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Atlas of Religion in China: Social and Geographical Context by Fenggang Yang

Reviewed by Joanne Pittman

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Editorial

Looking Back to Move Forward

By Kerry Schottelkorb, President

The ancient texts include scores of reasons and contexts for why God calls on his people to remember. Often, the vistas before us become clearer only after we have taken time to look back and reflect on how we came to this place. As we have now entered the Lenten season, I am once again reminded of one of my favorite passages in Scripture:

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God, and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. (John 13:3-4)



Remembering who he was and from where he came, Jesus got up and washed the disciples' feet and went on to sacrifice his life for us. And so it is that our Lord is very gracious to put things in context for us, to help us remember our identity, and move forward by remembering the seasons that brought us to the present.

Welcome to a special issue of *ChinaSource Quarterly* (CSQ) which comes to us just after the completion of 20 years of publication and at the beginning of a new season for ChinaSource. As I am so new to the ChinaSource team, I have been looking forward to this issue that focuses on looking back. In it we consider a collection of "best of" articles which have amazingly stood the test of time and are relevant to this day; we hear from our contributors and readers; and we review a bit of the story that brought us here.

I hope you'll join me in traversing the following:

- An introduction by the ChinaSource staff which includes a brief history of CSQ while looking forward to what God may have in store for us in the future.
- A compilation of articles we sense will continue to be applicable for years to come.
- The top five issues of CSQ and the top five articles that have been most read (indicated by page views on our website), plus the most read article reprinted in full.
- An interview with Mary Li Ma and LI Jin, mainland scholars who have guest edited four issues of CSQ and will be doing their fifth this year on ethics in leadership.
- Two short essays by ChinaSource readers sharing what they have found most valuable in CSQ.
- A review of Fenggang Yang's *Atlas of Religion in China: Social and Geographical Context*.
- Resource Corner: The new ChinaSource ebook, *View from the Wall: Essays on a Changing China* by Huo Shui.

Since I am only ten days into my new role with ChinaSource I can't wait to dive in and I hope you feel the same way!

Kerry Schottelkorb is the president of ChinaSource, appointed in March 2019. Over the past 33 years, Kerry has been involved in ministry across China as a founding pastor of Evangelical Community Church in Hong Kong, Vice-President of Advancement for English Language Institute in China and the North American Director of Christian Action Asia. In these positions, Kerry has cultivated a keen love for China and Chinese ministry and developed a broad and diverse set of relationships across the US and Asia. Kerry has a BA degree in history from Simpson College and an MA in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary.

Thought-provoking and Informative: *the ChinaSource Quarterly*

By ChinaSource Team

In 1995, when Brent Fulton began working at the Institute of Chinese Studies at Wheaton College, he realized the importance of having a publication about China for those serving there and for those interested in and praying for the church and the advance of the gospel throughout that country.



He began a four-page, quarterly bulletin that remained a print publication for four years. However, Brent had a vision for something more substantial with a theme for each issue and writers with current knowledge of selected topics. When the Institute of Chinese Studies became ChinaSource, that vision became a sixteen-page publication and the *ChinaSource* journal was born.

The theme of the inaugural issue in the spring of 1999 looked at formative issues for China as it entered the new millennium. The lead article, [“Thinking about China,”](#) dealt with ways people thought about China as it explored three myths, often held by many, about the country.

From the beginning, in striving to provide timely information, teamwork was essential. Topics were suggested and individuals well-versed in those specific fields were approached. More often than not, those who were asked to contribute graciously agreed to write for the *ChinaSource* journal.

As China has changed, so the journal has also changed. Over the past twenty years the front cover of the print version had several “facelifts.” Other changes followed, including the move from print to online as the journal was incorporated into the ChinaSource website and then was renamed *ChinaSource Quarterly (CSQ)*. What has not changed is the commitment to accurate, timely, and strategic analysis of the issues affecting the church and ministry in China.

Over the years, *CSQ* has delved into a wide range of topics with thoughtful, insightful articles. A look at the [topics listing for CSQ](#) indicates that breadth.

Certain themes have reoccurred, among them: **urbanization** and the effects of migration to the cities on both rural and urban communities and on the church; **education** in its various formats; **technology** with its impact on society and Christianity; **indigenous missions** from China; **family relationships** in a rapidly changing environment; **ministry among Chinese studying and working abroad** as well as **caring for those who return to China** as new believers; the **changing roles of foreign workers**; and **leader development**.

Brent Fulton has been the editor-in-chief of the *ChinaSource Quarterly* since it began. In recent years, in an effort to explore a wide variety of topics pertinent to ChinaSource readers, guest editors have taken the lead on many issues of *CSQ*. These individuals are well-versed in their assigned topics and have access to knowledgeable contributors with background and expertise to address those topics. Contributors to *CSQ* have come from many countries, and from the beginning, Chinese voices were heard as they contributed articles, often originally written in Chinese. We are indebted to the many translators and reviewers who have worked with us over the years to bring those voices to our readers.

In 2017 ChinaSource celebrated twenty years of ministry. At that time the vision and mission of ChinaSource were reviewed and refreshed as we looked forward to the coming years of service. We are moving from being a trusted **source** of information and analysis, written or put together primarily by ChinaSource staff, to being a trusted **platform** facilitating the flow of critical knowledge and leading-edge research among Christian communities inside China and around the world, and engaging them in collaboration to serve the Chinese church and society.

The *ChinaSource Quarterly* is one space where we are already bringing together thoughtful researchers and practitioners to share their knowledge and perspective.

Kerry Schottelkorb joins ChinaSource this month as the new president. Kerry brings over thirty years of experience in ministry in Asia and a deep passion for the church in China. He hopes to further expand and deepen our relationships across Asia and North America and increase our capacity to be a bridge between the church in China and the global church. You will see this reflected in the *ChinaSource Quarterly* in the coming months and years.

After twenty years, as it has from its beginning, the *ChinaSource Quarterly* continues to strive to be on the cutting edge of what is taking place inside China in order to keep its readers current, stimulate their thinking on China events and trends, and so contribute to their involvement in China.

Articles to Read and Re-read

By ChinaSource Team

In the topics explored in the *ChinaSource Quarterly*, the impact of change has been a reoccurring theme throughout the years:

- Changes in China, its government, society, and its approach to faith
- Changes in the church in China, its leadership, outreach, and challenges
- Changes for foreign workers in roles and opportunities

In 1999 Brent Fulton opened [his first editorial](#) with the words, “Someone has said that change is the only constant in today’s fast-paced world. In the case of China, social and economic change seem to be pulling the country inexorably forward.” Since that beginning the staff of the *ChinaSource Quarterly* has sought to observe the changes that were happening, anticipate what those changes might mean, and then bring together contributors who could knowledgeably and wisely analyze and comment on those changes.



Although change has affected all aspects of life in China and the Chinese church, certain topics have stood out and will probably continue to impact ministry in China. The following are key articles from recent years that we believe will continue to have relevance for readers into the years ahead. The articles are listed according to the broad topic that each deals with and the date each was published.

Lastly, Bill Job’s article “[Some Things Change, Some Are Timeless](#)” appeared in the 2015 autumn issue, [Serving in the Midst of Change](#). The article is reproduced in full and it recounts the personal story of one long-term worker who experienced profound changes in how he served in China. We trust his story will prompt readers to examine their own lives and be better prepared to serve in China in the midst of change.

Church and Society

“[Faith Going Public: Urban Christians and Civic Participation in China](#)” by Mary Li Ma and LI Jin.

View from the Wall feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2012 spring issue, [Global China: Implications for the Church](#) edited by Brent Fulton.

The authors provide a review of the origins and history of the house church movement and a discussion of the current urban house church situation including civic engagement and Christian publications.

Church and State

“[Urge for Faith: Postmodern Beliefs among Urban Chinese](#)” by Fredrik Fällman.

Supporting Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2013, summer issue, [The Postmodern Generation and the Church in China](#) edited by Brent Fulton.

Historical events following Mao's death left an ideological vacuum in China. This created a strong need for faith, even an urge, so as to avoid the risk of further social disruption and political instability. While postmodernism, with its relativity and lack of absolutes, tries to fill this void, it also leaves people questioning and open to exploring faith.

“[How China's Religious Affairs Bureaucracy Works](#)” by Carsten T. Vala.

Supporting Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2013, winter issue, [Religious Policies in China and Their Influence on the Church](#) edited by Joann Pittman.

The author helps us to understand the workings of the religious affairs bureaucracy, first by following the story of an aspiring pastor, then by viewing them historically. The Chinese Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement Association, China Christian Council, Religious Affairs Bureau, and United Front Work Department are all discussed along with how they interact, lines of authority, and the role of *guanxi*.

“[Is Persecution Worsening? Perspectives on the Changing Religious Policy Environment in China](#)” by two senior house church leaders.

View from the Wall feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2017, spring issue, [Journeying with the Church in China](#) edited by Brent Fulton.

Is persecution in China increasing? Two house church leaders, one who was imprisoned in a labor camp for a few years, and the other, who is a Chinese scholar with strengths in theological education and the history of the Chinese church, give their viewpoints on this topic.

Confucianism

[“Contemporary Confucian Revival and Its Interactions with Christianity in China”](#) by Kevin Xi Yi Yao.

Lead Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2014, spring issue, [Confucius and Christ: Conflict, Compromise or Communication](#) edited by G. Wright Doyle.

Chinese society today has turned fairly religious with Protestant Christianity and Confucianism experiencing the most growth in recent decades. As these two traditions interact more and more, the tension and rivalry between them intensifies. Dr. Yao looks at the roles that each plays in today's China along with the place of the so-called New Confucian Movement. As the current Confucian revival represents an attempt to regain Confucian dominance in Chinese society, what is the response of Christianity?

Christian Life

[“Intergenerational Challenges in Christian Marriages: A Sociological Case Study of Urban Young Christians in China”](#)

by Mary Li Ma.

Peoples of China feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2016, summer issue, [Christian Ethics and Family Living](#) edited by Mary Li Ma and LI Jin.

Over recent generations, marriage expectations have changed. For young Christians in China, marriages are taking on new ethical norms that include challenges. Parental pressures in finding a spouse as well as in planning a wedding can create much tension. After marriage, childbearing and rearing continue to generate challenges between the young couple and their parents. The one-child policy has exacerbated these difficulties. Christian couples are swimming against many secular tides in these areas.

Returnees and Partnerships

[“Functioning as the Body to Build the Body: Working Together for Chinese Returnees”](#) by Debbie.

Supporting Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 2016, autumn issue, [A Call to Partnership in Chinese Returnee Ministry](#) edited by Stuart.

Many returnees have difficulty getting involved in a church once they return to China. The author looks at how agencies, churches, and individuals working together can help returnees become part of a church body. She also explores the benefits of working together internationally and concludes with the importance of partnerships and reasons they can be difficult.

Indigenous Missions

[“The Church in China and World Evangelism”](#) by Roy.

Lead Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 2016, winter issue, [Cross-Cultural Missions from China](#) edited by WU Xi.

The author asks the question: “Is the Chinese church truly ready to face the task of world evangelism?” He goes on to discuss ten issues facing the mission endeavor as Chinese churches begin to send out workers. He addresses the focus of missions, its work, management, and goals among other topics. He also highlights the need for supportive care for the missionaries themselves.

Church History

[“Why Believers Need to Understand Church History”](#) by Brother Liu.

View from the Wall feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2017, autumn issue, [The Chinese Church and Its Historical Past](#) edited by Andrew T. Kaiser.

We must know the past to understand the present. For the most part, Chinese Christians do not understand Chinese church history; therefore, they often have no means to properly respond to changes in society. A look back at Chinese church history shows us that many of the difficulties faced by today's Chinese church have similarities to those that have confronted the church over the years. Not only can history suggest appropriate ways to respond to today's difficulties, it can help us discern God's purposes in the present.

Serving

[“Opportunities and Challenges When Foreign Workers Leave China”](#) by Rachel.

View from the Wall feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 2017, winter issue, [Transitions](#) edited by Brent Fulton.

A Chinese Christian reflects on the positives and negatives that leaders, seminaries, and churches in China face when cross-cultural workers leave the country.

Contextualization

[“A Pastoral Perspective on Contextualization: An Interview with Pastor ‘Peter’”](#) by Jackson Wu.

CSQ Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2018, spring issue, [Contextualization and the Chinese Church](#) edited by Jackson Wu.

In an interview with a pastor from eastern China on the topic of contextualization, the topics discussed include: the tension between Christianity and being Chinese; the lack of a contextualized Chinese theology; obstacles to Chinese contextualization; what Chinese missionaries need to know about contextualization in order to be effective; how foreigners help or hinder Chinese contextualization; and what foreigners misunderstand about the needs of the Chinese church.

Church Structure and Organization

[“Denominationalism—a Double edged Sword?”](#) by Andrew Qie.

Supporting Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2018, summer issue, [Denominationalism in China](#) edited by Mary Li Ma and LI Jin.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of intellectuals in Christian communities. The traditional emphasis of the Chinese church on the believer’s spiritual life no longer satisfies the intellectual desires of this new faith community. Naturally, as people’s desire for a systematic study of theology grows stronger, how to understand the Bible and “truth” with a deeper knowledge have become the pursuit and priority goal of this new generation of urban Christians. The pursuit of godliness is a good thing, but the author warns of some dangerous tendencies that may occur.

Article Reprint

[Some Things Change, Some Are Timeless](#) by Bill Job.

Lead Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2015, autumn issue, [Serving in the Midst of Change](#) edited by Andrew T. Kaiser.

Everything changes. We should be used to this by now, but, we usually resist it. As a result, we are stressed when we encounter the reality that some things must change to be relevant. I can no longer buy pants in the size I wore in high school!

So, it should not be a surprise that the role of foreigners in China changes. It is expected, and we should be prepared to offer what is relevant in the new season. Unfortunately, my observation is that we believers are not usually among the early adopters. Instead of asking the Lord for what his ideas are for today, we tend to anchor ourselves to what he said years ago and forget to ask for fresh input from heaven.

When I arrived in 1987, China’s needs were apparent. Foreigners knew how they could contribute. Many Chinese needed to speak English and could not. There you are; it was a clear need—and we came and truly helped. There were clear needs for medical upgrades in both skills and knowledge—and we came and truly helped. There were clear needs to interact commercially with other nations, and there were clear needs to help the disadvantaged—and we came and truly helped.

During the 90s, not much changed. English was still needed and we continued coming as teachers. International business was taking off, and some came to work in that area. Throughout the decade, manufacturing grew dramatically, and China took center stage as the world’s supplier of anything anyone wanted to buy.

China became stronger. English played a major role and was still needed. But, other areas of education also became important. All the skills of business, accounting, management, logistics, and customer service were also needed.

The first decade of this century saw the collapse of the world’s financial system in 2008. With that downfall came the loss of confidence in depending on international business as a way of achieving economic strength. With that shift came a huge change in China’s willingness to look to the West for its future. When that happened, China’s perceived need for Westerners changed as well. It had become very capable in many areas and therefore did not need what foreigners had been bringing.

Throughout past decades, foreign Christians hoped to help Chinese Christians. I recall my first trip to China in 1986, when, as I stood on a street in Guangzhou, someone quietly came up to me, six inches from my face, and said, “I have heard of Jesus. Is it true?” That experience gave me the feeling that the needs were very basic and yet significant; I would certainly be able to help in this area.

However, looking back over 28 years, I see that many of my ideas, flowing from my worldview, were not healthy from a Kingdom point of view. Back then, I assumed, as I had been taught, that the entire Christian experience was founded on knowledge. By that I mean that I did not know some very important things. At first I did not know I was separated from God by sin and that Jesus came to save me from that problem and reconcile me to himself. I needed to learn that truth and I did. Then I moved on to realize my knowledge of the Bible was nonexistent, and so I began to add to that knowledge. Eventually, I completed seminary studies and tried to fill in all the knowledge gaps that I had. My ministry in the United States took the form of teaching because I believed that the basic problem was lack of knowledge. Certainly, there is much to support this worldview.

Then, in my early years in China, I began to meet people who did more believing in what they were learning than I did. I began to meet people who did not know as much as I did, but they believed much more in what they did know. It was unsettling.

The Lord was dismantling the basis of my worldview and changing my foundation from “knowledge” to the idea of “obedience.” I began to realize that God did not seem to care so much about what I *knew* as he did what I *obeyed*. He highlighted the issue of obedience in scripture in a way I had not been willing to see. I began to realize that perhaps I should not be teaching what the Bible said unless I was also doing it. Statements like, “Do not worry,” became troubling because I saw how little I obeyed. Likewise, “Bless those who curse you,” took on new meaning when I learned that six women, identified as witches, were cursing me.*

As I began to obey his word more, I began to experience what I think of as his life. My life changed dramatically, and I began to shift from a heavy yoke to the light yoke he promised.

At that point, I realized that my influence on the lives of my Christian friends might not have been as positive as I had hoped. If I was simply trying to fill in their gaps of knowledge with what I understood to be the truth, then they would only get the benefit of knowledge. If I was honest, I would admit the accumulation of knowledge had not helped me achieve what my heart actually desired. It was obeying what I knew that brought life. My observation of the impact of what we think of as higher education was clearly disappointing. After a couple of years of focused study on spiritual subjects, several of my local friends had obviously not matured in their spiritual lives as I had expected.

However, the foundation of my worldview shifted once again from “obedience” to the “life of God.” This began to change how I thought about the gospel. I began to see it as the message of the very life of God being available to me and others. Of course, I had to understand my separation from God because of sin and his life given for me, but that was not the end point, it was only the beginning. The destination was experiencing the very life of God—he in me and I in him, just as he promised.

I mention this because it affects the role of the foreigner in China. Sometimes I meet someone who introduces him- or herself as a person sent to bring the gospel to China. I often think to myself, “Which gospel?” If you had asked me when I had first arrived, I probably would have described my understanding of the gospel as the gospel of sin management. I was fully prepared to give those lost people the knowledge they were lacking to deal with this universal problem. But, I was not bringing them the gospel of the “life of God.” That was not what I had been taught. It was not how I was thinking. There is a big difference between the gospel of sin management and the gospel of the “life of God.”

This whole shift in my thinking has taught me to seek intellectual humility. I have come to see that I still need to understand what the Kingdom is and how it works, but I have so much more to learn. Until my stories seem like they could have come from the Bible itself, I want to keep pursuing a better understanding of what I have been given—this life of God. I need to better understand how it works. In this regard, I feel I have learned more about the Kingdom in the past five years than the previous forty-three.

While countries like China will develop and grow, their need for foreign interaction will change. What they used to need, they may no longer feel they need. We might see the situation differently, but that does not really matter. We will be allowed and invited to interact only where they feel the need for our influence.

China has in many ways taken its deserved economic position in the world. Chinese companies now compete head-to-head with many of the best in the world. Sure, there is much to learn, but the invitation to help will go out to those who can bring specific and developed skills. That is the nature of this season in China. No country wants to feel dependent on others.

Still, the deepest benefit foreign believers can bring is the benefit of a life that flows from God through Jesus. The universal need for this does not seem to change as a society develops. Perhaps, it might even increase as a society achieves economic and technical greatness. Often, when that greatness comes, along with it comes the expectation that it has now achieved its purpose. Nevertheless, when you poke beneath the surface, you always find that what our hearts (and theirs) deeply long for is not found in that greatness. It is only found in a relationship with God through Jesus that is experienced as we practice dependence upon him. If we can provide a living example of how this life works in us, we can always bring a treasure to any country in any stage of development.

The problem will be who gets invited to come and stay. Those invitations will change according to the felt needs of China.

One day we were having a management meeting in one of my companies trying to deal with the economic collapse of 2008. Some felt that God had let us down because we lost half our orders that summer. But one leader made the statement that he would rather have one year in our company than 100 years in a large successful company because in our company he learned to walk with God. I was shocked, but delighted, to hear that was his assessment.

I believe that if we help people learn to walk with God as they watch us do our jobs, that will always bring a treasure to any country in which we live and serve.

* My staff, who lived in the community, made me aware that six women and a man, described as *wupo* or witches (巫婆), were cursing me and the company because of the influence of the kingdom of God that we were bringing into the community. For several months, my staff would go to their homes and pray God’s blessings before going to work. Hence, bless those who curse you.

Bill Job has lived in China since 1987, starting and operating five companies in Hong Kong and China.

Readers' Picks

By ChinaSource Team

We take a look back to see both entire issues of the ChinaSource Quarterly as well as individual articles that have been of most interest to our readers over recent years. We have based our selections on the total number of website page views that each of these categories have garnered.



First, we list the top five ChinaSource Quarterly issues. Then, further down this article, you will find a grouping of the top five individual articles that were most viewed. Lastly, we include the full text of the one article our statistics tell us was most widely read. Enjoy!

The Top Five ChinaSource Quarterly Issues

Theological Reflections on Urban Churches in China

Vol. 17, No. 2, 2015, summer issue. Brent Fulton, Mary Li Ma, and LI Jin, editors.

This issue looks afresh at various currents in the theological life of the church today. LI Jin, a scholar from China currently studying in the United States, and his wife, Mary Li Ma, have brought together a fascinating collection of perspectives, most of them written by church leaders in China. Together these articles speak to the historical antecedents of the church's theological journey while providing fresh insights into what may lie ahead. We also review two assessments from seasoned, outside observers whose different theological orientations mirror some of the diversity found within the contemporary Chinese church.

The Chinese Bible

Vol. 20, No. 3, 2018, autumn issue. Joann Pittman, editor.

When someone speaks of the Chinese Bible, they are most likely referring to the Chinese Union Version (CUV), or *Heheben* (和合本) as it is called in Chinese, since it is the most commonly used translation among Chinese Protestants, both in China and worldwide. Opinions on the CUV are strong and run deep. Many foreigners dislike it, citing the inadequacy of the translation and its archaic language. Chinese believers, on the other hand, retain a deep affection for the CUV, despite its problems. It carries a weight of authority that other translations do not. This year, 2019, marks the 100-year anniversary of the CUV, so it is especially appropriate to take an in-depth look at the Chinese Bible.

Contextualization and the Chinese Church

Vol. 20, No. 1, 2018, spring issue. Jackson Wu, editor.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to effective contextualization is the frequent tendency to sharply dichotomize culture and the Bible. However, the Bible and culture are entwined for two reasons. First, God revealed himself through ancient, Near Eastern cultures. Second, God calls his people to embody the gospel in cultures throughout the world. In short, genuine biblical truth is not an abstraction. For these reasons, this issue of *ChinaSource Quarterly* is dedicated to the topic of contextualization. The articles survey a range of topics relevant to contextualization among Chinese.

Confucius and Christ: Conflict, Compromise or Communication

Vol. 16, No. 1, 2014, spring issue. G. Wright Doyle, editor.

This issue of the *ChinaSource Quarterly* offers a number of articles from different perspectives that will help us understand the role of "Confucianism"—broadly defined—in China today. We are made aware of widely differing levels of understanding among "Confucianists" or "Ruists" on some important questions of approach. We will discover that Christians, likewise, have never been unified in their approaches to Confucianism but have exhibited varying attitudes of accommodation and rejection toward it. These two sorts of variety will be evident in the articles featured in this issue. We shall see brief snapshots of Confucianism from different angles and will encounter several types of Christian approach, both in the past and today.

Walking with Leaders: Mentoring in a Chinese Context

Vol. 16, No. 3, 2014, autumn issue. D. Michael Crow, editor.

The articles in this edition of the *ChinaSource Quarterly* give us a rare opportunity to hear stories from the voices of experienced coaches and mentors—mainland Chinese, overseas Chinese, and non-Chinese, both male and female. Beyond providing glimpses into the cultural and gender dimensions of coaching and mentoring, their rich authenticity speaks to the heart. We first heard some of

these stories at the “*Walking with Leaders Consultation: Coaching, Mentoring and Spiritual Formation*” held in Hong Kong, May 2014. From the very first session, we were surprised and touched by the vulnerability of the Chinese speakers. Their courageous openness helped us leap beyond the superficial into something special, precious, and unique.

The Top Five *ChinaSource Quarterly* articles

“[A Glance at People with Disabilities in China](#)” by Y-Wang. View from the Wall feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2016, spring issue, [Disabilities in China](#) edited by Steve Bundy.

Prior to the year 1980, people with disabilities in China were referred to as *canfei* (残废), which means “the handicapped and useless.” However, recently, social attitudes towards people with disabilities have gone through a gradual, yet fundamental, change. In China today, the term *canjiren* (残疾人) meaning “persons with disabilities” is now commonly used in the general public and official Chinese documentation as well as widely accepted by society. Due to a series of constructive administrative and legislative actions, in combination with the work of disability organizations (of governmental background or grass-roots, both domestic and international), the overall living conditions and social status of people with disabilities in China have greatly improved. Still, the majority of people with disabilities live in poverty.

“[Eastern Versus Western Learning Approaches](#)” by Lisa Nagle

Book Review in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2014 summer issue, [Partnering with Chinese Families to Educate Students in Christian U.S. High Schools](#) edited by Laura Coleman.

Chinese students from middle school to university continue to come to the United States for an education in increasing numbers every year. The two cultures collide in classrooms largely due to the fact that Western and East Asian people have vastly different beliefs about learning which affects how they view the world, themselves, and others. Innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit are attributes that are being discussed and promoted at education centers in the U.S., China, and around the world. School leaders in China recognize that their educational system does not promote creative thinking among middle school students. Can creativity be learned? The notion of whether creativity is learned or not can only be answered by understanding other important processes that influence child development. It turns out that culture penetrates so deeply it affects how we learn, how we relate with others, and how we think.

“[Religious Statistics in China](#)” by Tony Lambert

Lead Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2012, winter issue, [China by the Numbers](#) edited by Brent Fulton.

Counting adherents of religions in China is like entering a minefield. It is generally recognized that Chinese economic, population, and birth-control statistics are massaged up or down depending on political requirements, and religious statistics are even more problematic.

There are two major problems for anyone attempting to make realistic estimates of religious believers in China today. The first is that the government has, for a long time, downplayed the role of religion in Chinese society, and with it, generally underestimated, in the view of most serious researchers, the numbers of religious believers, especially Christians.

The second problem is, in some ways, the opposite of the first. Researchers and believers overseas, in strong reaction to the very partial and biased statistics which have emanated from Mainland official sources, have seized on every scrap of information coming from other sources, especially Chinese religious believers themselves, and proceeded to extrapolate, build models, and estimate numbers.

“[A Chinese Christian Critique of Confucianism](#),” G. Wright Doyle and Lit-sen Chang

Supporting Article in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2014, spring issue, [Confucius and Christ: Conflict, Compromise or Communication](#) edited by G. Wright Doyle.

Lit-sen Chang (Zhang Lisheng) was born in Wuxi, China in 1904. For the first fifty years of his life, he rejected Christianity and believed in Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism before finally committing himself to Zen Buddhism. A brilliant legal scholar, he served in the government of the Republic of China during World War II and then founded Jiangnan University in order to “extinguish” Christianity. Then, while living in Indonesia, he was dramatically converted to Christ. Immediately, he began an intensive study of the Bible and commenced teaching comparative religions at various Christian schools. After graduating from Gordon Theological Seminary (now Gordon-Conwell), he was invited to remain as a lecturer in missions. His book, *Asia's Religions: Christianity's Momentous Encounter with Paganism*, was probably written in the 1960s and published in 1999. This article picks up and develops several of the major themes covered in his rather substantial volume.

[“Disability and the Three Traditional Chinese Belief Systems: Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism”](#) by Kevin Avery

Peoples of China feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2016, spring issue, [Disabilities in China](#) edited by Steve Bundy,

Within Chinese culture, people with disabilities have been stigmatized and devalued. This is the result of beliefs which create stereotypes leading to prejudice and discrimination. With a desire to reduce this stigma, scholars are examining Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism to uncover any hidden cultural prejudice and stereotypes causing these attitudes. This is a complex endeavor that requires much sensitivity to cultural nuances. However, the goal is for people to come together in honest dialog and humble sensitivity, unified in purpose and compassion to combat prejudice and discrimination.

The Most Read *ChinaSource Quarterly* article

[“Confucianism in Modern Chinese Society”](#) By [Peregrine de Vigo](#)

View from the Wall feature in *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2014, spring issue, [Confucius and Christ: Conflict, Compromise or Communication](#) edited by G. Wright Doyle.

First, allow me to define some boundaries. I am taking *Chinese society* to mean contemporary, mainland, urban China, particularly areas that are predominantly Han, not counting islands or regions that for the last 100 years have largely operated under a different authority. Throughout the article I will replace the terms for Confucianism and its cognates with the word *Rú* (儒, like Ruist and Ruism).¹ There is not space here to argue for these parameters, but they need to be stated up front.

In considering this topic, a few questions come to mind that seem directly relevant. First, a person's pre-understanding of what is meant when we say "Ruism" is particularly significant. When we look for manifestations of Ruism in Chinese society, what exactly are we looking for? Is it a philosophy? Is it a religion? Both of these? Neither? Is it an individual's or whole society's way of life?

Secondly, the history of Ruism is complex, particularly the last 100 years, so a person's knowledge of its background is particularly important. How much of this complex history is understood by a general reader? The multiformity of Ruism throughout its long history has been highlighted in recent scholarship and must be taken into consideration. Is it as uniform and unified as many writers present it? How sufficient and useful are the generalizations so often used today?

While there is not space here to address all of these and many other questions, I hope they will help the reader see our subject in a new light as I sketch its influence in modern Chinese society. So, put on your walking shoes and journey with me through a Chinese megacity, and we will allow the environment to instruct us.

The first thing we pass is an elderly man with a long brush, drawing characters with water on sidewalk tiles. A few people gather to watch and comment on his skill. As school gets out, a grandpa rides by on a bike with his granddaughter riding behind him, wearing a small red scarf indicating her status as a model student. A black Audi sedan with black-and-white license plates blows through a red light. No one seems to notice.

We leave the street and enter a brightly lit bookstore. Young people are scattered about reading the most recently translated *Harry Potter* novel or searching for the one book that will propel them from high school to Harvard, or at least help them through the *gāokǎo* (national college entrance exam) and enter Beijing University. Middle-aged adults browse books on traveling abroad and popular magazines on the housing market or the best face-mask for air pollution.

Back on the street, we pass by a small musical instrument shop. Melodies from a piano and a violin drift out the windows as young students practice. A *gǔqín*, a stringed instrument from classical times and frequently associated with Ruist self-cultivation, hangs on the wall.

As we turn down a narrow alley, children from lower-income families run back and forth, dodging puddles. They chant some rhymes learned that day in school, one about a lamb that belonged to Mǎlìyà (Chinese for Mary) and one about a star that twinkles (no, not the one over Bethlehem).

Men and women stream from the subway exit in black "Western" suits, listening to music on their iPhones with knock-off Dr. Dre Beats. A large sign in red characters encourages everyone to "study Lei Feng."

As we reflect on this hypothetical walk through "Chinatown" looking for Ruism, the question that rises like a phoenix from the dust is, "Where is it?" By all appearances it no longer exists, but if we dig a little deeper and look beneath the surface with a little bit of background knowledge, a new phenomenon emerges. While it may not entirely reflect "the days of old," Ruism has taken on new forms of existence, and that is what I would like to unpack for you.

Most Notable: Filial Piety

When people think of Ruism, filial piety is probably one of the first things to come to mind, and remnants can still be seen in most Chinese families. Starting at a very early age, there is a strong informal education in which children learn that their highest responsibility and obligation is to care for their parents' welfare, particularly in old age. However, there is a general lack of true understanding regarding the meaning of filial piety as described in Ruist texts, so that little regard is taken for the children's concerns or desires.

In Academics

In academic circles there is a movement to reclaim some of the Ruist social and cultural norms that were lost through the May Fourth movement and the Cultural Revolution. One prominent stream of this movement is called *guóxué*, or National Studies, which has become a complete degree program at some schools with BA, MA and PhD opportunities. Promoters of this movement advocate the importance of the study of Ruist traditional literature (the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics*, or *sìshūwǔjīng*), emphasize moral education as the primary subject that should be studied from kindergarten through high school, and have published educational curriculum for these lower levels of learning. However, it has yet to catch on in most schools for several reasons. Perhaps primarily, the content of this kind of curriculum has not become a part of the university entrance examination and so is considered by most Chinese to be useless because it has no expedient significance. Secondly, there continues to be a general attitude among many Chinese that these ideas are part of China's past that may have influenced society but have no real significance for modern-day Chinese society. There is certainly a small minority that clings to elements of traditional China, but the great majority of Chinese view traditional Chinese thought, including Ruism, as archaic, too difficult to understand, and not relevant to life.

Another aspect of the academic expression is the role and question of Ruism as a philosophy. The question of whether China has philosophy has been around for a long time, and goes at least as far back as Hegel.² While some aspects of Ruism may not seem similar to contemporary philosophizing in Anglo-European philosophy departments, it has much in common with ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, talking about a "way of life" that places ethical and social demands on the individual. It is important for the uninitiated to understand that Ruist thought is as complex and diverse as anything that can be found in Anglo-European thought. While most people who have studied "Western history" or even "world history" taught in Anglo-European schools have heard of Master Kng (Confucius), Master Mng (Mencius), and Loz, this reduction is the equivalent to summarizing European philosophy by talking about Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. I'm sure Hegel would protest.

In Social Behavior

Another aspect of Ruism in Chinese society that has changed is the roles of men and women. It is now possible to broaden formerly patriarchal expressions to apply to men and women, for example, to read *zǐ* (子) as sons *and daughters* who ought to respect their *fú mu* (父母), father *and mother*.³

On a more plebian level, the loss of a framework for appropriate social behavior and morality has left people groping for support, and some have rediscovered such a framework in the classical writings of Ruism. While "Christianity Fever" may be better known to readers of this article, an upsurge of "Confucius Fever" has simultaneously occurred. *YúDān* (于丹), a professor at Beijing Normal University, gave a series of TV lectures and later published a book on *The Analects*, first in Chinese (2006) and later in English (2009), titled *Confucius from the Heart*. Joseph Adler of Kenyon College describes it as "Wonton Soup for the [Chinese] Soul; that is, a comforting, non-challenging collection of bland moral clichés, carefully avoiding any political implications that might encourage dissent."⁴ If it is any indication of social impact and interest, according to Adler, the book sold three million copies in the first four months.

In Politics

We also ought to ask where we see Ruism in modern Chinese politics. A significant amount of Ruist thought centered upon political governance and often challenged corruption and abuse of authoritarian power. I doubt it would surprise anyone that its influence is hardly seen anywhere today. While it was the dominant political ideology for nearly 2,000 years, the multiple reforms and revolutions of the last 100 years have all but eliminated many of the most obvious expressions of this aspect of Ruism. The strange, brief appearance of a statue of Master Kng in Tiananmen Square in 2011 caught the interest of many China watchers. What does it mean that it was set up, and what do we make of its midnight disappearance four months later? It is widely speculated that such phenomena are the government's attempt at various propaganda maneuvers. It is worthwhile to put a little extra thought into the motivations behind these activities and to examine the depth of the expression. How much does this reflect Ruist transformative influence in the government, and how much of it is a superficial nod in a politically expedient direction?⁵

The Christian Response

Lastly, how should Christians respond to the increased interest in Ruism as a source for spiritual support? Yao Xinzong, director of the China Institute and professor of religion at Kings College, London, writes, "Confucianism has survived the impact of Western culture and communist revolution and is being revived as a motive force for modernization so that 'Confucianism is in no way a religion of the past, but rather a living, *contemporary spiritual power* that influences people directly or indirectly.'" ⁶ We need to ask a few questions before taking this statement at face value. In what way has Ruism survived? How is it now manifested in the lives of Chinese people compared to 100 or 1,000 years ago? What is meant by Ruism as a religion, and how exactly does this "spiritual power" manifest itself?

In what seems to be an effort to reverse the impact of "Western" religion (usually an indirect way of saying Christianity, if it is not stated outright), some Ruist scholars, like Yao, are now talking about "transcendent aspects" of Ruism. Insisting that it is not a religion (*zōngjiào* 宗教), they call it a "religious humanism" and a philosophy with a religious nature (*zōngjiàoxìng* 宗教性). A spiritual equivalent is required to rebuff the popularity of Christianity and combat what some scholars continue to see as "Western invasions" and "Westernization" which include a smorgasbord of categories including clothing, social norms, spiritual resources, political governance, and so on. This may reflect the current political atmosphere, but I believe other more significant factors are at play. Along with the development of things like National Studies and China's growing international presence, for the last 100 years there has been a deep re-examination of identity among many Chinese. What does it mean to be Chinese? How much of the past should be held onto, and what defines "us" as a people? Given the strong cultural sense of "group identity," this form of ethnic *angst* is heightened.

Conclusion

So, what of Ruism? Is it dead? Far from it. Is it the leading force of the nation, guiding decisions from the top leaders down to the "man on the street"? Hardly. It occupies a fuzzy place in-between. What we experience today is "post-" China—post-Ruist, post-Marxist, post-modern—but "post-" anything implies a focus on the past, emphasizing what once was but now is not. What does the future hold for Ruism and for China? I think it is safe to say it will not die out, but neither will it be able to reclaim the status it held for ages.

¹ Robert Eno coined this term in English to distinguish it from traditions in Chinese contexts (particularly in the 19th century) that "worship Master Kng." According to Eno, a better way of understanding the R tradition is to consider them as "skilled ritualists." This understanding opens up potential for broader interpretations of the term and allows for new developments and syntheses with other systems of thought, such as Daoism, Buddhism, or even Christianity. Though most scholars continue to use the Latinized form (Confucianism), probably because it is more familiar due to historical factors, a small number of scholars have picked up on Eno's term. For example, Lauren Pfister at Hong Kong Baptist University and Diane Obenchain at Calvin College regularly use some form of R, such as R scholar or Ruist in English contexts.

² As a side note, this has not always been the case. The Jesuits, who initiated the first in-depth intellectual discussions between Ruism and European ideas, found much that was comparable to everything they had studied in Christian, Greek, and Roman philosophy.

³ However, it should also be noted that some scholars argue that women were not entirely excluded from all filial acts in older forms of Ruism. For example, in *The Lny (The Analects)*, Master Kng says, "A person should always be aware of the age of his father and mother. It is both a cause for joy and for anxiety."

⁴ Joseph Adler, "Confucianism in China Today," Pearson Living Religions Forum talk, New York, April 14, 2011. Transcript online: <http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Religion/Fac/Adler/Writings/Confucianism%20Today.pdf>

⁵ A New York Times article from February 13, 2014 highlights the most recent instance of this kind of activity. "Mr. Xi said the party leadership was preparing a policy document 'to promote traditional values, implant new social mores and a cohesive national spirit, and enhance cultural soft power.'" While I have nothing in particular against traditional values and social mores, if they are thought of merely as a means to a different end the point has been missed entirely. http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/13/xi-touts-communist-party-as-defender-of-confucius-virtues/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=1

⁶ Yao Xinzong, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of Jen and Agape*. Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 1996, p. 19. Emphasis original.

Peregrine de Vigo (pseudonym), PhD, lived in central China for nine years and is a student of philosophy, sinology, and several other "-ologies."

Guest Editing with ChinaSource: An Interview with Mary Ma and LI Jin

By ChinaSource Team

Mary Li Ma (MA Li) and her husband, LI Jin, have been a part of ChinaSource for some thirteen years, contributing to the ChinaSource Quarterly and participating in conferences sponsored by ChinaSource. Mary holds a PhD in sociology from Cornell University and is currently a research fellow at the Henry Institute of Christianity and Public Life at Calvin College. Jin is a PhD student at Calvin Theological Seminary and previously was a PhD candidate in economic history at a Shanghai university. Together they have coauthored articles and book chapters as well as *Surviving the State, Remaking the Church: A Sociological Portrait of Christians in Mainland China*. A second book, *The Chinese Exodus: A Theology of Migration, Urbanism and Alienation in Contemporary China* came out in September 2018. Their comments and thoughts may also be found at Caixin.com, Theology and Society, and Four Seasons Book Review.



ChinaSource recently interviewed Mary and Jin about their participation in, and thoughts about, the ChinaSource Quarterly.

ChinaSource: How did you first get involved with ChinaSource (CS)?

Mary and Jin: Mary's first interaction with ChinaSource was through Brent Fulton at a consultation CS held for faith-based NGOs in Shanghai when she was doing her dissertation fieldwork on urban poverty. She then contributed an article about the educational needs among second-generation migrant children. ("[Educational Inequality for Migrant Children Perpetuates Poverty](#)" in the 2008 winter issue on [China's Moving Population](#).) A few years later, Brent came to Shanghai again when Mary was teaching in a university and we were both serving in a house church there. Brent did an interview with Mary, as part of his research for his book *Urban Christians in China*.

ChinaSource: You have guest edited four issues of CSQ. Why do you think it is important to contribute to the Quarterly in this way?

Mary and Jin: We learned that CSQ serves as an important window for sending agencies based in North America to let them see current affairs among churches in China. We think it is important to bring out thoughtful reflections among Chinese Christians, especially that of Christian scholars who are committed to serving the needs of the church. So our very first issue for CSQ was on the theme of Chinese theology and the church. We try to encourage our peers (Chinese Christian scholars) to thoughtfully articulate their insights for understanding by an English audience. This has helped these scholars (ourselves included) to connect Chinese Christian scholarship with needs for serving China. We have felt very blessed by this fruitful collaboration.

ChinaSource: How did you decide what topics to pursue? What criteria were uppermost in your minds as you considered what would be of most value to ChinaSource Quarterly readers?

Mary and Jin: Through past networking, we are connected to a group of Chinese Christian scholars who have a passion to serve the church. We are regularly in conversations about the evolving phases of the church, local church affairs, and issues that require deeper theological understanding. So, as we planned issues of the CSQ, the topics all emerged from these regular conversations. Considering the readership of CSQ, these are probably a few criteria we used for selecting topics: (1) an issue among churches in China that has undergone changes that most scholarship in English-speaking circles has not kept up with; (2) an issue that Westerners tend to have misconceptions or lack local knowledge about; (3) an issue that has not been fruitfully discussed but is relevant to China's ongoing mission context.

ChinaSource: Of the four issues that you have done, which do you think is the most pertinent for our readers in the current era of increasing pressure on the church in China and why?

Mary and Jin: The four issues of CSQ that we guest edited were about Chinese theology, family living, urban ministry, and denominationalism. We think the current pressure on churches in China invites deeper theological and ethical reflections on how churches live in such a changing time. For example, what does change entail for the evolving structures or institutions some churches have already built up over past decades? Given the multi-layered reality of such an evolving climate (some political pressure, but still much freedom in economic and technological realms), how should churches resist the temptation of victimization? There are many questions to ask, and even more answers to explore. We think this is a time of testing that is not mainly about the external political

pressure, but rather about how churches respond and nurture an authentic community internally.

ChinaSource: *Which issue did you enjoy working on the most and why?*

Mary and Jin: We enjoyed working on the issues about urban ministry and denominationalism because these are cutting-edge themes that churches in China now face. Dr. Brent Fulton has, from early on, identified China's urbanization as an important context for serving in China. Historically, churches in the West all faced great, intense problems with the process of urbanization. China is no exception. In addition, because there is a need for a Chinese theology addressing urbanization in its own right, there remains a great deal more research to be done in this regard. The issue on denominationalism remains very pertinent as churches grow and mature in their organizational capacities. So, each issue was just the beginning of a conversation, and we feel that there is so much more to say and write about each of them. We are grateful to work with CS in starting these discussions.

ChinaSource: *You will be editing your fifth issue for the 2019 summer issue. What topic are you working on and what led you to choose that topic for this year?*

Mary and Jin: We are putting together an issue on leadership ethics for this summer. During our conversations with Chinese pastors and scholars, we have always felt the need of leadership ethics among churches in China. As explained in our book *Surviving the State, Remaking the Church*, most of today's church leaders are first-generation converts who rarely had mentors themselves. They are not equipped with the understanding of accountability and ethical boundaries. Like churches in other countries that experience growth, churches in China are also seeing a pattern of leadership that misuses power because with growth and institutionalization comes power. It is a widely observable pattern that church leaders in China enjoy greater authority than their counterparts in Chinese churches overseas. The misuse or abuse of power within the church has, in fact, created a high turnover rate—more and more people are leaving the church. While scholars mostly emphasize growth, very few pay attention to and examine why people leave the church in China. So we think leadership ethics is a very timely topic for serious discussion.

ChinaSource: *If there is one thing you would like to improve in future issues of CSQ, what would that be?*

Mary and Jin: We hope CSQ can bring the concerns and gifts of Chinese believers to readers. Apart from serving sending agencies based in North America, maybe CSQ can also serve as an incubator for mission-minded Chinese Christian scholarship.

ChinaSource: *Thank you for your time in speaking with us and for all the time, thoughtfulness, and insights you bring as you partner with us on the CSQ.*

Reflections on the ChinaSource Quarterly

By Kevin Xiyi Yao

America has always been fascinated with China. This started very early on, or not long after America's independence. Even when the relationship between the two countries soured, America's interest in China never seemed to diminish. For me, Americans' fascination with China is so deep and everlasting that it is a bit hard to explain.



Without question, one of the manifestations of the American fascination with China is that American missionaries sailed to the country even prior to the First Opium War (1840-42). As the activity of American Christian missions grew, the missionaries quickly emerged as perhaps the most important agents for informing the churches and general public in America—and the entire Western world—of that ancient and exotic land. Out of all the platforms the missionaries created to communicate with America and the West, such prominent journals as *The Chinese Repository*, *The Chinese Recorder*, and the more recent *Bridge*, stood out as best known.

In my opinion, the *China Source Quarterly* (CSQ) belongs to this great tradition of Christian communicators and bridge builders between China and America—and even the entire West. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a proliferation of media platforms aiming to keep the Christian and general public informed of contemporary Christianity and overall religious life in mainland China; however, CSQ has distinguished itself as perhaps the most recognized and respected one. From my point of view, there are four things that are behind this publication's excellence and prominence.

First of all, CSQ clearly knows that there is more than just persecution and suffering when we come to the Christian story in contemporary China. Due to a variety of reasons, Western discourses on Christianity and other religions in contemporary China have been overwhelmingly dominated by concerns such as religious freedom, ethnic human rights, and even geo-political struggles. Consequently, international Christian news coverage tends to disproportionately highlight governmental crack-downs on the church and the subsequent suffering of Chinese believers more than anything else. Without denying the importance of all these issues, CSQ constantly reminds us of the centrality of pastoring and witnessing as part of the experience of Chinese Christians. Put another way, CSQ's approach to Chinese Christianity is more pastoral than political, more theological than ideological.

Second, reporting to the world about Christianity in China is always a controversial and divisive business. Not a small number of international media come with their own preset agenda or self-interests. Not surprisingly, their portrayals of Chinese Christianity tend to be simplistic and biased resulting in a distorted image of the Chinese church being presented to the world. In contrast, CSQ is fully mindful of the complexity of Chinese Christianity and the diversity of China observers' opinions; it always strives to provide balanced and objective narratives and assessments. Therefore, CSQ's presentations of the Chinese church's story are more faithful to what is really happening on the ground, and, thus, definitely more creditable.

Third, CSQ is one of the rare platforms that brings thinkers and practitioners, professionals and amateurs, global churches and the general public together. With keen awareness of differing backgrounds and the interests of various audiences, it effectively appeals to a wide range of people who care about the church in China. The results are its unique products that are both thoughtful and practical. It is fair to say that CSQ is quite successful in bridging the chasm between scholarly and practical approaches to Chinese Christianity. In it, you find not only cutting edge discoveries of top-notch scholarship but also difference-making suggestions for strategy and policy.

Finally, in CSQ, you hear Chinese as well as Western voices. As an English news medium, this is quite an achievement. As we all know, it is always a huge challenge for any overseas-based, Western-language media to present an authentic Chinese story rather than a Chinese story filtered through Western lenses. CSQ makes commendable and very strategic efforts to deliver reports and analyses of not just Western observers but also Chinese church leaders and academia. Thanks to CSQ, authentic Chinese voices from Chinese contexts can now be heard loud and clear by international audiences.

Not surprisingly, CSQ has established itself as a brand name that global churches and the general public can rely on. With full confidence in its determination and ability to continue its amazing work, I am sure churches worldwide and international communities will continue to be captivated by the stories of Chinese Christians and the many issues, the joys and the challenges, that face the church in China found in the pages of the *ChinaSource Quarterly* in the decades to come.

Kevin Xiyi Yao, ThD, is Associate Professor of World Christianity and Asian Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Dr. Yao is an expert on the history of Christianity in China.

Why Read the *ChinaSource Quarterly*?

By George King

As an occasional contributor to ChinaSource (CS) publications, I feel slightly self-serving in commending the *ChinaSource Quarterly* (CSQ). Despite this reservation, I think the effort is worthwhile.

How does one get reliable information? The development of information and communication technologies, particularly the Worldwide Web, has made massive volumes of data readily available to a large proportion of the world's population. Yet, this has not helped the challenge of gaining reliable information and has indeed exacerbated the problem, as highlighted by recent controversies over “fake news.”

When it comes to information about China, the problem becomes even more difficult. It is not hard to find ideas, opinions, theories, and arguments about the world's second largest economy, with the perceived challenges it brings to the rest of the world as well as its own complex domestic issues. Much of this information, however, comes through the lens of Western prejudices or Chinese propaganda. Though the sheer scale of China defies simplistic interpretation, the fact is that abundant stereotypes and narratives abound: human rights abuses; benevolent friend of developing countries; church in revival growth; church as communist party tool; massive environmental pollution; leadership in global greening; religious persecution; religious tolerance; repressive censorship; regional predator; benign soft power; and many more.

Much of this information comes from a Christian perspective, yet often focuses on a single issue, such as publicizing instances of persecution, meeting the needs of orphans, or supplying Christian literature for a growing but often under-resourced church. Worthy though such initiatives are in their own right, in campaigning for their own specific area of concern, they inevitably give readers only a partial picture of China which does not do justice to the complexities of society, government, and church.

The challenge of finding reliable information is further complicated by the dynamic nature of Chinese society. While rapid change is a worldwide phenomenon, the last forty years since “opening up” have seen an unusually rapid period of change for China. Yesterday's realities may be long past, yet some perceptions of China, particularly for Western Christians, are dominated by events and attitudes of twenty or thirty years ago, or even more.

In such conditions, how can Christians serving in China, or concerned for China, find reliable and timely information to guide their work? This is where CS publications, and particularly CSQ, have an important role to play.

The mission of CS is promoting “...the flow of critical knowledge and leading-edge research among the Christian communities inside China and around the world and engaging them in collaborating to serve the Chinese church and society.”¹ In particular, CSQ provides “accurate, timely, and strategic analysis of the issues affecting the church and Christian ministry in China.”²

Each edition of CSQ is a collection of feature-length articles on a single theme, supplemented by book reviews and resource recommendations. Themes tend to recur over an extended period, allowing a longitudinal picture to emerge. For example, “education” was a theme in autumn 2001, summer 2011, summer 2014 and winter 2018.

As a regular reader and occasional contributor to CSQ, my observation is that this publication does indeed achieve its aims, through an ABCD of qualities: accuracy, balance, commitment, and depth.

Accuracy

CSQ aims to bring accurate information from a variety of sources. Not focusing solely on single interests, it covers many different aspects of current Chinese life and Christian service with sufficient nuance to allow for the ambiguities and sufficient detail that permit a careful analysis. Careful editorial oversight aims to ensure that factual information is as accurate and reliable as possible.

Balance

By tackling many different issues, CSQ gives, over a period, a balanced picture of China. Moreover, since it does not represent a single perspective, it is able to present varying, and sometimes conflicting, viewpoints in any one edition. In addition, responses to each edition are published in other CS outlets. Though these often affirm what has been written, they may also add nuance or even directly challenge what has been written in CSQ articles.



[michel china via Flickr.](#)

Commitment

The great majority of *CSQ* writers have lived in China for many years. Their commitment to serve China's people motivates what they write, making the articles of much more than academic significance as well as ensuring that their ideas are substantially rooted in the realities of life and work in China.

Depth

The focus on a single theme for each quarter, approached in different ways by multiple authors, allows for a thorough examination of the issues involved. Many authors have an academic background which brings a substance to the publication, hopefully keeping the rigorous approach of formal study without the obscure language and conventions that sometimes make academic publications inaccessible.

Inevitably, the ABCD qualities are imperfectly attained. Nevertheless, by consistent editorial oversight, by the use of expert and experienced guest editors, and by attention to detail throughout the extended process of preparing a *CSQ* edition, a good outcome is achieved. As a guest editor of *CSQ*, I found that the whole process of preparing an edition, over several months, was rigorous and showed a commitment to integrity.

I have been reading *CSQ* for many years; any contributions I have made are minor compared with the benefits I have received, both while living in China and since.

¹ ChinaSource website, <https://www.chinasource.org/about>, accessed 2019-02-26.

² ChinaSource website, <https://www.chinasource.org/about/publications/chinasource-quarterly>, accessed 2019-02-26.

George King (pseudonym) has taught in colleges and universities in both the UK and China for nearly 30 years.

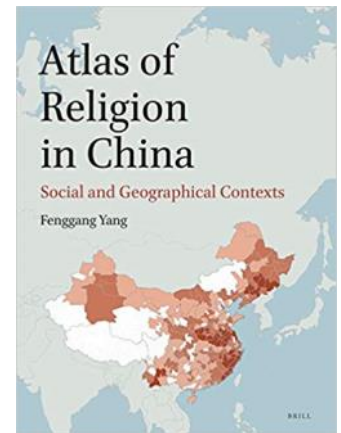
Book Review

Red, Black, and Gray: Mapping Religion in China

Reviewed by Joann Pittman

Atlas of Religion in China: Social and Geographical Context, by Fenggang Yang; (Brill, 2018), ISBN-10: 9004358854, ISBN-13: 978-9004358850; 260 pages, hardcover. Available from [the publisher](#) and on [Amazon](#).

Since I am a lover of maps, I was thrilled at the publication of *The Atlas of Religion in China: Social and Geographical Context* by Dr. Fenggang Yang. Produced by a team of researchers and students at the Center for Religion and Chinese Society, headed by Professor Yang, this atlas is a detailed examination of the religious landscape in China.



Writing in the introduction, Yang notes:

It maps the officially registered venues of five major religions—Buddhism, Christianity (Protestant and Catholic), Daoism, and Islam—at the national, provincial, and county levels, and draws the contours of Confucianism, folk religion, and the Mao cult. It describes the main organizations, beliefs and rituals of various religions, and the social and demographic characteristics of their respective believers. Putting various religions side by side in their social, political, and cultural contexts, this volume offers a comprehensive overview of religion in contemporary China. (p. 1)

Because religion can be understood in different ways, depending on one's approach (theological, sociological), also in the introduction, Yang begins with his definition of religion that he uses in his research:

This atlas treats religion as a complex social institution comprising both beliefs and practices. Religion includes four elements: 1) a belief in the supernatural; 2) a set of beliefs regarding life and the world; 3) a set of ritual practices; and 4) a distinct social organization or moral community. (p. 1)

Yang borrows from the economic theory of supply and demand to construct a useful paradigm of what he calls “religious markets”:

Under the restrictive and repressive regulations, the religious economy does not form a single market, but splits into three parallel and intertwined markets, which I have labeled red, black, and gray markets. Red is the color of the Communist Party and thus the red market represents the religions sanctioned by the party-state and includes the five legal (officially permitted) religious organizations, believers, and religious activities. The black market, on the other hand, comprises all illegal (officially banned) religious organizations, believers, and religious activities. The gray market for religion lies somewhere in between: it comprises all religious and spiritual organizations, practitioners, and activities with ambiguous legal status. (p. 2)

I first heard Professor Yang unpack this model of the red, black, and gray markets at a conference more than ten years ago, and I have always found it to be extremely helpful. Part one of the atlas provides an overview of these three markets nationally.

Red

In chapter one, Professor Yang describes the five legally sanctioned religions in China—Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism—and the associations that oversee them. While we often focus on the China Christian Council/Three-Self Patriotic Movement (CCC/TSPM), this atlas is a helpful reminder that the other religions operate under many of the same regulations, restrictions, and demands for political loyalty.

The first map in this chapter is a color-coded picture of the predominant religions at the county level. It is a fascinating visual representation of something quite abstract; a way to actually see the religious landscape of China. With each legal religion represented by a different color, some things are clearly noticeable. These include the dominance of Buddhism in the west, southwest, and southeast; the dominance of Islam in the far west and northwest; the dominance of Protestantism along the Yangtze River, and the pockets of Daoism and Catholicism around the country. Interestingly, there are also numerous counties where they did not have access to data.



(*Atlas of Religion in China*, p. 13)

Subsequent maps in this chapter map the number and location of the religious sites of each of the five red market religions.

Gray

Chapter two is a description of the semi-legal religions beginning with Confucianism. Other religions or religious organizations that are part of the gray market include folk religion, the Mao Cult, and the Protestant house churches and underground Catholic churches.

This section includes a map of the distribution of Confucian religious sites; however, due to the absence of reliable statistics on the number and distribution of Protestant house churches and underground Catholic churches, these are not mapped. One thing Yang notes is that, even though the Protestant house churches were originally part of the black market, the government's relative tolerance over the past two decades places them more in this gray market.

Black

Chapter three provides the reader with a helpful listing and description of the sixteen banned religious groups that have been designated by the Ministry of Public Security as "illegal cults" (*xiejiao* 邪教). Of the 16 groups included in this chapter, eleven would be considered cultic sects of Christianity. These include The Shouters, All Scope Church, Church of the Almighty God (Eastern Lightning), Cold Water Sect, Dami Evangelism Association, Disciples Sect, Established King, Lingling Sect, Lord God Sect, New Testament Church, and Three Ranks of Servants. There are no maps included in this section.

In part two of the atlas, Professor Yang takes his detailed description and analysis of the red market religions to the provincial level. For each, there is a detailed description of the topography, demography, and religious practices. These are accompanied by detailed maps and charts of religious sites down to the prefecture level. The data used in these maps is from publicly available sources. In addition to the helpful maps in this section, there are wonderful photographs depicting the religious life of China.

Unfortunately, because this is an academic publication, its price puts it out of the reach for the average reader. That said, it should be included in the library of every organization that seeks to serve the church in China.

Understanding the religious landscape of China is vital for effective service. This atlas is an essential tool for doing just that.

Editor's note: Our thanks to [Brill](#) for providing a copy of Atlas of Religion in China: Social and Geographical Context for this review.

Joann Pittman is senior vice president of ChinaSource and editor of ZGBriefs. She is the author of [Survival Chinese Lessons](#) and [The Bells Are Not Silent: Stories of Church Bells in China](#). Her personal blog, Outside-In can be found at [joannpittman.com](#), where she writes on China, Minnesota, traveling, and issues related to "living well where you don't belong." You can find her on Twitter [@jkpittman.com](#) and on Facebook at [@authorjoannpittman](#). She makes her home in New Brighton, Minnesota.

Resource Corner

View from the Wall: Essays on a Changing China

A ChinaSource ebook publication by Huo Shui

Chinese scholar, Hou Shui, writing from a sociological perspective, offers a unique viewpoint on the church in China and its role in society as well as its relationship to the Party-State.

In his essays, Huo Shui tackled key issues and challenges facing the church, and society in general, along with the church's response:

- How did society's perception of the church change over time?
- How did the church's relationship with the government change?
- What role did foreigners play in serving the church as she managed the shifting environment?
- What cultural values must foreigners understand in order to serve effectively?

Are you someone who is...

Engaged in service to the church—perhaps have been for many years?

Reading these essays will bring back memories and fill in gaps of understanding on some of the events you experienced and remember.

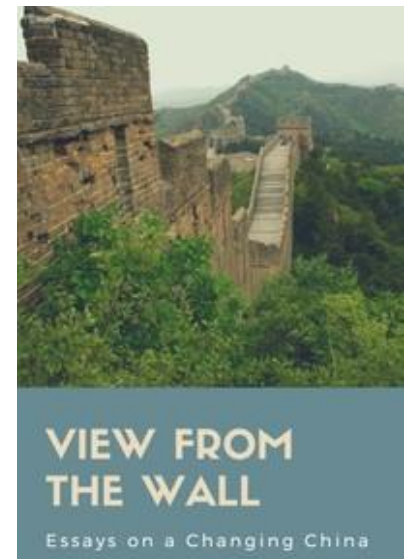
New to China ministry?

These essays are a reminder that there is a social, political, and historical trajectory that has brought the church in China to the place where it is today.

Interested in ministry in China or to the Chinese Diaspora?

These essays provide a fascinating look at how a Chinese Christian was thinking about the role of the church in a changing China.

The essays in *View from the Wall* were originally published as a feature of the same name in the *ChinaSource Quarterly* and were written over a period of time from 1999 to 2011. Huo Shui (pseudonym) is a former government political analyst who writes from outside China.



View from the Wall is available in three formats on the [ChinaSource website](http://ChinaSource.org) for US\$ 1.99.

