories of divine and human personhood intersect in the economy of the process of *a Patre ad Patrem*.⁴⁴⁶ Human personhood is inseparable for the being of the Trinitarian God.

⁴⁴³ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 246.

⁴⁴⁴ LaCugna, "Re-conceiving the Trinity," 14.

⁴⁴⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 246.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

The relations among Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the existence the Triune God. Relation shows the nature of a person's being. Different relations lead to different existences. God the Father is the Father because of the Father's eternal relationship with the Son and the Spirit. The same is true of the Son's relation to the Father and the Spirit and the Spirit's relations to the Father and the Son. Father, Son, and Spirit are in communion in different relationships in a movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*. For Latin theology, this communion is *intradivine* occurrence; for Greek theology, this communion opens to human and all creation.⁴⁴⁷ LaCugna argues that the economy of salvation and the eternal being of God are correlational.⁴⁴⁸ The being of the Triune God has a relationship with the being of humanity.

The one Trinitarian God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, has different relationships with humanity. The relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit expands to the relationship between God and human persons and all creatures. Through incarnation, the Son, Jesus Christ has a historical and intimate relationship with human persons. The Son's historical relationship with humanity (or humans) happens in history, but is with all human persons in the horizon of God which includes everybody. The Son, incarnated as a human, has an intimate relationship with humanity which invites humans to participate in the life of the Triune God. Through deification, the Holy Spirit has a deep relationship with all human persons and sanctifies human persons, leading them into the life of God. The Father, through the Son and the Holy Spirit, has a special relationship with all human persons in God's permeating love for all humanity. The Holy Spirit gathers together all persons and creatures in union and communion with God. God

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 249.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid..

exists in right relationship with every creature, past, present and future. In light of this expression of the relations among the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and human persons, and in light of the historical reality of the Cross one has to acknowledge that God suffers in Jesus Christ.⁴⁴⁹ The one God -- Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- is in relation with all dimensions of human life. God suffers with and for human persons in order to save everyone, including those one who persecute other people.⁴⁵⁰ This assertion clarifies the reality that God is with God's people in history and God is a living God. Jesus told Philip that "whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). God suffering with humanity is an answer to Arius' questioning of the transcendent God can not suffer. Arianism was a dualistic thinking about the relationship between God and humanity. Rather, God gives Godself completely to humanity in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. In communion with human beings, God experiences all dimensions of human life, including suffering and joy, crying and laughing.⁴⁵¹ Jesus Christ is the presence of the Triune God. The Trinitarian God has relationship with all the dimensions of human life and with all creatures.⁴⁵²

The relationship of the persons in the Triune God is the model of relationships among humans. In relational ontology, no one person could exist, who does not have a relationship with other persons. LaCugna reminds people that the central theme of all

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 301. Of course, God's suffering needs a further interpretation.

⁴⁵⁰ From this understanding, one may realize the forgiveness of Jesus Christ on the cross is the love of God for all, includes the ones who persecuted him. See The Gospel According to Luke 23:34.

⁴⁵¹ Jesus Christ is the "one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus Christ is the "one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin."

⁴⁵² Here does not mean that God needs the world, but emphasizes that the reality of the relationship between God and all creatures.

Trinitarian theology is relation: God's relationship with human beings and human relationship with each other.⁴⁵³ The understanding of person as being in relationship affirms that love and communion among persons is the authentic meaning of existence. The being of human and all creation is from the person in relation to the Triune God; the world is from the divine love.⁴⁵⁴ It is also true that human persons become fully persons only in and through these relations with and in the Triune God and with other persons. Being a human person is being in a dynamic relationship with God, with others and with all creatures. Any new relationship with others could make one a new person. Being a human person in a right relationship with the Triune God and with all creatures is being always in a new way. Jesus Christ is a model of being in the right relationship with God and with other human persons and all creatures. Jesus Christ builds up the relationship with human persons and all creatures in the Holy Spirit to God the Father, and claims that, "Behold, I make all things new" (The Revelation to John 21:5). Every creation is from God. God's relationship with human persons and with all creatures is real relationship, not just a logical relation. The relationships of the three persons of the one God are the foundation and model of having relationship between human persons and with other creatures. In Jesus Christ, every person and creature has a new relationship with the Triune God and with all creatures: all in God, God in all and all in all.

Being Christian, the followers of Jesus Christ, is participating in the life of God the Father in the Son, Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have relations with human persons and all creatures. A human person has a relationship with the Triune God and others from his or her being. Because being is

⁴⁵³ LaCugna, "*The Practical Trinity*," 275.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 255

being-in-relation and being with the Triune God and all creatures, every human person, whether one lives in any time of history, has a relationship with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. There is not one person who exists that does not have a relationship with God and others. Every one, past, present, or future, has a relationship with the salvation of Jesus Christ who is the presence and action of the Triune God.⁴⁵⁵ Being is being a person in relationship, so, being a human person is being in relationship with God, with one's self, with other persons and with all creatures. In this sense, one can understand that there is no one person who is out of the salvation of Jesus Christ.⁴⁵⁶ A Christian is a relational being who should open to God, to others and to all creatures.

Person and relation are two special concepts which LaCugna offers to understand and to express the Triune God, human persons and all creatures. A person in relation is the meaning of being person. Articulating God cannot be separated from the relationship of God's relational action with human persons; God is a God for human persons and with human persons, and human persons are for each other and for God. The process of *a Patre ad Patrem*, which is from the Father and to the Father, is the dynamic characteristic of the person in relation with the Trinitarian God with all human persons and creatures in the love of God in Jesus Christ and through deification in the Holy Spirit. As relation is the way of being person, any new relation will change a person anew. So, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, are always new persons in new relationship. In this sense, one can claim that the Christian Trinitarian God is a dynamic God always in a new relationship among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and in a new relationship

⁴⁵⁵ This is another way to understand that the salvation of Jesus Christ is for all human beings and creatures.

⁴⁵⁶ This work does not discuss the abuse of freedom, which causes self-centered and self-isolation of life, Christians call sin.

with different human persons and with various creatures. In the same way, human persons and all creatures are new every day. God's salvation to human persons includes incarnation and deification. Deification is an indispensable part of the process of *a Patre ad Patrem*. The next turn is on another very important concept which LaCugna offers: deification.

Deification

Deification, divinization or *theosis*, are the words in Greek and Latin traditions to express the process by which human persons become partakers in the life of God through the salvation of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:4 and 2 Corinthians 3:18). Deification is part of the salvific work of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit together with the incarnation. The economy of salvation which is *oikonomia*, means incarnation and deification, and the glory of God revealed in creation.⁴⁵⁷ Both the Greek and the Latin traditions affirm that communion is part of the nature of being a person. For Greek theology, "the mystery of communion is in the economy of redemption and deification. Jesus is the true union of divine and human and therefore the means of our own communion with God and with one another. The Holy Spirit is the power and presence who brings about through *theosis* the real union of the creature with God."⁴⁵⁸ Redemption through the incarnation and deification is the communion of the Triune God in economy of salvation, which makes all in all, all in God and God in all. Augustine argues that deification is a result of the grace of God, not human nature. Thomas Aquinas adds that deification is the gift of God for human persons to participate in the

⁴⁵⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 56.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 249.

divine nature.⁴⁵⁹ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches the importance of deification thus:

The Word became flesh to make us “partakers of the divine nature”: For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God. For the Son of God became man, so that we might become God. The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.⁴⁶⁰

Deification is the way in which the Holy Spirit invites human persons to participate in the life of the Triune God and become authentic Christians. LaCugna makes a special contribution to the understanding of deification.

LaCugna’s Contribution to “Deification”

LaCugna’s understanding of deification is based on the Greek and Latin traditions, especially their understanding of person as relational, which leads her to the insight that *theologia* is inseparable from *oikonomia*. By valuing the Greek theological contribution and Rahner’s axiom, LaCugna offers a dynamic parabolic model to express the one ecstatic movement where all things originate from God and are return to God. She continuously argues that “the subject matter of Trinitarian theology is the one dynamic movement of God, *a Patre ad Patrem* (from the Father, to the Father), in the economy of incarnation and deification.”⁴⁶¹ LaCugna believes that deification and

⁴⁵⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II.112.1

⁴⁶⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 460.

⁴⁶¹ LaCugna, “The Trinitarian Mystery of God,” 177.

incarnation are inseparable actions of God's salvation through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Deification is grounded in the eternal mystery of God's very being.⁴⁶² LaCugna reminds Christians that the meaning of deification is "God bestows the fullness of divine life in the person of Jesus Christ, and that through the person of Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit we are made intimate partakers of the living God."⁴⁶³ Deification and incarnation reveal the essential unity and equality of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in relationship with human persons in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Because there is only one self-communication of God and one history of love, the eternal procession of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit exists in time and history which is the mission of incarnation and deification. LaCugna explains that,

God goes forth from God, God creates the world, and God suffuses its history and dwells within us, redeeming the world from within. God makes an eternal gift to the world of God's very self. Through the outpouring of God into our hearts as love, we become by grace, what God is already by nature, namely, self-donating love for the other.⁴⁶⁴

This movement is the communion of God with all creation; it is also the process of our deification as human persons. In this vision, deification brings Christians into a process of eschatological fulfillment of personhood.

LaCugna claims that there is one parabolic movement *a Patre ad Patrem*.

Deification is an inseparable part of this movement through which God invites human

⁴⁶² LaCugna, *God for Us*, 73.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 353-354.

persons and all creatures to participate, through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, in the life of God. Deification is thus the way to be fully human which means living a Trinitarian life in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. All human persons, in every time and every culture, are called to live a life in communion with the God, oneself, and all creatures in the one movement *from* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and *in* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and *to* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This movement is also the way of becoming authentically Christian as well as the way of becoming authentic human persons in different times and cultures.

Trinitarian Being is the Model of Being Christians

Person in relation is the meaning of being. God's being is the foundation and model of being Christian. Deification is the way which God invites human persons and all creatures to participate in the life of the Triune God and God's relationship with others. LaCugna argues that Trinitarian theology is a way to contemplate the Triune God and human life, and that it also offers a model for being human persons.⁴⁶⁵ Understanding the Triune God means understanding the Trinitarian life which is a person in relationship to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and with all human persons and creatures in the movement of the *a Patre ad Patrem*. Trinitarian life is indeed the life of Christians and all creatures. Human persons and all creatures are created by God and share the same life of the Trinitarian God. Trinitarian theology is not only about God, - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; rather, it is also about every human person and every creature who participate in the life of the Trinitarian God. In the relational unity of the divine persons ,

⁴⁶⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 379, 382-383.

Christians not only find the foundational model for being a human person, but they also realize their relationships with other human persons and all creatures.

Deification is a way of living in a Trinitarian life. In understanding *oikonomia*, which is inseparable from *theologia*, one understands that there is one life of the Triune God in which human persons are invited to partake. Incarnation and deification are the eternal processions of *a Patre ad Patrem* in time and history, which transform and perfect all human persons and creatures in union with God.⁴⁶⁶ Jesus Christ, the communion of divine and human, and the Holy Spirit, transfigure and deify human persons and unite all persons, divine and human, in communion.⁴⁶⁷ Trinitarian life is the life of communion and indwelling: God in human, human in God and all of human persons are in each other.⁴⁶⁸

Deification is one indispensable part when articulating the life of the Triune God. For LaCugna, the understanding of the Trinitarian God has to go hand in hand with the understanding of human person and all creatures in relationship with the Triune God. The ultimate purpose of the human person is to have the fullness of humanity in communion with the Trinity through incarnation and deification. This life of deification is the prayer which Jesus offered for his disciples “that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us”(John 17:21). Being in communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is the meaning of becoming Trinitarian Christians. LaCugna claims that the meaning of living a Trinitarian life is “through the economy of creation, redemption, deification, and consummation, experienced in the context of our

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 353-354

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 292.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

own personal histories, we are enabled to know, love and worship the true living God.⁴⁶⁹

Trinitarian Christians live a life of the Triune God in a concrete time and context.

Trinitarian theology is a way to understand the Christian life and the whole world. The Holy Spirit deifies human beings through being in relationship with Jesus Christ, with oneself, with others, with all of creation. Through incarnation and deification, the human person participates in the life of God and becomes a Trinitarian person. These Trinitarian persons are exemplified in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ. These Trinitarian persons are Trinitarian Christians.

Deification is also the way of becoming an authentic Christian and becoming an authentic human. LaCugna's articulation about person, relation, and deification helps Christians to understand the life of the Triune God and the life of Christians. She offers a model of being an authentic Christian that participates in the life of the Triune God and has relationships with other human persons and all creatures. LaCugna's insights not only bring Trinitarian theology back to the center of Christian life, but also help Christians in different cultural contexts to be authentically Christians by becoming Trinitarian Christians. Her work is indispensable for becoming authentically Chinese Christian in Chinese Confucian cultural context. Being an authentic Christian in LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights is becoming a Trinitarian Christian.

Conclusion

This chapter examined Trinitarian theology as a way of contemplating the mystery of God, human life and all creatures. LaCugna explores Trinitarian theology from biblical texts, early Christian practices, and reinterprets the Greek and Latin

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 378.

Trinitarian traditions for a newer practical understanding of the life of Trinitarian doctrine. LaCugna concludes that *oikonomia* is *theologia* which means theology is inseparable from soteriology. The life of the Triune God is the foundation and model of being Christians. Through LaCugna's special insights on "person, relation and deification," Christians can understand the mystical life of the Triune God and Christian life in a new way. All human persons and all creatures are in a movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*. The next chapter enters into a dialogue between Christian experience and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights about becoming Trinitarian Christians, and then engages Confucian cultural teachings on ways of becoming a Junzi. This hopes to bridge the tension of being both an authentically Chinese and Christian leading to becoming an authentically Chinese Christian.

CHAPTER SIX: BECOMING AUTHENTICALLY CHINESE CHRISTIANS

Introduction

This chapter provides an important dialogue, which asserts the values of Confucianism and Trinitarian theology for being a Christian in China. It examines how Chinese Confucian philosophy including the way of being Junzi and LaCugna's Trinitarian theology mutually nourish each other and provides a model for being Christian in a Chinese Confucian cultural context. These insights into the relationship of Trinitarian God and a new life of Junzi foster a way of becoming a Chinese Christian by becoming a Trinitarian Junzi.

Being Chinese is Becoming Junzi

Being an authentic “human” person in Confucianism is becoming Junzi. Confucianism is a way of life through retrieving the ancient Chinese wisdom and learning from other wisdoms for renewing contemporary human life. The core teaching of Chinese Confucianism is becoming Junzi. Junzi is a Confucius' response for renewing the life of family, the order of society, and the whole world. Chinese culture is a family centered culture, and it extends and connects to and with the society, with Heaven and with all creation. So, being Junzi is simultaneously being in three life circles with responsibilities for family, society, and the Heaven and earth.

In the first circle, Junzi practice Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety) to one's parents and one's brothers and sisters. In the second circle, Junzi practice the Li (禮 rite) in the spirit of respect to one's friends in the society. The Li (rite) is also an extension and practice of Xiao dao (filial piety) in relationship with others in society. In the third circle, Junzi practice the Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven) to follow Heaven and to treat all

creations with the spirit of Xiao dao (filial piety) and Li (rite). The Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) expresses the relationship of Junzi with Heaven and all creatures.

This third circle is the zenith and foundation of the other two circles.

The life of Junzi is a continuing spiral mutual influencing circle. The family circle extends to the social circle, and then extends to the circle of Heaven and earth which includes every creature. From the family viewpoint, this extension of the life circle is an expression of Junzi practicing Xiao dao (filial piety) in the relationship with family members, with social colleagues, and with Heaven and all creatures. From the viewpoint of Heaven, the understanding of the Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) also helps Junzi understand that the practice of the Xiao dao is not just a cultural rule or a virtue, but the natural action of being human.

Every person has the life and mission of Heaven which encompasses the passion of Xiao dao (filial piety) to one's families, to one's colleagues in the society, to Heaven, and to all the creatures. These three connected spiral circles are the process of becoming Chinese Confucian Junzi. The first circle emphasizes the oneness of a family; the second circle emphasizes the oneness of a society; and the third circle emphasizes the oneness with Heaven and every creature. The ultimate goal of becoming Junzi is being in the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human, 天人合一) and to become a Dar en (great person 大人).⁴⁷⁰

All Confucian teaching is about the meaning of being the authentic human who is Junzi. This is a Chinese way of being a human person. The Chinese Confucian culture understanding of being Junzi also has some limitations which are opportunities to open

⁴⁷⁰ See Chapter Four.

one's self to other wisdoms of understanding being human and to rebuild human life, society, and the whole world in a new horizon and vision. Being Junzi is the first step in becoming a Chinese Christian. By valuing the Confucian cultural contribution about becoming an authentic person who is Junzi, and by being open to the main teachings of Christianity; in Catherine M. LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights about being authentic Christian, Chinese Christians will find a new way of becoming a Chinese Christian.

Being Authentically Christians in the Trinitarian Theological insights

Being Christian is being in and with God the Father, the Son who is also Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The understanding of God deeply connects with the way of being Christian which the contemporary Trinitarian theologian Catherine Mowry LaCugna argues that the doctrine of the Trinity is a teaching about God's life with humans and human life with each other.⁴⁷¹ Trinitarian theology should not be only a doctrine about God, but an understanding of God's person in relation with the human person and with all creatures. LaCugna asserts that the mystery of God and the mystery of salvation are inseparable.⁴⁷² Trinitarian theology is not only about God, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, but also about every Christian, every human person, and every creature who participate in the life of the Trinitarian God. LaCugna's special insights about "person, relation, and deification" will help Christians understanding more deeply and broadly about the meaning of being a Trinitarian Christian.

Understanding person, relation and deification is the way of living the Trinitarian life. God is in the human person and the human person is in God and all human persons

⁴⁷¹ Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for u.* 1.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.

are in each other.⁴⁷³ So, the ultimate purpose of human person is to achieve the deification in the communion with God and with all humans and all creatures. All creatures are Trinitarian beings.

Being a Christian is having a Trinitarian life.⁴⁷⁴ Through incarnation and deification Christians participate in the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* becoming authentically Christian. There is only one parabolic movement *a Patre ad Patrem* which permeates in the life of human person and all creation. All human persons, in every time and every culture, are called to live in a life in communion with the Triune God, with oneself, with others and with all creatures in the one movement *from* the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and *in* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and *to* the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Participating in the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* is the way of becoming authentic Christian; this participation should also be the way of becoming authentic human in every time and culture.

The movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* includes three levels of circles. The first circle is the inner dynamic love between Father, Son, and the Spirit. The second circle is the relationship between the Triune God and human persons in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and through the deification in the Holy Spirit. The third circle is the relationship between the Triune God and all creatures, which is also in the process of incarnation and deification through a way of Sacraments. In this one movement of the *a Patre ad Patrem* and the three circles of the continuity of God's love, one can understand that human persons are Trinitarian beings, and all creatures are all in a same movement from the

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 292

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.378.

Father, the Son, and the Spirit and will be back to the Father in participating in the life and mission of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Catherine LaCunga's Trinitarian insights about person, relation and deification will help Christians to become Trinitarian Christians. The human person is based on and from the three persons of God who has relationship with every human person and every creature through incarnation and deification in the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*.

Pivot from Divine Personhood to Human Personhood

The Divine Personhood unlocks the meaning of "human" personhood. For LaCugna personhood is the meaning of being and person is being in relation. The histories of divine and human personhood intersect in the economy of the process *a Patre ad Patrem*.⁴⁷⁵ Person is relation; relation is the way of being person. God's three persons in relation *is* God's being. The divine personhood is the foundation and meaning of being human personhood. God's divine personhood enlightens human personhood to be human. Person is essentially related to God.

Human person is created by God as the image and likeness of the persons of the Triune God. So, the human person does not only have relation with God, with other human and with all creatures, but also is the relation. One of the contemporary Trinitarian theologians, Theodore James Whapham, argues that "human persons are relational beings who find their eschatological and ontological fulfillment through participation in the divine life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 223.

⁴⁷⁶ Theodore James Whapham, "Pannenberg on Divine Personhood," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75 (2010):4.

Through participating in the divine life, human person will find its meaning and fulfillment. LaCugna argues that the understanding of the Triune God cannot be separated from the understanding of Christian life. This parabolic movement *a Patre ad Patrem* is the life of the Triune God, Father, Son, and the Spirit, with all creations, which is also a model of being human personhood. Jesus Christ is the model of becoming human person in the three persons of God. In Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, human persons find the meaning of being human.

Human personhood is based on divine personhood, but there is a difference. In divine personhood, because person is relation, there is a full unity and diversity in the life of the Trinitarian God. Whereas in human personhood, as human has the limitations and sins which caused the tension of unity in relation with God and with others. This tension leads human personhood in a process from being to becoming.

Sin has caused the human understanding of personhood to become unclear and the human understanding of relation full of challenges. This limitation is a reason human always needs to be renewed in the relationship with the Triune God by participating in the life of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The salvation of Jesus Christ is the model and method of becoming in the right relationship with God and with all creatures. Furthermore, as LaCugna argues that human personhood is also in the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*. In the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*, human personhood flows out from the Trinitarian life. As human person is from Trinitarian personhood, human personhood still has the potential of being in perfect relation with God and with all creatures which will be from the incarnation of the Son, Jesus Christ and in the deification in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ is the authentic personhood for being human in the Triune God. As human person has a process from being to becoming, the pivot from divine personhood to human personhood is a process to become authentic Christian and authentic human. As divine person is the meaning of being, Trinitarian personhood is also the model to be Chinese Junzi, the model to be authentic human.

The understanding of being Chinese Christian through dialoguing between Trinitarian theological insights and Chinese Confucian cultural contributions is a way of seeking to be both authentic to Chinese Confucian culture and Christianity. This is also a process of being Christian in relationship with God and with all human persons from doctrinal language to pastoral language.⁴⁷⁷

For Christians in a Chinese Confucian cultural context, LaCugna's special insights about "person, relation and deification" will help their understanding become more deep and broad about "Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety), Li (禮 rite), and Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven)" when they try to become an authentically Chinese person. Being Chinese Christian is being in the nourishment of the Confucianism, and in the light of the Trinitarian theological insight. Chinese Christian should be both nourished by Confucian cultural teaching about being human person and by Trinitarian insights about being authentic Christian. The dialogue between LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights about being both authentic Christian and authentic Confucian contributions about being authentically Chinese should be continued.

Junzi walks hand in hand with Trinitarian Christian

⁴⁷⁷ See chapter two.

Being Junzi is the first step of being a Chinese Christian. To take this first step, there needs to be a dialogue between the Confucian ways of being authentically Chinese (Junzi) and being Trinitarian Christian according to LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights. In Chinese cultural understanding, Heaven, earth, and human beings are always walking hand in hand. So, this is a natural dialogue between Confucian cultural teachings and Trinitarian theological insights.

Xiao dao (孝道) and Person

Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety) and person are special contributions in Confucianism and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological conclusions. These two concepts will help Chinese Christian find a new way of being in Chinese context. First of all, it will allow for a comparison of the similarity of Confucianism and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights, which will enlighten Chinese Christians to value both Confucian cultural ideals and Christianity. Secondly, it will provide a mutual critique between Confucian understanding of becoming Junzi and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights about becoming authentic Christian. These critiques will help both sides to acknowledge their limitations and be open to each other.

The Xiao dao (filial piety) practice is the foundation of being Junzi. The practicing of Xiao dao (filial piety) is also the foundation of rebuilding one's family, the state, and the whole world in a right order. The first virtue of Xiao dao (filial piety) practice is Ren (charity) which means to love others. In Confucianism, there is not an isolated human person; everyone belongs to a family, a society, and a large family under the sky which includes Heaven and all creatures. This understanding of being a human person in Confucian cultural contribution echoes LaCugna's insights about person. She

argues that persons are interpersonal.⁴⁷⁸ Confucius and LaCugna all agree that the human person from one's very being has relationship with God, with other human persons and with all creatures. Understanding both will help Chinese Christians realize that all human persons are in one family and love each other.

Yi (義 righteousness) is the criterion for being Junzi. The practice of Ren (charity) has to follow the guidance of Yi (righteousness). Ren (charity) and Yi (righteousness) always go hand in hand. All the practices of Xiao dao (filial piety) should be in accordance to Yi (righteousness). Without Yi (righteousness) Junzi cannot follow the correct way of life.. This Confucian ideal may be found in LaCugna's insights that the human persons need some principles to keep their personhood.⁴⁷⁹ Junzi is not a blind or an arbitrary person, but a person who walks according to the order of life. Walking on the right way of life, in Confucianism is Yi (righteousness), in Trinitarian theological insight this is expressed as being in relationship with God through following the teachings of Jesus Christ. Yi (righteousness) and Christian teachings of being human persons will help Chinese Christians to walk on a way with the light from human knowledge and Christian revelation.

Zhi (智 wisdom) is the passion of opening to others by learning from them and having relationships with them. Confucius taught his disciples to learn from the ancient wisdom and their contemporaries. The purpose of Zhi (wisdom) in Confucianism is to know Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), and to know others and to know oneself. Knowing Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) will help a Junzi to know others and to know oneself. The virtue of Zhi (wisdom) will help Junzi to connect with ancient people,

⁴⁷⁸ LaCugna, *God for us*, 288.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 291.

with one's contemporaries, and with Heaven. This characteristic of Confucian understanding of being Junzi is similarly expressed in LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights. She argues that persons are catholic. Persons are created to be inclusive of everything. The catholic person expresses the totality of human nature.⁴⁸⁰ Confucian understanding of Zhi (wisdom) and LaCugna's insights about the catholic characteristic of person will help Chinese Christians to learn from each other and to open to other persons and wisdom. With these two lights, Chinese Christians will have a deep understanding of the meaning of one family under the sky, which includes Heaven and all creatures.

Yong (勇 courage) is the spirit of being Junzi. The virtue of Yong (courage) makes it possible for Junzi to give up one's life to love others. Yong (courage) is a virtue of expressing faithfulness. Being Junzi is being faithful to oneself, to one's family, to others, and above all, to Tian ming (the mission of Heaven). The virtue Yong (courage) reminds Junzi to value one's uniqueness and responsibilities. This insight also has a similarity with the understanding of person in LaCugna's insights. She argues that "a person is an ineffable, concrete, unique, and unrepeatable ecstasies of nature."⁴⁸¹ There are not two of the same persons in this world. Everyone is unique, valuable and every person should shine the light of one's life. With the Confucian understanding of Yong (courage) and LaCugna's insights about person, Chinese Christians will cherish one's values and callings, and balance the benefits of one's family and oneself according to the meaning of being a human and the calling of becoming a new person.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 288-292.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 289.

These similarities between Confucian understanding of becoming Junzi and LaCugna's insights about person allows Chinese Christians to value their cultural values in being Christians. These similarities allow them to open to the wisdom of Christianity and will inspire Chinese people to open to Christianity for being Junzi in a new sense.

Confucian understanding of being Junzi in practice of Xiao dao (filial piety) and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights of person have similarities, and also has some differences for mutual enlightenment and critique. Here the process will follow LaCugna's eight point insights about person with Confucian understanding of Junzi who practice Xiao dao (filial piety). The first understanding of person for LaCugna is that "Persons are essentially interpersonal, intersubjective."⁴⁸² LaCugna argues that every person always has relationship with other persons. But she did not say how every person has relationship with others. LaCugna's insight will help Junzi to understand one's relationship with others in one's families in the society and between Heaven and earth is from one's very being as person in relation.

Confucian understanding about being Junzi as filial-pious person will help Chinese Christians to understand that being in one's family, in the society and between Heaven and earth are concrete expressions of the relational being. Confucian understanding of being Junzi will help Christian to practice their understanding of person in a concrete context, such as family and society. One has to practice one's responsibilities one by one from one's family to the society and to all creatures. LaCugna's insights about person will help Confucian Junzi to go beyond one's family and race to have a new vision of being in this world with others.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 288

LaCugna's second point of person which is "a person is an ineffable, concrete, unique, and unrepeatable ecstasis of nature."⁴⁸³ She argues that every person has his or her essential and indispensable meaning and value. This insight will help Junzi to avoid being exhausted by the family or society when one misinterprets Confucianism as a negative hierarchy. The authoritative community tends to misinterpret Confucian teaching about Xiao dao (filial piety) as blindly following a leader of a community. Confucius emphasizes the order of life in one's family, in society and between Heaven and earth which also includes the hierarchical meaning. But Confucius teaching is a positive hierarchy. Hierarchy has two kinds of meanings, one is a positive meaning which expresses the different responsibilities in different times and situations, such as every family should have a hierarchical structure to educate children when they were young. This positive meaning of hierarchy points to a right order of family, community, and society. The other negative meaning of hierarchy has a danger of ranking one person above other persons because of his or her ethnicity, religion, social position, education, and so forth, especially in an authoritative community.

The misinterpretation of Confucianism is dangerous just as is the misinterpretations of Christianity. The Trinitarian family is person-in-relation. This family does not have a static hierarchical structure which is the foundation and model of human family.⁴⁸⁴ On the one hand, Chinese family-centered culture has a potential of static hierarchy which has a potential of losing someone's dignity. LaCugna's insights will help Junzi to respect and to value every person whether one is in any situation or

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ John Paul II claims that Trinitarian God as a family is the model of being human family, not vice versa. John Paul II, *Puebla: A Pilgrimage of Faith* (Boston: Daughters of Saint Paul, 1979).

position. Every Junzi is an ineffable, concrete, unique, and unrepeatable person. On the other hand, Confucian cultural understanding of being Junzi will help LaCugna's insight about person to realize that every concrete, unique person always belongs to a community and everyone has responsibilities to other persons in the community.

Confucius and LaCugna remind Chinese Christians that every human person as well as every Christian is a precious gift from God with a special mission in building a family, a society, and the whole world. For Christians in China, as well as Christians all over the world, Confucius and LaCugna remind every Christian, whether one is a bishop, a pastor, or a lay faithful, everyone has the same grace and dignity from God our Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, but with different responsibilities. In God's family, everyone is indispensable.

LaCugna's third point of person is that "the person is the foundation of nature."⁴⁸⁵ Person is the meaning of being. LaCugna's insight about person will help Chinese people to understand that becoming Junzi is not just a dream for Chinese people, but because of one is a person. This person is based on the persons of the Triune God. For Confucianism, human nature is the "life of Heaven" or the "mission of Heaven" which is also the foundation of being Junzi. In Confucian understanding, every human person is a concrete Tian ming (the life and mission of Heaven). Confucianism understands human persons through Tian ming (the life and mission of Heaven). LaCugna understands the Triune God and human persons through the understanding of person. Confucian understanding of being human will help LaCugna to realize that because every person is from God / Heaven, so, person is the foundation of nature. LaCugna's insights will help

⁴⁸⁵ LaCugna, *God for us*, 288.

Chinese people to understand person is more important than one's virtues. In the insights of Confucius and LaCugna, Chinese people will understand that Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, is the example of the authentic person for everyone.

LaCugna's fourth point of person is that "the freedom of the deified human being consists in being free-for, free-toward others, poised in the balanced between self-possession and other-obsessions."⁴⁸⁶ She argues that every human person is a *theonomous* person who has a center of life who is the Triune God will cherish one's values and dignity and respects others and all creatures. LaCugna's this insight of person will help Junzi to avoid two extremes, one is communism which has a tension of ignoring human person's self-possession and personal rights; the other is the localism which would make people forget their responsibilities to others outside of one's family or community. Confucian understanding of Xiao dao (filial piety) will remind Christians to practice their responsibilities in one's family first and then extends it to a broader circle of life.

LaCugna's fifth point is that "persons are catholic."⁴⁸⁷ Every person has a deep connection and relationship with other persons and with all creatures, past, present, and future. LaCugna argues that each human person uniquely exemplifies the meaning of being human just as each divine person uniquely exemplifies the meaning of being divine. This insight of person will help Chinese Confucian understanding that the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human) is not a dream; rather, it is the characteristic of being human. Every human person has a relationship with God as well as with other human persons and with all creatures. Furthermore, the contributions of LaCugna about person will help Chinese people to understand that every human person,

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 290.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

whether he or she is in any situation and time, also exemplifies the meaning and value of being human. The value and meaning of a person is not because of one's ethnicity, class, or position, but because he or she is a person in the persons of the Trinitarian God. This understanding of being a human person will help Junzi to understand that Junzi is an inclusive person who has a deep connection with every human person, every creature, and all creation. So, whether one is a Christian or not, from LaCugna's understanding of person, everyone has a relationship with God. Confucian understanding of Junzi has three circles of life which are family, society, and Heaven and earth will help LaCugna to understand how human persons practice their catholic characteristic step by step, from one's immediate responsibility to a larger community.

LaCugna's sixth point of person is that "the achievement of personhood requires asceticism."⁴⁸⁸ Human person needs some disciplines to confine oneself between the tension of grace and sin. LaCugna's insights will help Junzi to realize the danger of walking astray. The human person needs to constantly renew one's life according to the life of the Trinitarian God. The Trinitarian person is the foundation and model of human person. Confucian teachings about practicing the Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (wisdom), and Yong (courage) are the ways to help Christians to follow the criterion of being an authentic person.

LaCugna's seventh point of person is that "person is an exponential concept."⁴⁸⁹ Every new person will renew a person's being in new relation, and every new relationship will bring people to a new way of being with others and with God. LaCugna's this point of understanding person also reminds that Christians should

⁴⁸⁸ LaCugna, *God for us*, 291.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

understand the immutability of the divine essence in a new way. Person is relational. God's persons are changing by having new relationship among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and with different human persons. This understanding involves a substantial revision of traditional theological understanding of the immutability of the divine essence. Like Wolfhart Pannenberg,⁴⁹⁰ LaCugna also might face a critique in this point. Actually, Pannenberg and LaCugna both try to walk on the way of Christian Tradition. Theodore James Whapham points out that "the core of truth in the patristic notion of divine immutability in the idea of God's fidelity to himself and to Israel that is expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures."⁴⁹¹ God's fidelity to human is immutable; the Triune God and God's relation to all human and all creatures are always new.

By claiming that person is an exponential concept, LaCugna argues that human persons are always in a new relationship with God, with others, and with every creature. LaCugna's insight will help Chinese people to understand that with every new person, one will have a new relationship. This understanding of person also supports Confucius' dream that by calling Chinese people as Junzi to renew the family, the society, and the whole world. Confucianism will help LaCugna to understand how human person will renew ones' life, one's family, the society, and the whole world by practicing Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite) and Tian ming (the mission of Heaven).

⁴⁹⁰ Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 2, trans. George H. Kehm, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971). 157–173.

⁴⁹¹ Theodore James Whapham, "Pannenberg on Divine Personhood," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75 (2010):4.

LaCugna's eighth point of person is that "living as person in communion, in right relationship, is the meaning of salvation and the ideal of Christian faith."⁴⁹² Person in right relation is the meaning of being authentic Christian. LaCugna argues that human personhood and communion has the origin and destiny in the persons of the Trinitarian God. This insight of person will enlighten Confucian Junzi to realize that being faithful person with others in one's family, in society and in the whole world is also a way of being in relation in God's love. The history of divine and human personhood is in a same process of *a Patre and Patrem*. Being human person in the person of the Trinitarian God will help Junzi to understand the potential of having a full communion with God, with others, and with all creatures through the incarnated God Jesus Christ who is the way. Confucius teachings about practicing Xiao dao (filial piety) through Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (wisdom) and Yong (courage) will help Christian to practice one's faith in one's family and beyond.

The comparison of the similarities and mutual critiques between Confucianism about being Junzi through practicing Xiao dao (filial piety) (孝道) and LaCugna's insights about person will help Chinese Christian to value both cultural insights and Christian teachings for being authentically Chinese Christians. Since one's parents are the roots of one's life, so Xiao dao (filial piety) is certainly the root for one to practice other virtues and other responsibilities. Trinitarian personhood is the foundation and model for being Christians. Every Christian should seek the light in the way of being person in the life of the Triune God. Christian faith will help Chinese people to find out the deep meaning of Xiao dao (filial piety); and Chinese Xiao dao (filial piety) also will help

⁴⁹² Ibid., 292.

Christians to understand a contextual way of practicing Christian faith. The Trinitarian insights will help Junzi to realize that the deep meaning of being human is based on the persons of Trinitarian God who has relation with every person and all creatures. Being Junzi and being Christian should walk hand in hand in a mutual nourishment to help Chinese Christian becoming both authentically Chinese and authentic Christian. As Xiao dao (filial piety) and person both are the core category of Confucianism and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights, this part of dialogue is the longest one. After dialoguing between Confucian understanding of Xiao dao (filial piety) and LaCugna's Trinitarian insight about person, the next section will turn to another dialogue between Li (rite) and LaCugna's concept of relation.

Li (禮) and Relation

Li (禮rite) is a very important concept for Confucius to express the relationship of Junzi with one's families, with one's friend in society, and with Heaven and all creatures; relation is also a very important theological concept for LaCugna to express the characteristic of being person. Li (rite) and relation are both very important for becoming Chinese Christian. The Li (rite) is the way which Junzi being in the social circle of life. In practicing the entire Li (rite), the attitude of respect is the spirit. The Li (rite) is one of the indispensable dimensions of the life of Junzi and the Li (rite) permeates all dimensions of Chinese people's life. Offering sacrifice is the Apex of the Li (rite) which includes worshiping the Heaven and venerating one's ancestors and loved ones. Offering sacrifice to Heaven and venerating the ancestors is a very important Li (rite) for Chinese people. Veneration to one's ancestors is a celebration of the continuity of one's ancestors' life;

this celebration is also a communion action with one's ancestors and with Heaven and all creatures. Confucian understanding of Li (rite) is the way of being Junzi with others.

Relation, in LaCugna's understanding, is the way of being a person. In LaCugna's understanding that God's personhood is being in relationship among Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in a movement *a Patre ad Patrem*. These are reciprocal relations in which the Father respects the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son respects the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit respects the Father and the Son. The authority of the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit is not power, but respect in love. Christian God is an open Trinitarian God who is and who has relationship with all creatures. The relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit expands to the relationship between God and human persons and all creatures. Through incarnation and deification, God the Father has a new relationship with every human person and creature. God is with God's people in history and beyond history. God is a living God. The understanding of person in relation helps Chinese people to understand that God's persons are in relation also with all human persons and with all creatures. The meaning of being a person is only in one's relationships. God's being persons in relation is the model of being Christians as well as being human person. Being Christians in the right relationship with the Triune God and with all creatures is being always in a new way. Being Christians, the followers of Jesus Christ, is participating in the life of God the Father in the Son, Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights of person in relation will help Junzi to understand the connection and responsibility to others more deeply. Li (rite) is the way to practice the relationship with others in Confucianism. LaCugna will help Junzi to

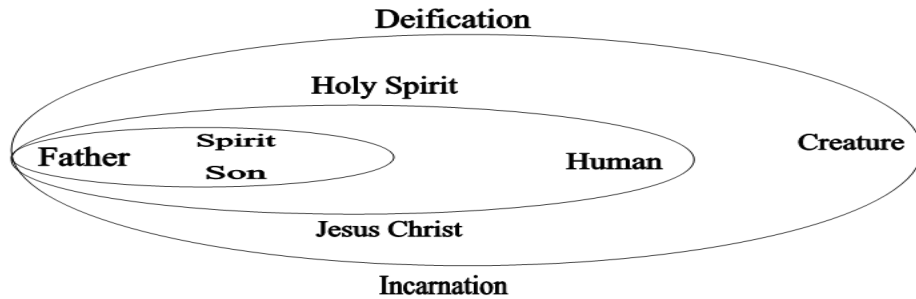
understand the relationship with others is because human person is from a Trinitarian community of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this sense, it should be clear that there is not just “a Junzi” or “a Christian,” but there is always a Junzi or a Christian in relationship with others and with all creatures and above all with God. A Christian is a relational being who opens to God, to others, and to all creatures. LaCugna’s understanding of person in relation when relate to human person, one needs to realize the limitations and sinfulness of human person. Although human persons also share the person of the Triune God, human persons (includes Christians) cannot have a full relationship with everyone and every creature in a same level.

Confucian teachings about being Junzi and LaCugna’s insight about person in relation both have three levels of different relational circles.⁴⁹³ In Confucianism, Junzi has three fundamental life circles, which are family, society, and Heaven and earth. The first circle is one’s family circle, where Junzi experiences the organic love and practices Xiao dao (filial piety). The second life circle is one’s society where Junzi practices Li (rite). The third life circle is Heaven and earth where Junzi practices Tian ming (the mission of Heaven). This process from the family circle to the social circle and to the circle of Heaven and earth is a process of becoming Junzi and a process of fulfilling one’s responsibilities from love of one’s blood family to one’s social family and to the family of Heaven and earth. This extension from one’s family to society and to Heaven and earth is also a desire for seeking fulfillment of becoming Junzi. This is also the Confucian method of learning things from below, perceiving things about above. This constantly

⁴⁹³ See Chapter Four and Five.

opening to a bigger world is one of the characteristics of the Chineseness (which has been discussed in chapter two).

Chart 5: The Three Levels of Circles in the Movement of a *Patre ad Patrem*.⁴⁹⁴



In LaCugna’s Trinitarian theological insights, the three persons of God have an open relationship with human persons and with all creatures in a parabolic movement. This movement actually includes three levels of circles.⁴⁹⁵ The first circle is the inner dynamic love between Father, Son, and the Spirit. Father bestows all himself⁴⁹⁶ to the Son and the Spirit in love and the same love through the Son and in the Spirit come back to the Father. This circle of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit opens to a second circle--the Triune God and human person.⁴⁹⁷ In the second circle of the movement of the Father, through the incarnation of the Son, Jesus Christ, bestows the same love to human persons, and invites human persons to participate in the life of the Triune God; through

⁴⁹⁴ These three levels and three circles show how the Trinitarian life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit flows from the Father to the Son and to the Holy Spirit and back to the Father in the first level and first circle, and then to human persons through the incarnation and the deification in Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, and back to the Father, and then to all creatures, and back to the Father. This chart shows how human persons and all creatures share the same life and in the same movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*.

⁴⁹⁵ See chart 5.

⁴⁹⁶ God does not have a gender; one can use “himself” or “herself” to indicate God.

⁴⁹⁷ Moltmann also argues that the life of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is “open, inviting unity, capable of integration.” See Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: the Doctrine of God*, 149.

the deification in the Holy Spirit, human persons, in the life of “*in persona Christi*” --- in the person of Christ --- in the Holy Spirit, go back to the Father. Deification is the way of Christians and human persons participating in this movement *a Patre ad Patrem* back to the Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. In this circle, by following Jesus Christ and participating in the life of the Trinitarian God in the deification, Christians are in a process of becoming authentically Christians. Being an authentic Christian comes in communion in the life of the Trinitarian God and becoming Trinitarian Christian. The same love of the Trinitarian life continues to open to a third circle to all creatures in the incarnation of Jesus Christ through the way of Sacraments.⁴⁹⁸ In the third circle of the *a Patre ad Patrem*, through the deification in the Holy Spirit and the salvation of Jesus Christ, all the creatures participate in the life of the Trinitarian God and will go back to the Father. The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the summit of this circle. In the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the creatures, the bread and the wine, not only participate in the life of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, but also become “the body and blood” of Jesus Christ.⁴⁹⁹ In this one movement and three circles of the continuity of God’s love, one can understand that the whole beings are Trinitarian beings, human persons and all creatures which are all from the Father, in the Son, Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, and will be back to the Father in participating in the life, action and mission of Jesus Christ and in the deification in the Holy Spirit. The first circle is the inner dynamic life between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Father bestows himself to the Son and to the Holy Spirit in love, and in the Spirit, the same life come back through

⁴⁹⁸ Here the understanding of the sacraments is in the Catholic perspective.

⁴⁹⁹ For more information about a Catholic perspective about the Holy Eucharist, see Kenneth Brighenti, *The Catholic Answer Book: The 300 Most Frequently Asked Questions* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2007).

the Son to the Father in the Spirit. The second circle is the Trinitarian love of God which invites human persons to participate in the same life of the Trinitarian God through incarnation. Deification is the way of being Christian and being human in this movement to the Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The third circle is the same movement which opens to all creatures and invites them to be partakers of the Trinitarian life of God. This one movement and three levels of circles are another way of expressing traditional Trinitarian theological concept of *perichoresis* (which means mutual inclusive).⁵⁰⁰

These three levels of circles of the movement *a Patre ad Patrem* will help Christians to understand the historical presence of God in Jesus Christ more clearly. Incarnation is the life of the Triune God who chooses to love human persons in any kind of situation. Deification is the life of the Triune God who opens to every human person by inviting them to be partakers of the life and work of God. The challenge of the Cross was not an abandonment of Jesus Christ by God, but a life of the incarnated God who chose to love humanity and to reveal the love of God to everybody, including the ones who persecuted him.⁵⁰¹ These three levels of the circle of the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* will open Chinese people's horizon and vision to understand the being and meaning of

⁵⁰⁰ Moltmann argues that the one God has three persons in relation is the meaning of being God Father, Son and the Spirit who are in a *perichoresis*. This life of the Triune God opens to all human and creations. See, Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: the Doctrine of God*, 1981, 149-150; See LaCugna, *God for Us*, 270-278.

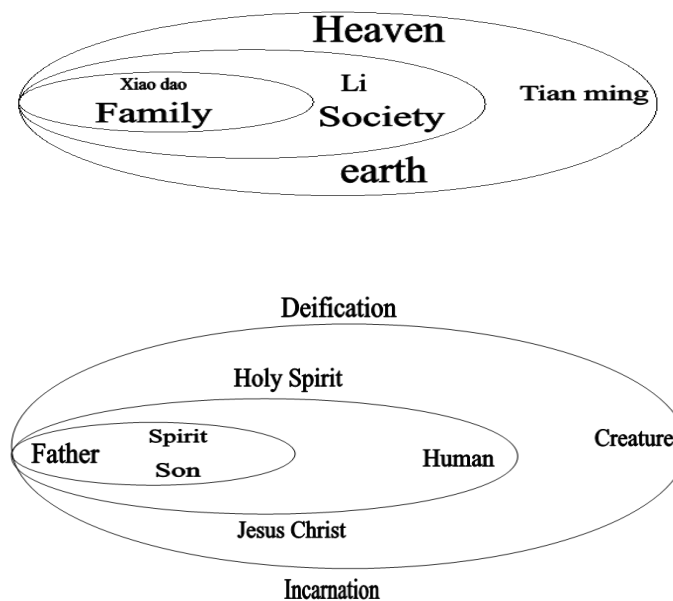
⁵⁰¹ In his work, David Coffey concluded against Moltmann's misunderstanding of the theology of Cross. David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 127; See: Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 27.

their life and all creatures. Human persons and all creatures are accompanying by the Triune God from the beginning of life to eternity.

These three levels of circles in the movement *a Patre ad Patrem* will help Confucian Junzi to enter into a new horizon of understanding being human person. In the movement *a Patre ad Patrem*, Junzi will realize that the relationship with Heaven is a relationship with a Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Human person is from and in the persons of God and has relationship with God and with others. So, there is not a person who exists does not have a relationship with God and with others. Every Chinese person, past, present, or future, has a relationship with the Triune God in different levels because of different people's limitations. Jesus Christ is the concrete presence of the Triune God among human history, Chinese people also has a kind of connection and relationship with him. The process of *a Patre ad Patrem* is the movement which the Triune God opens to all human persons and creatures from above. Through this movement, Chinese Junzi will find out the full meaning of being authentic human person. the three life circles of Junzi which is a spiral life circle Junzi practicing Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite) and Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) in a desire of hunger, a hunger of seeking relationship with other people, with Heaven and with all creatures. When Chinese Junzi in one's three life circles meet the Triune God who opens to all human and creatures in the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* through the three levels of circle, Chinese Junzi will become New Junzi who is Trinitarian Junzi. This new Junzi will understand that the life and mission of Heaven (天命) which has a significant revelation in the life of the incarnated God Jesus Christ. The practice of the Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety) through the four virtues Ren (charity), Yi (righteousness), Zhi (wisdom) and Yong

(courage) is a relational life which has a foundation in the Triune God. The practice of Li (rite) in the spirit of respect is a way of choosing to love others even though they have their limitations and sins which Jesus offers a good news of life on the Cross. Christianity reveals a way which the Triune God chooses to love humans and all creatures; Confucianism offers an understanding that a human seeks a way of becoming authentically human by following the mission of Heaven. One is from above to blow to open to all human persons and all creatures; the other is from blow to above to seek the meaning of being human persons.

Chart 6: The Comparison of the Three Life Circles of Junzi and the Three Levels of the Movement *a Patre ad Patrem*.



The purpose of this research is to seek a new way of becoming authentically Chinese Christian. The Confucian understanding of the Li (rite) and LaCugna's Trinitarian insight of person in relation will help Chinese Christian to realize the responsibilities to other human persons and to all creatures in a deeper and broader sense.

Being Chinese Christian is being in relationship with and has responsibilities for all Chinese people and for all human persons. Next, section will turn to the third dialogue between Confucian understanding of Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insight about deification for being authentically Chinese Christian.

Tian ming (天命) and the deification

Tian ming (天命, the mission of Heaven) means the life of Heaven or the mission of Heaven. Through Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), Junzi follows the mission of Heaven to fulfill one's responsibilities. Deification expresses human persons are sanctified by the Holy Spirit and becoming partakers in the life of God. The two concepts also will help Christians in Chinese Confucian context becoming authentically Chinese Christians. The life of human person is a gift which human persons have received from Heaven. For Confucianism, everyone receives Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) from above. The life of Junzi is to follow Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) and to seek in the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human) for becoming a Da ren (great person). As everyone receives the same life of Heaven, everyone has the same mission of Heaven with different responsibilities. Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is the human nature which should be the way of human life. In the light of Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), Chinese people consider that everyone depends on every one and every creatures. Participating in the work of Heaven makes Junzi as the co-worker with Heaven. Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) will help Junzi to understand that the Xiao dao (filial piety), actually, flows from one's being and nature. Practicing the Xiao dao (filial piety) in one's family circle and practice the Li (rite) in the social circle are also different ways of practicing Tian ming (the mission of Heaven). Through offering the

sacrifice to Heaven, Chinese people's life connects with Heaven and the entire world becomes a world in divine.⁵⁰² The ultimate purpose of being Junzi is entering into the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human). Although the idea of Heaven and the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human) is not a very clear in Confucianism, apparently, it has a similar meaning which Jesus calls his disciples and all human persons to be one in God.⁵⁰³ In Confucianism, Junzi practice the Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) and fulfill one's responsibilities in one's family through practicing Xiao dao (filial piety) and in the society through practicing Li (rite). The understanding of Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is a natural Confucian way to understand Heaven and human life in Chinese Confucian culture.

Deification is the third very important category for LaCugna's Trinitarian theology. Deification is grounded in the eternal mystery of God's very being. Deification and incarnation reveal the essential unity and equality of Father, Son, and Spirit in the relationship with human person in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian self-communication life and the history of love are all in the same eternal procession of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which exists in time and history is the Incarnation and deification. Through deification God bestows the fullness of divine life to Christians who are made intimate partakers of the Trinitarian living God. Deification is a way of living in a Trinitarian life. The ultimate purpose of human person is through deification to have a fullness of our humanity in communion with the Trinitarian God. The Holy Spirit deifies human person in a way of being in relationship with God, with others, and with all

⁵⁰² Fang, Dongmei (方东美). *The Original Philosophy of Confucianism and Daoism* 原始儒家道家哲学, 112.

⁵⁰³ The Gospel According to John 17:21

creatures. Deification is an inseparable part of the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* which God invites human person and all creatures to participate in the life of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. All human persons in every time and culture are called to live a life in communion with the Triune God, with others and with all creatures in this one movement. Deification is the way which God sanctifies human life as the life of God.

Confucian understanding of Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) expresses human understanding the relationship between God and human which is a process from Heaven to human; LaCugna's insights about deification articulates the relationship between the Triune God and all human and all creatures, which is a process from human back to God. Confucian concept Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) will help Christians to understand that human life is from God with a mission; LaCugna's concept of deification will help Confucian Junzi to realize that God's life always opens to humans and invites humans and all creatures to enter into the life of God. The difficulty for LaCugna is she used relation to express the difference between persons which cannot express the positive hierarchy in Christian life. Confucius emphasizes the equality of human but different responsibilities in time and situation. Time and situation is a context for a human person to practice one's responsibilities to different people. The understanding of people's different responsibilities in different contexts will help LaCugna to understand the meaning of positive hierarchy. Confucian cultural understanding about Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) will help Christians to realize that through the natural revelation, human persons could understand the basic meaning of life. Human person from their very being has already participated in the life of God in a natural level. The dream of the Tian

Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human) is the hunger of Chinese people for God.

LaCugna's insights on deification will help Confucian Junzi to understand more vivid the meaning of Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) and the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human). Through Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), Junzi will connect with the incarnated God Jesus Christ in a realistic and mystical way. Junzi receives the life and mission of God in a realistic way. Through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the deification in the Holy Spirit, Junzi will be also in the life of the Trinitarian God in the process of *a Patre ad Patrem* in a mystical way. With the light of Christian faith, Confucian Junzi will understand Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) could be a living experience. This living experience is having a life and mission of Jesus Christ who is the incarnated God.

In summary, through the dialogue between Confucian cultural contributions of Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety), Li (禮 rite) and Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven) and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights about person, relation, and deification, one can understand that there is not a significant tension between Confucian understanding of being Junzi and Trinitarian theological insights about being Christian. They have mutual similarities and supplements to each other. This dialogue tells people that there is a deep attraction between these two wisdoms. Confucian wisdom offers a Chinese way of becoming authentic human person who is Junzi; Christianity offers a new way of becoming authentic person who is the Trinitarian Christian. In the mutual enlightenment and nourishment, Chinese Christians will realize that the first step of becoming authentically Chinese Christian is becoming Junzi in Confucian cultural contributions;

without being Junzi, Chinese Christians would not become both authentically Chinese and Christian. Every authentic Christian is being in a local cultural context and nourished by Christian faith in a new way. As person in relation is in a dynamic process of *a Patre ad Patrem*, every Christian should become new Christian with other human and creature in a new context and in one's daily life. In the nourishment of these two wisdoms of Confucianism and Christianity, Chinese Christian will find a new way of being Christian which will be Trinitarian Junzi. In the nourishment of Christianity, Confucian understanding of becoming Junzi also will enter into a new vision and horizon of being authentically Chinese person.

A New Junzi

In the Christian Trinitarian theological insights, Junzi will understand that one's life in practicing Xiao dao (filial piety) in one's family circle, in the social circle, and in the circle of Heaven and earth is not only a way of becoming Junzi, but it is also a way of participating in the historical love of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Through each of these expanding circles, the Junzi extends the practices organic love to an increasingly larger sphere of influence. With LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights, Chinese Junzi will live in a new horizon of living with one's families, with one's colleagues in the society and with one's friends all over the world, past, present and future.

In the Trinitarian theological insights, Junzi will have a new horizon of becoming authentically Chinese and new Junzi. Christian faith will open the horizon of new Junzi from local to universal and to eternal. Being Chinese Christian is being in a concrete context that connects with history and future. In the horizon of Trinitarian God, new

Junzi will have three departure viewpoints as a whole which are past, present and future. Each of the viewpoints of life will help new Junzi to understand more deep the meaning of being Chinese.

From present to past and to future

This “present” is here and now with the Triune God. From here in the horizon of the Trinitarian God and in the process *a Patre ad Patrem*, a new Junzi looks back to his or her past and envisions a future. This understanding of present is a new and graceful time that is beyond the philosophical perspective. It is a new “today,” a new “present” with the “presence” of God in relationship with others and with all creatures. This horizon of present will help new Junzi to realize that everyday human life is meaningful and valuable. New Junzi will walk together with the Triune God and work together with God. This new “today” is an incarnated time and being which is being with the Triune God in one’s context and time in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. From this “present” new Junzi will enter into the horizon of God which is the communion with all creatures, although this communion is still limited. From this horizon at present, new Junzi will understand the deep meaning of one’s past which includes one’s ancestors and other historical events; new Junzi even will understand more deeply the meaning of the people in the past of history, because new Junzi will understand the history in communion with God which is a Christian horizon of understanding history and future through Jesus Christ. In the Trinitarian horizon, new Junzi will understand that past has a meaning in present. In the horizon of the living God, everything is meaningful. At the “present” with the Trinitarian God, new Junzi sees in the “past” how God was there and worked with other people, and envisions a “future” that is where one is going to go with

God full of hope. The future is another present with the Trinitarian God in the dynamic process of from the Father in the Son, Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

From past to present and to future

In the Trinitarian horizon, new Junzi will understand the present and future from the past view that exemplifies the continuity of God's creational history. Human life has its continuity in history, and this history can help human persons to understand the present lives and envision a continual future. Understanding present from a past view is also the predominant Chinese way of understanding human life which is also a reason of learning from ancient wisdom and the teachings of one's ancestors is so important for Chinese people. Without the Trinitarian horizon, this view present life and future from a past historical view will also narrow Chinese people's creativity and the relationship with other people. Through the creational perspective, new Junzi will see one's present life and the future has a continual meaning and calling. God creates all human beings and creatures. The future of Trinitarian Junzi is also a future with God. Present and future are the continuity of past in the same love of the Trinitarian God.

From future to present and to past

From the "future" to see one's "present" and "past" is a special horizon. This vision will just happen in the horizon of the Triune God. This future is a promise of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This future view of human life will help new Junzi to understand the meaning of present life and history are both valuable. This future view also will arouse new Junzi to value historical tradition and to fulfill one's present responsibilities. A Trinitarian Junzi will have a special future that is the eschatological Jesus event. Through Jesus Christ, especially his suffering, death and Resurrection,

Trinitarian Junzi will participate in the life of the Trinitarian God and have a trustworthy future, a Christian future. The Christian future is the eschatological future which will be a new heaven and a new earth in the movement *a Patre ad Patrem*. From this perspective of future, Christians will find out that not only one's present life has a relationship with the future of Eternity, but also one's past life and one's ancestors, the whole human beings were accompanied and supported by God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The whole life journey is walking with God.

This Trinitarian horizon will help Chinese people to understand that every human person has a relationship with God. Every human life is from God (Heaven). This horizon in the contributions of Confucianism will help Christians understanding any stage of life, childhood, youth or adults all could have an intimate relationship with God.⁵⁰⁴ Everyone has opportunities of choosing to fulfill one's responsibilities as a Trinitarian person. When Christians in China cherish their traditional view of horizon (from past to present and future) and promote the other two views of horizon (from present to past to future and from future to present to past), Chinese Christians will have a multiple vision and will find out the profound meaning of past and present life and will fulfill their mission of Heaven in a new sense. In the light of the Trinitarian God, past and future all have a sense of present. In this horizon, past has special values, present has a concrete hope, and future will enlighten people's life. In the light of LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights, and

⁵⁰⁴ James W. Fowler offers a very good theory about faith development which tries to help Christians to grow up in faith. But in Confucian cultural contribution and LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights, Fowler's theory needs some supplement, because whether kids and adults all could have intimate relationship with one's parents and with God. James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Father* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher, 2000).

Confucian contributions, the horizon of new Junzi is past, present and future in one as a whole; the vision of new Junzi is in the life of the Trinitarian God.

Conclusion

Being Christian in Chinese context means seeking a new way of becoming both authentically Chinese and authentic Christian. The tension of being authentically Chinese Christian was because people misunderstood the values of Chinese culture and the relationship between Chinese culture and Christianity. The positive experience of being Chinese Christian reminds people to cherish the values of both Chinese Confucian culture and Christian faith for being authentically Chinese Christian. The positive experience of being Christian in Chinese context needs to be valued in the new situation. Following the good contribution of tradition, contemporary Christians need to seek a new way of being authentically Chinese Christian. From a sociological perspective, after his fieldwork in China among Chinese Catholics, Madsen pointed out that “Catholicism sustains a way of life that was good for building strong communities in a preindustrial Chinese society but is not good for building a civic morality in an industrialized, urbanized China.”⁵⁰⁵ A calling to be authentically Chinese Christian is also a mission of being Chinese Christian. Being Chinese Christian always should base on being in the Confucian teachings and in the light of Christian Trinitarian insights. The Confucian understanding of being Junzi will help Christians to understand the meaning of being human in Chinese context; LaCugna’s Trinitarian theological insights will help Chinese people to have a new meaning, a new horizon and a new vision for being Junzi. Cherishing Chinese Confucian cultural contribution about Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite), and Tian ming (the mission of

⁵⁰⁵ Madsen, *China’s Catholics*, 136.

Heaven) is also a way to recognize the presence of God among Chinese people.

Christianity will enrich Chinese culture and the meaning of their core teachings of being authentically Chinese. Christian faith will not undermine Chinese culture of Xiao dao (filial piety), but will strengthen and open the horizon for Chinese people to understand the Xiao dao (filial piety) in the Trinitarian horizon. The Christian faith will help Chinese people to cherish one's culture and to find its profound meaning of life in the light of Jesus Christ who is the incarnated God, and in the deification in the Holy Spirit.

Being authentically Chinese Christian is nourished by Confucian understanding of being Junzi and in the Trinitarian theological insights about being authentic Christian in the circles from one's family to the society and to the Heaven and earth, and in the process of the *a Patre and Patrem* with the Trinitarian God in three levels of circles which includes other human persons as brothers and sisters and all creatures. Being authentically Chinese Christian is becoming Trinitarian Junzi.

CHAPTER SEVEN: BECOMING TRINITARIAN JUNZI: NEW JUNZI, NEW CHRISTIAN

Introduction

Being an “authentically” Chinese Christian means becoming a Trinitarian Junzi in a Chinese, Confucian cultural context. This chapter offers an understanding of what it means to be an “authentically” Chinese Christian, and also provides an inspiration for being Christian in different cultural contexts. This chapter will, first, present conclusions based on the research described in this work. Second, it will articulate the meaning of being a Trinitarian Junzi as a new model for being a Chinese Christian, which is, in its own manner, a new way of being both Junzi and Christian. Third, it offers new insight on being Christian in a diverse context.

A New Way of Being Chinese Christians

Throughout the history of being Christian in China, Chinese Christians have experienced a tension between being both “authentically” Chinese and Christian. In a contemporary Chinese cultural context, an urgent pastoral question arises among Chinese Christians seeking a new way to be simultaneously Chinese and Christian. In order to answer this pastoral question, this work explores the experience of being Chinese Christians within the context of Chinese history, from which the positive and tense experiences of being Chinese Christians emerges (as discussed in Chapter Three). The positive experience of being Chinese Christian will be valued in contemporary Christian practice; while the tension must be addressed through a theological inculturation in dialogue with the contributions of the Christian experience, Confucian cultural teachings, and Christian Trinitarian theological insight. The positive experience of being a Chinese

Christian is witnessed through the very important aspect of “cherishing”⁵⁰⁶ the main Chinese culture—that of Confucianism—and the core teachings of Christianity—Trinitarian theology on the Triune God and God’s relationship with human persons and all creatures.

Being authentically Chinese means becoming Junzi according to Confucian teachings. The three Confucian terms: Xiao dao (孝道 filial piety), Li (禮 rite), and Tian ming (天命 the mission of Heaven), indicate the meaning of becoming Junzi (as discussed in Chapter Four). The core teaching of Confucianism is being a filial-pious person who practices Xiao dao (filial piety) within the family. By practicing Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite), and Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), Junzi is a relationship and responsibility for and towards one’s immediate family, one’s colleagues in a social context, and with Heaven and earth, towards all creatures. Becoming a Da ren (great person 大人), who knows the will and heart of Heaven, and living a life of Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human) is the ultimate goal of becoming Junzi. A Confucian understanding of becoming Junzi is a Chinese way of becoming and authentic human person. Becoming Junzi should be the first step in becoming a Chinese Christian. Becoming Chinese always leads to a new way of being. Being Christian is a new way of becoming Chinese.

Becoming Christian means being in God’s Triune of Being.⁵⁰⁷ Catherine M. LaCugna’s Trinitarian theological insights help Christians to understand the Triune of God and God’s relationship with all human persons, and with all creatures, through

⁵⁰⁶ The word “cherish,” as explained in Chapter One, indicates the idea of embracing both positive and aspects.

⁵⁰⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Named God and the Question of Being* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 342

categories of person, relation, and deification, in a new way (which has been articulated in Chapter Five). LaCuga's concept of Trinitarian theology is based on the revelation of Jesus Christ and Christian practice expressed in the liturgy and creed. Through an understanding of the Trinitarian God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God has a relationship with all human persons and creatures, so that Christians understand the Triune God as a model of being Christian. The Trinitarian God has a relationship with all human persons and creatures through *a Patre ad Patrem*. Therefore, becoming Christian is not being constrained by a static cultural model, but being a Trinitarian Christian.

Historically, there has been a divide between becoming Christian and being “authentically” Chinese, resulting from acaused tension brought on by the idea of being Chinese Christian. Based on a practical theological understanding, this tension can be reconciled by connecting Confucian cultural teachings on becoming Junzi and Catherine M. LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insights on becoming of Trinitarian Christians. Through a dialogue between the main Chinese Confucian teachings on being Junzi and the essential element of Christianity, the Triune God as a model of being Christian, the tension between being an authentically Chinese Christian in a Chinese context can be reconciled, and doors opened to become Christian in a Chinese cultural context and beyond (as discussed in Chapter Six). At the same time, this work also envisions a new way of being Chinese Christian: New Junzi, New Christian. This new Chinese Christian is a Trinitarian Junzi, a Chinese Christian in line with the Christian Tradition both contextually and culturally.

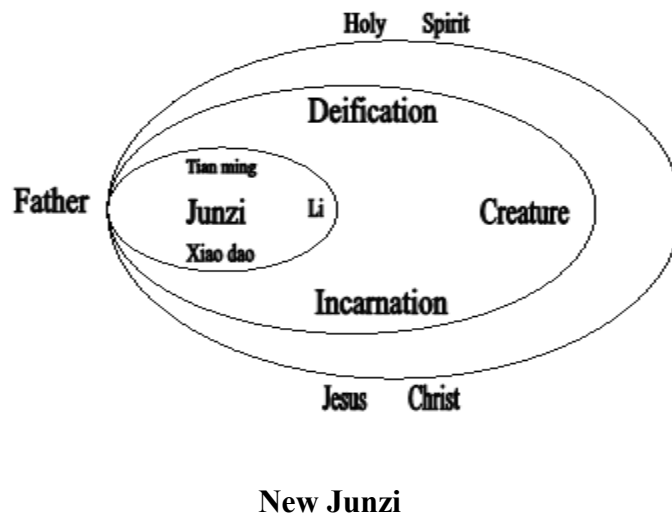
New Junzi, New Christian

Trinitarian Junzi is a new model for being Chinese Christian. Becoming Trinitarian Junzi is the goal of the process of incarnation through inculturation in a Chinese context. This new way of being Christian in a Chinese cultural context is Christianity incarnated in Chinese culture. It is also a way for Jesus Christ to continue his journey of incarnation among the Chinese people. The Trinitarian Junzi is a natural product of the openness between Chinese culture and Christianity.⁵⁰⁸ Being Trinitarian Junzi is a new way of being Christian, as well as Chinese. The Trinitarian Junzi will enrich Chinese culture and transform both the Chinese people and the tradition of Christianity. Being Trinitarian Junzi will bring the Chinese people into a new horizon as new Chinese. This new way of being will help Junzi understand that Chinese people also come from the Triune God, and are in the movement of going back to the Father through the Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. The mission from Heaven for Junzi to one's family, to society, and to Heaven and earth, are part of the mission of Christians. The Trinitarian Junzi will be open to being Christians in a new cultural context. This culturally Chinese way of being Christian will help Christians find the presence of God in different cultures, and understand another way of practicing the Christian faith. Through Trinitarian Junzi, one will understand the mutually transformative process of theological inculturation between Chinese culture and Christianity. This Trinitarian Junzi is not a static model for being "authentically" Chinese Christian. It is in a dynamic understanding of the relationship between Confucian cultural teachings and Trinitarian theological insight, which is like the transition from pastoral language to doctrinal language, and to a

⁵⁰⁸ About the meaning of Chineseness, please see chapter two.

new pastoral language to another new doctrinal language.⁵⁰⁹ As the pastoral language and doctrinal language should go hand in hand when articulating Christian faith in different cultural contexts, Christianity should also go hand in hand with positive cultural contributions for becoming Christian in different contexts. This new model of being Trinitarian Junzi will also inspire new ways of becoming Chinese Junzi and new ways of becoming Christian in other cultural contexts.

Chart 7: Trinitarian Junzi



Trinitarian Junzi is a new Junzi. Junzi, according to the teachings of Confucianism, is a basic understanding of the meaning of being Chinese and being a human person. The foundation of being Chinese is to practice Xiao dao (filial piety) in one's family/life circle, and to extend this practice to the larger life circle of society through the practice of Li (rite), and then to the life circle that includes Heaven and all creatures in order to seek Tian ming (the mission of Heaven). The practice of Li (rite) is an understanding of one's relationship with others. The practice of Tian ming (the

⁵⁰⁹ The relationship between pastoral language and doctrinal language has been discussed in Chapter Two.

mission of Heaven) is one's relationship with God and all creatures. These are part of the continuous life circle in which Junzi practice Xiao dao (filial piety) towards every human person, and towards God and all creatures. The understanding of Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) helps Junzi understand the meaning of Xiao dao (filial piety) in a deep, broad way as having a relationship and responsibilities with one's blood family, with others in society, and with Heaven and all creatures. As for a Confucian Junzi, who does not have a fundamental foundation and mutual, defined relationship with Heaven (God), there is no clear horizon for life or an eschatological vision of the future, a future in Eternity. Christianity will open horizons for Confucianism in understanding human life through the vision of the Triune God, who is the creator and image of all human persons and beings.⁵¹⁰ Christianity will help the Chinese Da ren (great person) understand that seeking the will and heart of Heaven is to participate in the life of the Trinitarian God through the incarnated Son, Jesus Christ, and in the deification of the Holy Spirit. In a Trinitarian theological light, Confucian Junzi will become a new Junzi.

New Junzi is being in the Trinitarian God

Enlightened by Christian Trinitarian theological insights, Confucian Junzi will understand that the real meaning of being a filial-pious person is the model of the Triune God. The Trinitarian Junzi has a relationship with the Trinitarian God, in the family of God, in the process of *a Patre ad Patrem*, and in the relationship with every human person and creature in the journey from earthly life to eternity. A new Junzi understands that one not only belongs to an immediate blood family, but to the family of God, which includes every human person and creature. The relationship with the Triune God

⁵¹⁰ Confucianism also presents Heaven as the ancestor and creator of the Chinese people, but not clearly. See: Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 145.

connects everyone in a deep and concrete way. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ, especially the sacrament of baptism, new Junzi will understand that “the water is thicker than blood,” the love of God is more important and tighter in bringing together the whole being.⁵¹¹ Trinitarian Junzi will recognize that Chinese people are also the children and image of the Triune God, and that the world is God’s Garden, every one, whether belonging to a particular ethnicity, community, religion, or social position, is God’s child.

The Trinitarian Junzi understands that God’s love and salvation is available to all. In the light and vision of the Triune God, the Junzi will understand that every Chinese person is also from and in a relationship with the Trinitarian God. The new Junzi has a new relationship with God and all creation. Christians have the privilege of experiencing and understanding the salvation of God through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and deification in the Holy Spirit. Other people in different cultural contexts may not have a clear sense of being in a relationship with God because of their limitations or sins.⁵¹² Every Christian has a mission to share the experience and understanding of God and others as brothers and sisters in God’s family. Sharing the mission of Heaven in the spirit of respect through the love of Xiao dao (filial piety) is also the mission of the new Junzi. For the new Junzi, life is a mission from the Trinitarian God. The mission of Confucian Junzi and the mission of Christians comes together to become the mission of the Trinitarian Junzi. The Trinitarian Junzi has a life in the Triune God and the mission of

⁵¹¹ Here is a Catholic understanding of the meaning of the sacrament of baptism through which Christians receive a new life in Jesus Christ as a new way of being. See: Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213.

⁵¹² Here is not a judgment to anyone when using the word “sin,” but an expression of walking on a wrong way of life. Here is also another way to say that the natural understanding of God and human needs a supernatural revelation to enlighten. See: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* 1.1.1.

Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Within a Trinitarian light, the Confucian Junzi will be transformed into a Trinitarian Junzi. Trinitarian Junzi will help Confucian Junzi enter a new way of being with other humans, with creatures, and above all with the Trinitarian God.

New Junzi has a Trinitarian Horizon

The New Junzi has a Trinitarian Horizon. The Trinitarian horizon brings Junzi into an understanding with other human persons and creation into the family of God. In the Trinitarian horizon, Junzi will realize that relationships with other human persons should be as close as that with one's parents and one's blood family. Everyone lives in the family of God with other humans. Based on emotional feelings, everyone has different levels of relationships, from that with one's family to friends and beyond, but within a Trinitarian horizon; all relationships are equal, important, and close. The relationship with one's family and with others is based on the relation between persons and the Trinitarian God. The relationship with other human persons is modeled on the relationship with and in the Trinitarian God. In the horizon of the Trinitarian God, the relationship with one's present family, with one's ancestors and one's future family, as well as the whole of humanity across time and within different contexts are all part of the same horizon of the Triune God. This Trinitarian horizon will help Junzi to value every human person in the family of the Trinitarian God. Trinitarian Junzi will not have a private relationship with God and other persons, but all relationships will have a public dimension. This means no one can hide from God or from other people.⁵¹³ Trinitarian

⁵¹³ In the Genesis, when Adam and Eve hid from God, God came to look for them (The Book of Genesis 3:8-10). When Cain killed his brother and escaped from him, God asked

Junzi are always a public persons who have responsibilities to their brothers and sisters in the context of family (community), in society, and in the world. In this understanding, new Junzi realize that “under the sky, one family” there is a new deep, broad meaning: all human persons are God’s children. The Trinitarian Junzi will help the Confucian Junzi understand that every family belongs to the family of the Trinitarian God; every human person, regardless of social position, is God’s child and has different responsibilities towards others. This new Junzi will overcome the potential danger of classism, treating different people according to their social positions or ethnic group, in interpreting Confucian teachings. For Trinitarian Junzi, the past, present, and future are all very important in aspects of life.

New Junzi Partakes in the Life of God

The new Junzi partakes in the life of God. Trinitarian Junzi will understand that life in this world is not just from birth to death, but from and in the eternal God to attain an eternal future communion with human life in the Trinitarian God. The process of practicing Xiao dao (filial piety), starting with one’s family and expanding to include society and the circle of Heaven and earth, is part of the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*, which is the Trinitarian God sharing the same love of God with all human persons and creatures. New Junzi will understand Tian ming (the mission of Heaven and the life of Heaven) in a new sense. Tian ming (the mission of Heaven) is also the mission of Christians, as received from God, who reveals Godself through Jesus Christ. New Junzi will understand that the Tian ming (the mission of Heaven and the life of Heaven) is the natural gift of the life of God. Through the incarnated God, Jesus Christ, Christians

him, “where is your brother?” (The Book of Genesis 4:9), which means everyone is one’s brother and sister.

receive the supernatural gift, which is Godself. The new Junzi will realize that one's mission is not only to rebuild the order of one's family, the order of society, and the order between Heaven and earth, but also to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ through the incarnation and the mission of the Holy Spirit in deification. The Trinitarian Junzi partakes in the life and work of the Triune God in daily life in light of Confucian culture and Christianity. The new Junzi, as followers of Jesus Christ, invite humans back to the order of life and experience God by becoming co-workers with God.⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, by following Jesus Christ, new Junzi enter into the life of God. By participating in the life of Jesus Christ, and in the deification in the Holy Spirit, new Junzi partake in the life of the Trinitarian God.

Trinitarian Junzi will help Confucian Junzi realize that the ultimate purpose of human life, the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human), is not just a dream but a reality. Seeking communion with Heaven, with other human persons, and with all creatures is a natural dream and human desire in Confucian culture. For Confucianism, becoming a Da ren (great person 大人) is the ultimate purpose of becoming Junzi. Trinitarian Junzi will help Confucian Junzi understand, and accept and respect, Jesus Christ as the Da ren (great person) who is in communion with Heaven and all creatures. For Trinitarian Junzi, the Tian Ren He Yi (oneness between Heaven and human) is a reality that happens in everyone's life when they follow Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, in a process of being and becoming. From a Trinitarian horizon, new Junzi understand that everyone is being in the image and likeness of the Trinitarian God

⁵¹⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* (Washington, D. C.: USCCB Publishing, 2005). In this book, the bishops of the United States remind Christians to be co-workers with God.

through the salvation of the incarnated God, Jesus Christ; everyone also participates in the life of God through the deification of the Holy Spirit toward Eternity in God. This new horizon will help Junzi have a new attitude toward their situation.

New Junzi will Renew Chinese Culture

The Trinitarian Junzi will be an agent of cultural change that will renew Chinese culture and transform the Chinese people. Confucius called the Chinese people to become Junzi in order to renew the life of the family, society, and the world by practicing Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite), and Tian ming (the mission of Heaven). Trinitarian Junzi will be the kind of people that will renew Chinese culture and people's lives according to the practice of Xiao dao (filial piety), Li (rite), and Tian ming (the mission of Heaven), and according to the will of the Triune God, who is the foundation and model for humanity. Trinitarian Junzi is nourished by Christianity, in which this new Junzi will establish new relationship with Chinese Confucian culture by renewing to transform Chinese culture as a new way of life.⁵¹⁵ In renewing Chinese culture, and establishing a new relationship with other Chinese people, Trinitarian Junzi will also ready the Chinese people to establish a new relationship with God and others by realizing the idea of a Christian community as people of God. This is the mission of Trinitarian Junzi. A Trinitarian Junzi means being in the Triune God and having a new life and horizon in God to renew the Chinese people and culture. This Trinitarian Junzi will not only help Confucian Junzi become new Junzi, but will also help Christians become new Christians within a Chinese cultural context.

New Christian

⁵¹⁵ This new way of life, is actually a person, Jesus Christ, who is the way of life. See: The Gospel according to John14:6.

The Trinitarian Junzi is a new way of being Christian. Being Christian is being in relation with the Triune God and all humans and creatures in the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem*. This movement is a dynamic way of being in relation with others. According to LaCugna's Trinitarian theological insight, every new relationship will renew a person in a new way of being. Trinitarian Junzi, as Christians who have a new relationship with Confucian Junzi, offers a new way of becoming Christian within a Chinese cultural context. Historically, some missionaries understood that being Christian meant only being Christian according to a Western model (which was discussed in Chapter Three). They did not realize that being Christian cannot be separated from one's local culture, and even the Western model of being Christian has a process of development.⁵¹⁶ In the Confucian teachings, and in LaCugna's Trinitarian theological views, one understands that Christians in every era and context should be new Christians—every Christian is a new Christian in relation with the Triune God and with every other person and creature. In this understanding of being Christian, a Chinese Christian is a new Christian in this sense.

The Trinitarian Junzi is a New Way of Being Christian

The Trinitarian Junzi is a new way of being a Christian who “cherishes” the values of both culture and Christianity. From a Trinitarian horizon, both Confucian cultural teachings and Christian insights have the same foundation under Heaven/God. Confucianism reminds Christians to value the cultural, which is also a way through God is naturally revealed to the Chinese people. A Trinitarian Junzi recognizes God's presence through culture and Christian revelation within a Chinese context. Trinitarian

⁵¹⁶ See chapter two where John Paul II and Benedict XVI emphasize the importance of Greco-Roman culture for forming the understanding of Christian faith.

Junzi will not only be nourished by the teachings of Confucius, but will also internalize the teachings and life of Jesus Christ and the deification of the Holy Spirit in the process of *a Patre ad Patrem*, and practice their faith within the context of family, society, and the universe. A Trinitarian Junzi is enlightened by the two lights of life: the natural teachings of God through Confucianism, and the supernatural teachings of the incarnated revelations of Jesus Christ. Enlightened by these two lights, a Trinitarian Junzi lives in a local situation, but has a global horizon; a traditional cultural life and a new life in God and with God through Christianity. Through this new way of being, Christians will help the Chinese people realize their relationship with the Triune God in their daily lives through Christian revelation and in the Confucian cultural teachings. Furthermore, it will also help the Chinese people to recognize the presence of God in Jesus Christ as a historical reality, and in their own context as a sacramental reality. For new Christians, every human person and every culture is valued.

The Trinitarian Junzi will help people “cherish” the “two books” that are the natural revelation across different cultures and the supernatural revelation in Christianity. Through natural revelation, God speaks to every human person and every creature. Through supernatural revelation, God speaks to people who have special responsibilities to others. Trinitarian Junzi, as new Christians, remind the people to find God in all things.⁵¹⁷ God always has various ways of communicating with human persons and being present among different people. The Trinitarian God is the living God of Christians as well as of all human persons. Trinitarian Junzi, as new Christians, remind Christians in

⁵¹⁷ See The Letter to the Romans 8:28. Paul reminds Christians that “all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” This is a reminder that all cultures, includes Chinese Confucian culture, has values for the good of Christians.

every cultural situation to dialogue with local cultures and seek mutual transformation between Christian understandings and cultural values to be “authentically” Christian in a unique situation.

Trinitarian Junzi have a relationship with God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian God is a model for being a Christian. Being a Christian cannot only mean having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Christians have to have a relationship with the Trinitarian God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The deepest desire, from the bottom of human heart, is to see Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, and to see the Father in the Holy Spirit.⁵¹⁸ Trinitarian Junzi, as new Christians, will help Christians go beyond the historical understanding of being Christian to have a living relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and to have a relationship with all human persons and creatures. Then the “authentic” meaning of being Christian is as such: being Christians is being in Jesus Christ in the relationship with God the Father in the Holy Spirit. This new way of being Christian in and with the Triune God is not only a human hope, but also a reality in Christian’s every day by participating in the life of Jesus Christ and in the deification of the Holy Spirit. Trinitarian Junzi practice the Xiao dao (filial piety) within the immediate family and with the larger family of society and the family that includes Heaven and all creatures in the spirit of Christianity. Christians can never be separated from their cultural context.

New Christians Practice Faith in Cultural Ways

The Trinitarian Junzi will help Christians understand that the practice of faith has to be cultural. Through inculturation, Christians carry the mission of Jesus Christ into a

⁵¹⁸ Philip asked Jesus to reveal the Father by saying “show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” (The Gospel according to John 14,8)

new culture among new people. Christians in every cultural context should be aware of the cultural influence of different contexts. Every Christian is influenced and formed by both culture and Christian revelation. As the understanding and expression of being Christian is part of the process of the transition from pastoral language to doctrinal language, and to a new pastoral language,⁵¹⁹ Christians also have to practice their understandings of faith in a cultural way. The practice of Christian faith in a cultural way is a new way of being Christian within a contextual cultural situation. History teaches Christians heavy lessons about practicing faith without regard for the local culture, which led to the tension behind being Chinese Christians. Practicing one's faith in a cultural way also means to root Christian faith in a culture and transform that culture.

New Christians fulfill the cultural dream of Confucianism. In light of the Trinitarian theological understanding of Christian life, Chinese Christians will have a similar dream and passion as Confucius, which is to rebuild family life, social life and the order between Heaven and earth. Furthermore, Trinitarian Junzi will understand the meaning of the mission and responsibilities of Confucian Junzi beyond practicing Xiao dao (filial piety). Trinitarian Junzi will help Confucian Junzi understand that the cultural mission is also part of the Christian mission.

Practicing the Christian faith in a cultural way is a new direction among contemporary theologians, from John Paul II and Benedict XVI to Peter Phan, Robert Schreiter, and Stephen Bevans, and to all Christians when they try to become "authentically" Christian in a concrete cultural context. Practicing the Christian faith in a cultural way means to not only evangelize to human persons but to cultures as well. The

⁵¹⁹ See Chapter Two.

Christian God is an unknown God and a new concept for the Chinese people who have been “nourished” by the ideas of Confucianism. In order to proclaim this unknown God to the Chinese people, missionaries have to use a cultural language and concepts to present the Christian God. Using cultural language to preach Christianity is a process of inculturation; this is also a process that involves moving from doctrinal languages to a new pastoral language. By practicing the Christian faith in a cultural context, Trinitarian Junzi will find God’s natural revelation in Chinese culture. Trinitarian Junzi is a new way to support the continuity of the incarnation and inculturation in a Chinese cultural context to become a new Christian.

Trinitarian Junzi is always a New Being

The Trinitarian Junzi is a new way of being Christian, as well as of being human. Trinitarian Junzi is part of a process of renewing the understanding of God and God’s relationship with all creations, and the understanding of one’s self and others. God is a mystical God; the understanding of God is always in a process of development. Human persons share the person of God who is ineffable; the understanding of every human person is also in a process of renewing and developing. Every relationship will change a person, and every person will be changed by a new relationship. The Christian God is always a new God in relation with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and with human persons and creatures. For the Trinitarian Junzi, God in Jesus Christ is a historical God, but God is also always a living God. The Trinitarian Junzi is always a new person in relation with God and other human persons and all creatures. Every day is a new day and every context is a new one. Trinitarian Junzi invites all Christians to renew their lives and way of thinking in relation to the living Triune God and all creation.

Christians Fulfill their Responsibilities in Order

Trinitarian Junzi will help Christians realize that one has to fulfill one's responsibilities in order. The Confucian Junzi loves their family first and then extends the same love to others in society. Christians should also love their families and communities first.⁵²⁰ Love has an order; love has to be practiced one by one. Trinitarian Junzi love their families with the love of God first, and then extend the same love to others, as brothers and sisters in God's family, and then to all the creatures. Fulfilling responsibilities in order will help Christians realize their immediate duty in a specific context. Fulfilling responsibilities in order is also a way to help Christians become practical Christians.

A Trinitarian Junzi is a new Junzi and a new Christian. This new Junzi is the result of Confucianism nourished by Christianity. This new Christian is Christianity enriched by Confucianism. Being a Trinitarian Junzi means being a new Chinese Confucian Junzi, as well as being a new Christian in a Chinese cultural context.

The Diversity of Being Christians

Christians are always diverse. The Triune God is the model for being Christians and being human beings. Human persons are created in *Imago Dei* — the image and likeness of God. The Christian God is one God with three persons. The Trinitarian God is the root and model of the diversity of being and becoming Christians. This diversity of God reminds Christians that they do not need to be afraid of the diversity of cultures, religions, and human life. All the various cultures, religions, and human persons are from the Triune God, though they may have different missions, and will be united in the one

⁵²⁰ The First Letter to Timothy 5:8; the Gospel According to Mark 7:10-13.

God. Diversity is also characteristic of being Chinese and being Christian. The diversity of becoming is part of the process of deification through which God sanctifies everyone in different ways. This diversity of being also reminds Christians to have various ways of expressing spirituality and numerous ways of practicing faith. Christians have diversity and unity simultaneously. Christian diversity and unity is the result of being part of God's Trinity and unity, three persons of the one God. Trinitarian Junzi will offer a representation of diversity in the unity of being Christian.

The Trinitarian Junzi is one way of being Christian in a Chinese Confucian cultural context. Every Christian across different contexts and times is a being with local and individual callings and responsibilities, at the same time, he or she belongs to the one family of being, which is the universal and communal being, the being of the Triune God. Through dialogue between Confucius's teachings on becoming Junzi and Trinitarian theological insights on becoming a Trinitarian Christian, people will understand that eternity and the contemporary, God and human persons, walk hand in hand. God creates all human persons and invites humanity into the movement of *a Patre ad Patrem* through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and in the deification of the Holy Spirit. The incarnated God, Jesus Christ, is the model of this dialogue and being. Jesus Christ is God and human. Confucianism is the dominant Chinese culture which has sustained the Chinese people across history, so it is logical to assert that valuing Confucian teachings on being Junzi, and Christian teachings on being a Trinitarian Christian (as per Catherine M. LaCugna's insights on Trinitarian theology) provides a better way for becoming an "authentically" Chinese Christian who is a Trinitarian Junzi.

This work is based on the experience of Chinese Christian praxis and comes to a new understanding that prepares for a new praxis in a contemporary Chinese context. This research is a way of seeking to become authentically an Chinese Christian. This work is also a process from pastoral language to doctrinal language, and to a new pastoral language in a new context. This process is also a theology of inculturation that will help to enrich “Chineseness” and the Christian understanding of God and humans in a broader sense. Christians represent the different faces of cultures that reflect the light of the Trinitarian God in this colorful world. In practical theology, understanding is part of Christian practice. Christian practice, theological reflection, and pastoral response are the ongoing process of becoming “authentically” Chinese Christian. This work will not end here, but will be practiced in a contemporary Chinese cultural context.

Trinitarian Junzi offers a new way of being both “authentically” Chinese and an “authentic” Christian in a Chinese context. Trinitarian Junzi will also give provide inspiration for Christians in different cultural contexts around the world in seeking to become “authentically” Christian and “authentic” human persons. Being Christian in a Chinese context is becoming Trinitarian Junzi.

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