

Comparison of Christian Culture and Chinese Culture

SPIIUS (Student Partners in Learning US), a non-profit organization, offers "English Bible Course" (bilingual in English and Chinese), "Free English Courses", and specially designed "Christian Culture Course" to Chinese immigrant students and adults. The aim is to care for and assist immigrant families and students in learning English, understanding Christian culture, and better integrating into American community life.

We know that the United States was founded by Protestant Christian immigrants from Europe and is a nation built on Christian principles. As new immigrant families come to the United States and seek to integrate into American community life, it is necessary to understand Western culture and Christian culture. At the same time, we must prepare for the Christian faith of Chinese immigrants. Education, in essence, is religious because it concerns the soul and the relationship between God and man. Therefore, education cannot be divided into religious and non-religious in terms of content and methods.

Today's Christian Culture Course will focus on comparing Christian culture with Chinese culture.

What is Culture?

Culture, fundamentally, is "the way of life of a people," encompassing all aspects of life for a particular ethnic group. This includes clothing, food, housing, transportation, literature, art, history, geography, customs, religious beliefs, legal systems, values, and spiritual symbols.

It can be summarized that the core factor determining the success or failure of a nation or a company is "culture." For instance, in the history of China, the country was invaded and ruled by foreign tribes several times. However, these foreign tribes did not possess a highly civilized cultural system, and over time, they faded away in the river of history. Examples include the Xiongnu during the Han Dynasty, the Jurchens during the Song Dynasty, the Mongols during the Yuan Dynasty, and the Manchus during the Qing Dynasty. Ultimately, they were assimilated by the Han culture because they could not resist the infiltration of Confucian Chinese culture. Similarly, in the corporate world, whether a large company can succeed depends on whether it has a good corporate culture. For example, Huawei's "wolf" culture has enabled it to stand out in the fiercely competitive industry and even thrive in a harsh international environment, becoming a leader in the global communications industry.

Comparison of Eastern and Western Cultures: There are two major civilizations in the world: the Mediterranean civilization represented by Christian culture, which forms the basis of Western traditional culture, and the Chinese civilization dominated by Confucian culture, which represents traditional Chinese culture. Over the past 500 years, the Western culture based on Christian principles has built highly civilized Western societies. Most modern and developed countries today are predominantly Christian, with Japan being the notable exception. Why has the West led the East over the past 500 years? The core reason lies in culture. Today, we will explore the similarities and differences between Christian culture and traditional Chinese culture to understand the contemporary world, our nation, and ourselves.

The Relationship Between Christian Culture and Chinese Culture, For the past century, the relationship between "Christian culture" and "Chinese culture" has been a topic of concern for both Chinese Christians and non-Christians. Chinese non-Christian intellectuals have also pondered whether Christian culture can become a source for reconstructing China's "spiritual civilization." There have been two significant intellectual movements in the past century:

1、The May Fourth Movement in the early 20th century: During this period, there was a rise in the New Culture Movement, where intellectuals turned to Western culture in hopes of changing Chinese culture and society. During this time, Chinese people frequently referred to "Mr. Democracy" (德先生), "Mr. Science" (赛先生), and "Mr. Christianity" (基先生). Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, strongly advocated for Christian culture before the establishment of the Communist Party, believing that it could be applied to China to change society, correct flaws, and alter people's perspectives, thus gaining "religious benefits."

2、The early stages of China's reform and opening up in 1989: Intellectuals at the time advocated for "wholesale Westernization" in an attempt to transform and reform Chinese thought and cultural concepts.

The two peaks of cultural movements in Chinese society have had a profound impact. Today, by comparing Christian culture with traditional Chinese culture, we hope to prepare for the transformation of Chinese thought and culture.

In reality, the mainstream culture of a country determines its institutions and whether its people live happily. Despite China's economic growth over the past forty years of reform and opening up, moral decline, materialism, and a profit-driven mindset have led to indifferent interpersonal relationships and a general lack of security and happiness. Why is this the case? The root cause is culture. Chinese traditional Confucian culture is a hierarchical culture designed to serve feudal emperors, suitable for a feudal and authoritarian society. However, our society is now a commodity economy, and Confucian culture no longer fits China's modern market economy and capitalist society. Although our society has entered the modern era, the thoughts of Confucian culture still flow in the veins of our people. Leaders think in terms of centralization and control, making our society essentially hierarchical, which hinders China's progress and development and is the source of various issues. Culture is fundamental, and we need to introduce advanced culture to change Chinese society and adapt to modern societal development.

Therefore, it is necessary for overseas Chinese and those in China to study and understand Western culture and Christian culture and reflect on Chinese traditional Confucian culture. Especially for overseas Chinese, understanding Western and American societies requires understanding Christian culture. This understanding is beneficial for new immigrants to integrate into American society and comprehend American ideologies. It can also help us change our cultural concepts and transform future Chinese society, making China stronger and its people happier.

Western Traditional Culture: Western traditional culture (mainly referring to the core values of developed countries in Western Europe and North America) is primarily rooted in traditional Christian culture, which integrates core values from ancient Greek and Roman cultures. Greek culture in Western culture emphasizes science, with philosophers like Plato and Aristotle also being mathematicians. Through the nurturing of natural law tradition and Christian theology, under the loose political order of European feudalism and the impetus of the Renaissance, Western culture evolved over more than two thousand years to nurture a constitutional and rule-of-law culture that upholds equality, fraternity, freedom, democracy, rule of law, science, and order. This is specifically manifested in respect for and protection of individual civil rights, the spirit of contract, constant vigilance against human evil, principles of checks and balances of power, zero tolerance for privilege, and democratic demands for the legitimacy of political power. The development and strength of Western society over the past five hundred years are closely related to the Christian-centered cultural concepts. Since the Renaissance, Western culture, led by Christianity, has propelled Western countries into modern civilized societies.

Christian Culture:

Christianity is one of the world's largest religions, with over two billion followers. It is not just a religion but also a cultural and philosophical force that has profoundly impacted human history and value systems. Western traditional culture, predominantly Christian, is not human-centered but God-centered, emphasizing eternity beyond this life. Everyone is expected to have a sense of awe, reverence for God. The core doctrines of Christianity are rooted in the Bible and historical traditions, continually evolving and enriching over the past few thousand years.

Fundamental Doctrines and Beliefs:

1, God's Creation: The world and all things in it were created by God through His only Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, God is the source of all life. Among all created beings, humans hold a special position because God created them in His own image. In the Garden of Eden, Adam, the first man, was God's servant and was tasked with governing all the creatures on Earth. Thus, only humans can have a direct relationship with God. However, we must remember our role as servants and maintain a humble heart, centering our lives on God, doing His work, and serving others.

2, Original Sin: When God created the first humans, Adam and Eve, He made them in His image—holy, sinless, and capable of enjoying eternal life. However, they disobeyed God and became sinners, introducing sin into the world. Adam and Eve's disobedience symbolizes that each of us is also susceptible to sin, leading us to do what we should not do, think what we should not think, or fail to do what we should. Thus, in the eyes of the all-knowing God, we are all unholy "sinners." When people sin, their relationship with God is severed by that sin, causing them to lose God's love and blessings. Because of sin, humans lose the promise of eternal life and must pay the price of anxiety, suffering, and death.

3, The Birth of Jesus Christ: A covenant is an agreement between God and man. The Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament reveals that humans once had a direct relationship with God, which was severed by sin. According to the Old Testament, God is righteous and just. If people keep the covenant, revere Jehovah, and follow His ways, they will be blessed, as exemplified by Abraham and David. If they break the covenant, do not believe in God, or do not follow His ways, they will be judged and punished. The history of the Jewish people demonstrates this; due to their unbelief, they were conquered, their nation was destroyed, and they were exiled around the world. In the Old Testament, God is depicted as a consuming fire and a jealous God, emphasizing justice and judgment.

Over 2,000 years ago, at the beginning of the Common Era, Jesus Christ was born. He changed the world and the covenant between God and man. God is not only just and righteous but also loving and forgiving. Jesus introduced a new commandment to His followers: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another" (John 13:34). Love and forgiveness warm the world, giving those who err a chance to repent, preventing them from despair, and filling their lives with hope.

Before Jesus, the God of the Old Testament was a God of justice and judgment. Sin was met with judgment and punishment. Jesus brought change, portraying God as a God of grace. When you sin, you are given a chance to repent, and one mistake does not condemn you forever. For instance, when Jesus was crucified, a criminal was crucified alongside Him. This criminal, a condemned man, typically faced hopelessness and fear. However, he believed in Jesus just before his death, and Jesus told him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Jesus forgave his past and gave him the hope of paradise, preventing his despair. This is the New Covenant, characterized by a God of grace.

Throughout history, who has ever overcome the world? No sage or person has conquered the world, except Jesus Christ. Despite the world's most brutal methods of crucifixion, Jesus triumphed, rising from the lowest point to become the highest and eternal God. Jesus exemplified the miracle of

"overcoming Caesar with bare hands," a feat unmatched over 2,000 years. Despite the immense power of figures like Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon, their glory faded over time. Only Jesus, with His gentleness, humility, obedience, love, and forgiveness, has overcome the world and death, becoming the eternal king in people's hearts. No prophet or saint's birth has ever compared to Jesus; He changed the world and bestowed love and grace upon humanity, freeing people from the bondage of "law and sin" and granting them freedom, human rights, and equality.

Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Traditional Chinese Culture:

Traditional Chinese culture is primarily based on Confucianism. With the development of traditional Chinese society, Confucianism was influenced by Daoist thoughts and the introduction of Buddhism, eventually forming a middle-ground civilization. Before the rise of Confucianism, Chinese culture placed greater emphasis on the consciousness of "Heaven." After the emergence of Confucianism, Chinese culture experienced a significant shift, forming a moralistic humanism centered around humanity. This worldview lacks transcendence beyond the material world, focuses on the present life, is self-sufficient, and has a closed cosmology, emphasizing self-reliance. Under this influence, Chinese values are practical and utilitarian, founded on complex interpersonal relationships and material interests.

Traditional Chinese culture has three major shortcomings: a lack of equality, scientific spirit, and legal awareness.

Lack of Equality: Chinese culture lacks the concept of equal relationships and personal independence. In feudal society, the relationships were hierarchical: "The ruler guides the subject, the father guides the son, the husband guides the wife." Individuals in society primarily had obligations rather than rights. Personal freedom was heavily suppressed by social norms and the state machinery. Emperors could kill subjects at will, parents could beat or even kill their children, and they could interfere in marriages. To some extent, Confucian ethics severely damaged human nature. In the strictly hierarchical ancient society, commoners had to kowtow to officials, and officials had to call themselves slaves in front of the emperor.

Lack of Scientific Spirit: Another drawback of traditional Chinese culture is the lack of scientific spirit. Ancient Chinese focused more on humans and society rather than the natural world. The Four Books and Five Classics do not discuss science, and the imperial examination never tested scientific knowledge. Commerce and industry were not valued; intellectual pursuits were considered the highest calling, while merchants were looked down upon and commerce was seen as unworthy. Furthermore, ancient China lacked logic, which is the foundation of mathematics and the mother of science. Many ancient Chinese philosophical schools engaged in sophistry, and their abstract notions were not conducive to the development of formal logic. Texts like the I Ching and the Tao Te Ching undermined scientific reasoning and experimental spirit, having an anti-scientific impact.

Lack of Legal Awareness: The third flaw in traditional Chinese culture is the lack of legal awareness. Confucian culture emphasizes governance by virtue. Since the Han Dynasty, which adopted Confucianism as the official ideology, China's feudal society has implemented the idea of governing by virtue. Morality is a general behavioral norm, while law is a higher behavioral norm. Thus, law is the highest form of morality. To improve a country's and a people's moral standards, it is crucial for the state to first establish and enforce strict laws. The Confucian concept of "li" (ritual propriety) blurred the lines between morality and law, effectively governing by human rule rather than by law. Confucianism was utilized by rulers and elevated as the official ideology, ultimately hindering social progress and stifling people's thoughts.

Therefore, Confucian culture is anthropocentric, unlike Christian culture, which is theocentric. Modern Chinese people often adhere to Confucian ideals in their youth, engaging with society and pursuing ideals like "cultivating oneself, regulating the family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world," motivated by the spirit of "striving unrelentingly." As they reach middle age, when many ideals remain unfulfilled, they start to adopt Daoist ideas of "going with the flow and accepting what comes." In old age, they often turn to Buddhist notions of detachment, viewing everything as empty. Chinese values focus on the present life, are centered on humanity, and are entirely practical and utilitarian.

In reality, from the Qin to the Qing dynasties, most emperors were "two-faced." Outwardly they espoused Confucianism, but internally they practiced Machiavellian tactics. As Lu Xun mentioned in "Diary of a Madman," "When I examined history, I found no dates; every page was filled with the words 'benevolence, righteousness, and morality.' I couldn't sleep; after examining it carefully for half the night, I finally saw between the lines the words 'cannibalism' written everywhere!" In modern Chinese society, including overseas Chinese communities, the same "Confucian exterior, dark interior" phenomenon persists. In reality, many people, especially those in power in Chinese society, including pastors in overseas churches, outwardly appear polite and speak of benevolence and morality, but internally they are cunning and deceitful, employing various despicable means. The root cause is that Chinese people lack faith, have no ultimate concern, and no fear of God. They only focus on their own interests and present happiness, disregarding future judgment, and care not if future generations face calamity.

As a result, contemporary Chinese society suffers from moral decay, and many heinous acts occur. Historically, Christianity viewed the entire Chinese civilization as heretical, including idol worship, polytheism, the emperor as the "Son of Heaven," ancestor worship, tomb-sweeping, and even the profound I Ching, which was considered witchcraft.

Comparison of Chinese Cultural and Christian Cultural:

1. Understanding "Heaven" and "God": Differences and Similarities between Chinese and Christian Cultural Perspectives

The term “帝” (Dì) appears frequently in ancient Chinese texts. This “帝” does not refer to an “emperor” but to “God,” or the deity they recognized in their understanding. In Chinese history, during the Shang and Zhou periods, the concepts of Heaven and God are reflected in cultural artifacts such as oracle bone inscriptions and the Book of Songs. The ancient Chinese acknowledged God as the sovereign of humanity, whose will determined the rise and fall of dynasties. This God punished evil and rewarded good, and no one could escape His judgment.

In ancient Chinese culture, there was a concept of God and reverence for Him. Both Daoism and Confucianism have points of contact with the God described in the Bible. The earliest term for “God” during the Shang dynasty was “上帝” (God), and in the Zhou dynasty, it was commonly referred to as “天” (Heaven). Many ancient texts, such as the Book of Songs, document these concepts. For example, the "Great Elegance" section of the Book of Songs states, "Majestic is the Sovereign on high, scrutinizing the four quarters, seeking out those who do not submit." Therefore, the original concept of God in ancient China is quite similar to the Biblical God. Both the Shang dynasty's “上帝” and the Zhou dynasty's “天” are very similar to the Christian “Jehovah”: they are both personal gods, unique, with attributes of justice and love, and the creator and ruler of all. However, during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Daoist thought provided further interpretations of the concept of God. Laozi and Zhuangzi often call this god as “道”(Dao) or “无”(Wu)(nothing), but this has no personality.

In Confucian thought, there is also a concept similar to “God”(上帝). “Heaven” (天) is the highest category. Confucius claimed, “At fifty, I understood the decree of Heaven.” He stated, "A gentleman has

three fears: fear of the decree of Heaven, fear of great men, and fear of the words of the sages." Among these fears, the primary one is the fear of the decree of Heaven, which is the command or will of God. Confucius recognized that the decree of Heaven was not an object of speculation but one of fear and reverence.

However, Confucianism is a moral humanism that deviates significantly from early Chinese culture. Before the formation of Confucianism, Chinese culture focused more on the awareness of "Heaven." After the establishment of Confucian culture, Chinese history can be seen as a development of rational humanism, lacking transcendence beyond the material world, emphasizing the present life, human-centeredness, and a self-sufficient worldview. Under this influence, Chinese values are pragmatic and utilitarian, based on complex interpersonal relationships and practical benefits.

During the Qin dynasty, Chinese culture began a significant shift. The Chinese started to regard humans as the ultimate authority. In Confucian tradition, humans were seen as emperors, sons of God (Heaven), and even sages. The greatest sage, according to Confucianism, is not an intellectual or Confucius, but the emperor.

In Chinese Confucian tradition, the "emperor" represents the union of religious and political authority, being both the spiritual priest and the political leader. This makes the Chinese emperor fundamentally different from European monarchs. In Europe, a king is solely a political leader. The concept of a combined spiritual and political leader, or emperor, does not exist in Europe. If such a union existed in Europe, it would be termed "emperor." For thousands of years in China, and even today, this fundamental principle of combining spiritual and political leadership persists. In Confucianism, a true sage is always the emperor. Therefore, the Chinese emperor is not just a political figure but also a religious concept, having both royal and divine authority as the "Son of Heaven," representing both earthly and divine power.

Under thousands of years of feudal rule, each household could have its own family gods and worship ancestors, but only privately. In Chinese feudal culture, "God" was the emperor's deity and had no connection to common people. During the Lunar New Year, common people could legally worship their ancestors, but worshipping the supreme deity "God" was strictly forbidden and punishable by death. The Temple of Heaven in Beijing, for example, was exclusively for the emperor's use. This reveals the inherent inequality of Chinese feudal society, where the emperor was the "Son of Heaven," while common people were merely subjects with no direct access to worship God.

Contrast with Western Christian Societies: This is starkly different from Western Christian societies, where the separation of church and state prevailed. In medieval Europe, religious authority often exceeded political power. By the time of the Renaissance and Martin Luther's Reformation, the principle of "priesthood of all believers" emerged, granting every individual the right to worship God. In Christianity, everyone is a child of God, equal before Him, with no special privileges for rulers over common people.

Modern Implications in Chinese Society: This historical background contributes to the deep-seated hierarchy in modern Chinese society, where rulers and common people are inherently unequal. The Confucian and feudal imperial ideology is deeply entrenched in the minds of those in power. Despite rhetoric about serving the people, in practice, rulers often view themselves as emperors, enforcing their ideologies and maintaining control, much like the combined spiritual and political authority of ancient emperors.

2. On the Concept of Sin: In Chinese Culture, "Man's Nature at Birth is Good," while Christianity Emphasizes "Original Sin"!

In human nature theory, Christianity emphasizes the inherent evil of human nature. Paul says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Christianity acknowledges the impact of "sin" on humanity, hence the need for redemption. This redemption cannot be achieved through human effort alone; it requires the crucifixion and Jesus' sacrifice to transform life. This contrasts with the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist belief in the inherent goodness of human nature, which can be realized through personal cultivation.

Humanism in Chinese Culture: One of the characteristics of Chinese culture is its tendency towards "humanism." Humanism emphasizes the full and optimistic affirmation of human potential, relying on oneself and personal cultivation. However, this optimism about human nature often leads to self-centeredness, selfishness, moral decay, various forms of profiteering, and unfairness. These outcomes have proven to be failures.

Different Understandings of Justice and Afterlife: Chinese people often view the Christian concept of "justification by faith" as unjust. This perspective arises from differing understandings of "heaven" and "hell." In Chinese thought, "heaven" and "hell" are seen as a reward-punishment system, understood from the perspective of retribution. In contrast, Christianity views "heaven" and "hell" as the result of one's relationship with God. "Heaven" is an eternal state of being with God, while "hell" is an eternal state without God's presence. According to Christianity, unwillingness to reconcile with God is sin. A "hell" without God's presence means the absence of love, light, warmth, truth, and beauty, which is more terrifying than burning fire.

The Need for the Concept of Original Sin: Without the concept of "original sin" and "God's judgment on sin" (including the final judgment), it is impossible to effectively prevent evil. The lack of awareness of original sin among Chinese people means they cannot recognize human limitations and imperfections, nor have they developed a tradition of self-criticism. For the modernization of China, people should re-evaluate the characteristics of human nature, recognize the controlling power of sin in human life, and incorporate the concept of original sin into Chinese culture. Otherwise, Chinese people will continue to pursue human perfection through self-realization.

Faith as Spiritual Support: In real life, when facing various situations, people can live and act according to true human nature, which may bring suffering and death. In times of fortune and misfortune, in life and death, people need spiritual reliance. God and Jesus are our ultimate support, and believers will receive God's support. Our lives are not under our control; we cannot escape the bondage of personal "sin" by our own power. It is like being trapped in a quagmire; we cannot escape by ourselves without external strength. Therefore, Christianity believes that without Jesus' crucifixion and redemption, we cannot break free from the bondage of sin.

Redemption and Social Change: Without redemption, it is impossible to change the characteristics of the Chinese personality. Chinese culture assumes that people can achieve perfect morality by their own efforts, but this assumption has proven to be entirely unsuccessful. Christian redemption changes the lives of the redeemed, leading to individual changes that result in overall societal transformation. "The human soul needs the nourishment of faith. The spiritual hunger must be fed with spiritual food. ... Seeking religious salvation becomes the only way. ... Only the voice of God is the food of the soul; only Christian faith can save the souls of the Chinese people."

3. Emphasis on "Love and Forgiveness" in Christianity vs. "An Eye for an Eye" in Chinese Culture

Lu Xun said: "When you open the history of 2,000 years of feudal ethics, you see only one word—'cannibalism'." Chinese moral culture, while seemingly admirable on the surface, often became a binding force through feudal ethics. It demanded "self-restraint and restoration of propriety" and imposed "three obediences and four virtues" on women, yet provided no way for individuals to correct their mistakes. When people fail to meet these expectations, there is no way out. In Confucian feudal culture, failure often leads to a dead end, which is what Lu Xun referred to as "cannibalism." In essence, there is no tradition of "love and forgiveness" in Confucian culture.

The Lack of Forgiveness in Traditional Chinese Culture: A simple example is the fate of a woman who loses her chastity. In traditional Chinese culture, what is her fate? Under such cultural norms, she has no way out; her life is essentially over. Even if she is a victim of rape, not committing any sin herself, there is no way out for her within 2,000 years of Confucian culture.

During the Cultural Revolution, my father participated in a criticism session against a female principal, who hanged herself the next day. Though my father was not the main instigator, merely a participant, this incident barred him from ever joining the Communist Party, leaving him with lifelong regret. There are countless such examples in reality: a single mistake can burden someone for life, never allowing them to lift their head again. The Cultural Revolution brought endless harm to the Chinese people, but as a nation, we have not fundamentally examined the cultural and ideological roots of these issues.

Modern Chinese Society: Even today, Chinese society is rife with various forms of purges. If you make even a minor mistake, you could be arrested and imprisoned—whether it's for corruption, differing political views, or practicing a faith deemed heretical by the government. The authorities will punish you severely, showing no forgiveness. Can such a society sustain itself in the long run? In recent years, countless people in China have been purged, leading to broken families and countless tragedies. The key problems are a lack of reverence and a lack of "love and forgiveness." Christianity, with its God-centered approach—loving God, loving people, loving one's neighbor—offers a way forward for China.

4. Emphasis on "Reverence for God" in Christianity vs. "Reverence for Power" in Chinese Culture

Christianity requires everyone to have a reverent heart, revering God Jehovah. As the Chinese saying goes, "Three feet above your head is a divine presence." Christian believers are generally devout, both in public and private, forming a conscious reverence for and adherence to God's path. It is as if God is constantly observing everything, making people wary of crossing the line, abiding by rules, and valuing morality. For example, in American society, we observe that the vast majority of people follow the rules. This is closely related to most people's Christian faith, their reverent hearts, and their reverence for God. This reverent heart creates a self-awareness to follow the rules.

One day, Principal Nick asked an excellent question: "At least 50% of people in American society today do not believe in Christianity or attend church. Why do they still behave civilly and follow the rules?" I told him that although some people may not go to church or appear to believe in religion, Christian culture has already formed a mindset, imprinted in the very marrow of Western people. This is the significance of our lecture on "Christian Culture." The culture flowing through the veins of a country or nation is crucial. Culture determines the moral orientation and spiritual outlook of that country or nation.

The Cultural DNA of Chinese People : In the bones of Chinese people lies Confucian culture, which has, over many years, merged with Machiavellian tactics, resulting in a so-called "outer Confucian, inner Machiavellian" persona. Such individuals may preach benevolence and morality in public but practice

deceit and cunning in private. Even overseas, in church gatherings, they might appear to be Christians, but their behavior is still dictated by the "outer Confucian, inner Machiavellian" mindset. Their faith in Christ is no different from burning incense to Buddha. Why? Because Confucian culture has deeply rooted itself in the hearts of Chinese people over thousands of years; it is ingrained in their very marrow. This is why our lecture emphasizes the significance of culture and the propagation of Christian culture. Without cultural transformation, mere verbal or superficial faith is useless. It must be cultural, penetrating to the marrow.

Reverence for Power in Chinese Culture: Chinese people revere power, treating the state as heaven and worshipping power as a deity. This mindset of worshipping the emperor, the state, and power is deeply rooted in the cultural DNA that governs every Chinese person's soul and life. Even in modern society, we continue to practice centralized autocracy. From this perspective, Confucian civilization has always been regarded as the orthodox teaching, and the core of Chinese culture remains unchanged.

Looking at contemporary Chinese society, many high-ranking officials and business leaders are imprisoned. They share a common problem: a lack of reverence. When they engage in corruption and bribery, they gamble on not being discovered, believing they will not get caught. Without a reverent heart, they cross the line, break rules, and eventually find themselves imprisoned. Society does not forgive, from the Cultural Revolution to the past decade, countless families have been shattered. This cycle of vengeance seems endless and hopeless.

The early emblem of Harvard College featured three books, two facing upward to symbolize the reason and revelation God grants humanity (general revelation and the Bible), and one facing downward to represent reverence for God's supreme mysteries. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God" (Deuteronomy 29:29). Recognizing that all human pursuit of knowledge and education begins with the reverence for the Lord. Christianity demands that people have a reverent heart, revering God Jehovah and following His ways to receive God's blessings. This reverence is not superficial or verbal; it is a heartfelt, soulful reverence for God because God is omniscient, omnipotent, and all-seeing, filled with love. Whether in public or private, whatever we do should be worthy of the supreme God, who constantly examines us. Such a life will follow a righteous path and be blessed by God.

Without God in our hearts, without recognizing an omniscient, all-seeing deity, we cannot comprehend that God examines everything and holds us accountable. As the Chinese saying goes, "Heaven's way is good at reincarnation; who does heaven forgive?" Recently, we saw on China Central Television's anti-corruption program that Li Tie, who rose from a poor background and a football player to become a coach and eventually the head coach of the national team, quickly fell from grace. He became involved in bribery, corruption, and match-fixing, facing imprisonment. Why did this happen? Was he lacking money? Certainly not. Beyond greed, the main issue was a lack of reverence. He had no god in his heart and believed his actions would go unnoticed. In reality, many things unknown to people are known to God. If many of the problematic individuals in China had faith, read the Bible regularly, and had a reverent heart for God, there might be fewer personal and family tragedies.

A Scholar's Lament in the 1980s: "The Tragedy of the Chinese People Is the Lack of God"

One scholar lamented that the tragedy of the Chinese people lies in their lack of God. The fundamental issue is that they "do not worship God but worship people, adorning them with a radiant, god-like aura (from emperors, Confucius, to Marx and Mao Zedong)." Worshipping people is seen as humanity's most dreadful fall. Chinese people "do not worship any gods but kneel at the feet of those in power, treating authority as a deity." For China to accelerate its progress towards democratic politics, it must establish Christian faith, nurturing thinkers and politicians with a spirit of love and humanitarianism. The scholar further noted that "one of the greatest flaws in the Chinese character is the lack of religious faith," which is

the root cause of many problems. If ordinary people lack religious faith, the issues may not be as severe, but for politicians, the absence of religious faith can be disastrous. Religious faith provides strong constraints, helps establish fair rules, fosters economic development, encourages a spirit of repentance (the doctrine of original sin), respects freedom and individual value, and discourages repaying evil with evil.

Christianity and God are often associated with a spirit of repentance. The scholar pointed out that the "most fatal error" of Chinese culture is the "lack of awareness of its own errors." In contrast, "Westerners have an absolute God, allowing for repentance and atonement; the Chinese, lacking God, never repent or atone." He believed, "When people repent and confess their sins, they are most devout, transparent, and full of vitality and passion." Without an ultimate value (i.e., God), repentance becomes meaningless. Only by seeking a sacred life can one find truth. "Look up and gaze at the heavens; bow down and question your heart; by doing these, life will be fulfilling, sacred, and full of expectation for the arrival of God."

"The history of democratic political development worldwide proves that successful civilization transitions are mostly driven by the actions of Christians. Thus, establishing Christian faith and laying the foundation for modern civilization is fundamentally significant for a nation." "A nation without religious faith cannot progress towards modern democratic constitutionalism. Only the ideological framework of religious faith can determine the direction of societal development."

Integrating Christianity into Chinese Culture: In promoting the Christianization of Chinese culture, it is essential to recognize the current minimal or nearly non-existent influence of Christian faith in China. In mainstream Chinese culture, Christianity has yet to hold a place, and it remains silent in the intellectual and cultural circles of China. Christianity seems incapable of influencing Chinese culture and society. It has not formed its unique theological system to convey the Christian faith to fellow Chinese. Chinese churches have yet to produce influential theologians to systematically convey, assert, and advocate for the Christian faith. Christianity must root itself in Chinese culture to better integrate and enrich it, thus addressing the deficiencies in Chinese culture and ensuring more stable cultural development.

The Power of Love in Christianity : "Love, as a divine power, highlights Christianity's interpretation of death as 'a transcendence of love over revenge, conscience over violence, and freedom over necessity.'" Jesus faced various temptations, even the threat of crucifixion, and still said "no" without hatred, revenge, or incitement to violence. Instead, he was "full of boundless love and tolerance," adhering to non-violent passive resistance, calmly saying "no" while carrying the cross.

The Eternal King Jesus : The most beautiful masterpiece in this world is the image of Jesus on the cross, bearing humanity's suffering and representing humankind under God's punishment. However, his suffering was not humiliation but glory; not failure, but success. Time washes away all great figures, even the most enlightened emperors will be forgotten, but Jesus remains eternal in people's hearts as the Messiah, the Savior, the true King in people's hearts for over two thousand years. Jesus is the eternal King, the eternal Lord, who conquered the world and death!

Our Mission:

Our mission is to understand and engage in the tension and conflict, not being ashamed of the gospel, explaining the Christian position and its significance and value to the Chinese people. In a multicultural context, it is our unforgotten mission to promote the Christian faith and offer it as a choice to our compatriots. Through studying the Bible, we aim to infuse Christian culture and thought into our marrow, transforming Chinese immigrants into a devout generation that reveres and obeys Jehovah's way. Establishing Christian faith is crucial for our life's journey!

