PhD thesis

Missionary-self and mission others: the identity of Chinese missionaries from a Trinitarian perspective

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'Missionary-Self and Mission Others:

The Identity of Chinese Missionaries from a Trinitarian Perspective'

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OCMS, Ph.D.

January 2023

ABSTRACT

Despite the rise of the PRC Chinese missionary movement over the past 20 years, there has been hardly any research on how the identity of Chinese missionaries affects the relationship with their mission 'Others' in the field. The purposes of this thesis are, firstly, to explore the key factors in Chinese missionaries' identity construction as they engaged in cross-cultural missions. The second purpose is to use Trinitarian traits to respond to identity construction among Chinese missionaries to help them in their awareness of their own identity and so promote the creation of fruitful relationships with their mission 'Others'.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Chinese missionary identity, I combined the discourses of identity presented by Chinese and Western scholars on the construction of the Chinese missionaries' identity. Through in-depth interviews, I collected the stories of 52 missionaries from China. Using Narrative Inquiry, I was able to provide a thick description of the challenges they faced due to their identity as they crossed cultures. I then used a multidisciplinary perspective to synthesise a sociological, philosophical, and theological approach to address these challenges.

Despite 70 years of Communist governance, it was found that Confucian values still strongly impacted Chinese missionary identity. Familism, Face culture and authoritarianism all played a vital role in relationships. The findings showed that the Chinese missionary identity was influenced by social class and a Han-centric ethnocentrism which led to nationalism. In the religious sphere there was a strong emphasis on suffering for the gospel, a conservative theology focused on following tradition, and Pentecostalism, which explained conflicts as due to power encounters.

Finally, 'Tridentity', a new paradigm based on four Trinitarian traits, is presented in the hope that it will enable future Chinese Missionaries to overcome identity challenges in cross-cultural service.

Missionary-Self and Mission Others:
The Identity of Chinese Missionaries from a Trinitarian Perspective

by

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BA (Singapore Bible College)

MA (University of South Australia)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Middlesex University

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January 2023

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

DECLARATIONS

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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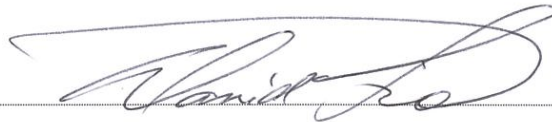
Date .... 27th January 2023 ....

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my parents, Dr Daniel Lin and Judy Lin. They dedicated me to the Lord before I was born and were role models for me as they loved and served the Lord.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful that God has loved me, redeemed me, and continually renews me. And finally, all praise and honour to this Triune God who has granted me all of these!

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NOTES AND GLOSSARY

Notes

1) All the missionaries interviewed for this study were Han Chinese and sent out by house churches in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

2) All Bible references are from the NIV Bible.

3) The Chinese characters used in this thesis are written in traditional Chinese characters. If there was no English translation given for a Chinese author's name, then the name was romanised using the Mainland Chinese Pinyin system.

4) To clearly distinguish between Western and Chinese scholars, when available, names in Chinese characters were added for the Chinese authors to clarify the author's origin.

5) The term 'Chinese missionaries' often appears and was used interchangeably with 'missionaries'.

6) To protect the identity of the Chinese missionaries, all have been given English pseudonyms in this thesis.

Glossary

Chinese Church

The three main divisions of the Chinese Church discussed in this paper are:

1) Chinese churches prior to 1949, before the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

2) The Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), founded in 1954, the registered Protestant Church in the PRC.

3) The House Churches in China are part of a church movement that is not registered (see below listing on House Church).

Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

The Chinese Communist Party (also known as the Communist Party of China) was founded in 1921 and is currently the ruling party in the People's Republic of China. The current leader of the party, Xi Jinping is the General Secretary of the CCP and concurrently holds the offices of Chairman of the Central Military Commission and President of China.

Ethnic Minorities in China

There are fifty-six ethnic groups in China with the Han being the majority at over 91%. The other fifty-five are known as ethnic minorities. Most are in rural or mountainous areas along the border areas. Their religious beliefs include Tibetan Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Animism. As some members of the ethnic minorities have moved into the large cities because of urbanisation, missionaries serving these groups are also included in this study.

Face

In Chinese culture, Face includes one's reputation, honour, and social standing. Face is a form of capital that can be given, lost, or saved. Throughout this paper, it will be referred to with a capital F as in 'Face'.

House Church

The house churches in China are part of a church movement that came into being in response to the formation of the TSPM. As a result, these churches are not part of the

TSPM and are also called the 'underground' or 'unregistered church'. The participants in this study are mainly missionaries sent by the house churches. Among them, a few came to faith in TSPM churches, but later joined a house church and were sent out as missionaries by the house churches.

Nationalism and Patriotism

For the purposes of this research, the concept of Chinese nationalism (民族主義) is combined with patriotism (愛國主義) to express not just love for one's country, but also the feeling that one's country is superior to others. This phenomenon is encouraged by the current political leadership in China to construct the national identity and is further explored in Chapter Two (see Chapter Two 2.1.5.3.3).

Others

The 'Others' in this study are Chinese missionaries' mission 'Others' (the target or host people group whom missionaries engage and serve in their cross-cultural fields). They have different cultures and ethnicities from the Han Chinese. However, 'Others' can also include missionaries from other international organisations or missionaries from other denominational backgrounds. They will be referred to with a capital 'O' throughout this thesis.

People's Republic of China (PRC)

The People's Republic of China is the official name of China since 1949. In addition, the PRC is sometimes referred to as Mainland China or Communist China. This is not to be confused with the Republic of China, more commonly known as Taiwan.

Thick Description

Thick description refers to the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context (Holloway, 1997).

Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM)

The TSPM is the registered Protestant Church in the PRC. The name comes from the three principles of self-governance, self-support (i.e., financial independence from outsiders), and self-propagation. It lies under the authority of the United Front Department of the Chinese Communist Party.

Missionaries

The participants in this thesis are missionaries sent by the Church through local or international missions to cross-cultural ministry in ethnic minority areas or overseas. This does not include individual workers who come to the mission field independently or Christians who work or migrate overseas.

Mission Agencies

The mission agencies with which missionaries in this thesis are involved are divided into local and international agencies. Their primary responsibilities include mobilisation, screening, training, member care, and co-sending with churches. Some missionaries are paired with a local and international mission agency to support the care and ministry development of Chinese missionaries on the mission field.

FIGURES AND TABLES

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ABBREVIATIONS

BRI – Belt and Road Initiative

BTJ – Back to Jerusalem movement

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

HIT – Hybrid Identity Theory

IMM – Indigenous Mission Movement

INT – Identity Negotiation Theory

KMT – Chinese Nationalist Party

MC – Mission China

NIV – New International Version

PRC – People's Republic of China

SIT – Social Identity Theory

TSPM – Three Self Patriotic Movement

WTO – World Trade Organisation

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

One of the purposes of this research is to explore the key factors in Chinese missionaries' identity construction as they engage in cross-cultural missions. Their inner struggles as well as the challenges they face while crossing cultures are analysed through in-depth interviews conducted in the field. Secondly, I use traits from Trinitarian theology to reflect on and respond to identity construction among Chinese missionaries and to address the challenges the missionaries faced. Finally, 'Tridentity', a new a model for constructing missionary identity is presented in the hope that it will enable future Chinese missionaries to overcome their challenges as they serve cross-culturally.

This chapter includes six sections:

o Research background—The effects of rise of China (society, politics, economy, and culture) on the Chinese church and the resulting indigenous missionary movement (IMM)

o Research problem and questions on the challenges faced by Chinese missionaries

o The theoretical framework of this research

o The significance of this research

o The scope of the study and its limitations

o The structure of the thesis

1.1.0 Research Background

1.1.1 The Rise of China

Toynbee, A. J. in his book, *The Toynbee-Ikeda Dialogue: Man Himself Must Choose* (1976), stated that the nineteenth century belongs to the U.K., the twentieth belongs to

the U.S., and the twenty-first belongs to China. China's global development today verifies Toynbee's 45-year-old prediction as China in the twenty-first century has become increasingly influential.

Historically, China experienced imperialist aggression in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, China transitioned from an empire to a republic in 1911, then from democracy to communism in 1949. During this period, China experienced invasion by Japan and the ensuing Sino-Japanese war (1931-45), a Civil War (1945-50), the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), and economic reform and rapid development (1978 to the present). Arriving in the twenty-first century, China has become influential on the world stage in terms of her economic, political, cultural, and military prowess.

Golley, J. and Song, L. (2011) point out that China became the world's second largest economy following her entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). China's rising global economic might not only affects her economic and political relations with the rest of the world, but is also changing regional and global economic and political landscapes in fundamental ways. Chinese culture is also a form of soft power that is increasingly influencing the world. In Cai, Yanan's 才亞楠 (2014) article, 'Discourse on the Overseas Spread of Chinese Culture from the Influence of Confucius Institutes', Chinese culture is described as one of the world's mainstream cultures, which should be acknowledged and shared abroad. The Confucius Institutes are educational institutions that organise cultural exchanges between Chinese universities and universities abroad, promoting interest in Chinese language study and enhancing people's understanding of Chinese culture. Therefore, China's rise includes influence in the political, economic, and cultural spheres.

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1.1.2 The Rise of the Protestant Church in China

The Protestant Church in China began when the gospel was brought by pioneer missionaries such as Robert Morrison (1782-1834) in 1807 (Starr, J. B., 1998). Since then, the church in China has experienced persecution, but also revival and growth. Sociologists, Yang, Fenggang 楊鳳崗, Gao, Shining 高師寧 & Li, Xiangping 李向平 (2018), have researched Chinese government publications to report that the number of Christians has grown from 700,000 before Liberation in 1949 to an estimated 130 million 60 years later.[1] Yang, Fenggang 楊鳳崗 (2014) predicts that the number of Christians in China will reach 244 million by 2030, making it the country with the most Christians in the world. This reflects the resilience of the Chinese church, which continues to grow despite restrictions.

1.1.3 The Rise of the Indigenous Mission Movement in China

In the early 2000s, as the Chinese church increased in numbers and their knowledge and application of the Word, they began to care for the marginalised and engaged in cross cultural missions. Hattaway, P. (2003) writes that the Back to Jerusalem movement (BTJ), had a vision to send out 100,000 missionaries westward and bring the gospel from China back to Jerusalem. Later, it developed into an indigenous mission movement as Chinese churches formed agencies to send missionaries to serve cross-culturally, either domestically or overseas. In 2013, 'Mission China 2030' (MC2030) was started, a movement which hopes to see 20,000 missionaries sent out from China by 2030. All these show the potential impact of the Chinese Church on global missions. I will now review these different mission movements.

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[1] http://www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=9120 Access date 2018-10-12

1.1.3.1 The Back to Jerusalem (BTJ) Movement

The BTJ movement can be divided into two phases. The first took place from 1935 to 1949. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, some Chinese Christians proposed to take the gospel westward, all the way back to Jerusalem. The main thrust came from two indigenous evangelical institutions: the 遍傳福音團 'bianchuan fuyin tuan' (Chinese Back to Jerusalem Evangelistic Band) and the 西北靈工團 'xibei linggong tuan' (Northwest Spiritual Band). They believed Christianity originally came from Jerusalem to Europe and North America, and then spread to Asia. The BTJ Christians believed that if they could bring the Christian gospel back to Jerusalem along the ancient Silk Road through Central Asia and the Middle East, they would have completed the Great Commission and could wait for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and the new heaven and new earth. However, Hattaway, P. (2003) reminds us that the arrival of Christian missionaries in Xinjiang in 1948 coincided with that of the Communists. The liberation of Xinjiang, China's westernmost province, and the closure of China's borders led to a pause in the BTJ movement for almost forty years.

The second phase of BTJ started in the 1990s, after the Chinese house churches had experienced nearly half a century of persecution, especially during the Cultural Revolution. Churches in China have sprung up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain since the 1980s and there has been a great response to the gospel, especially in the urban centres in the 1990s. International interest in the BTJ movement was revived mainly through two books written by Paul Hattaway: *Back to Jerusalem: Three Chinese House Church Leaders Share Their Vision to Complete the Great Commission* (2003*)* and *The Heavenly Man: The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun* (2004). Note that all who were sent out by the BTJ movement were Han Chinese. The BTJ movement claimed they wanted to send out 100,000 missionaries before 2010. No matter

if this was seen as a slogan, a vision, or an actual action plan, this BTJ revival became a driving force for missions in China.

The missionaries sent by the BTJ network were mainly from rural churches. Consistent with Chinese culture, the traditional house churches governed churches and their missionaries in a patriarchal manner. These churches valued prayer, obedience to the Holy Spirit, willingness to suffer, and total obedience to the Church's leadership. The BTJ movement's leading advocates also included overseas charismatic churches. During its initial stages, these overseas churches provided the local missionaries' training and determined their field assignments (Hou, Xuandao 侯宣道, 2017). The leaders of the movement declared that the Chinese Church should take the baton for the last lap of the gospel race and fulfil the Great Commission. The plan was for Chinese missionaries to travel westward from China, passing through mostly Muslim countries before arriving in Jerusalem. However, the young missionaries sent by BTJ had their limited educational background and social experience, facing numerous challenges as they tried to engage with people and deal with culture shock on the mission field.

Wei, Hong 魏宏 (2020, 64) observed that: 'The BTJ Movement is a movement that is united by vision with the absence of organisation or strategies. Their objectives are simple and clear. They did not rely on knowledge, but on their sense of the guidance by the Holy Spirit. They gave the impression of being reckless, impulsive, and fanatical.' Predictably, their lack of clear goals, rigorous screening, and effective training led to a high attrition rate. Solely relying on inspiring visions and enthusiastic responses from young people, the movement was not sustainable.

Wei, Hong 魏宏 (2020) also pointed out that the slogan of sending 100,000 missionaries seems exaggerated and ostentatious. In fact, the Chinese house churches' experience of sending out missionaries was shallow, and they were not aware of the

responsibilities and costs involved in sending out missionaries. Applying strategies from their experience in rural missions to the foreign mission field led to challenges and frustration. Missionaries from relatively homogenous and stable rural societies ran into difficulties as they entered a diverse and complex mission field. In addition, most of the BTJ missionaries were sent to Muslim areas. It has never been easy to witness effectively to Muslim communities and it is even more challenging for missionaries in that context. In addition, there were significant limitations on single female missionaries.

Some of the BTJ missionaries were sent out before they were 20 years old,[2] one of the advantages being their ability to learn a new host language and adjust to a new culture. However, their lack of life experience and independent thinking were the biggest obstacles in their adjustment on the mission field. In a patriarchal culture, the younger missionaries were taught only to obey their elders and were not trained to think independently. Also, many were sent without a clear personal calling from the Lord. As a result, the attrition rate of the young BTJ missionaries was 90% (Ai, Hua, 愛華 2018).

1.1.3.2 Mission China 2030 (MC2030)

Jin, Daniel (alias Li, Shengfeng) 李聖風 (2018) states that the MC2030 movement started when nearly 200 invited Chinese house church leaders were stopped by the government from attending Lausanne 2010 in South Africa. As a result, MC2030 organised its first gathering in Korea in 2013 for these same church leaders. Its vision was for China to send out 20,000 missionaries by the year 2030 in response to the Great Commission. This movement aims to promote missions through research, education, mobilisation, partnership, and sending. MC2030 is different from the grassroots BTJ movement in that its membership consists mostly of intellectuals with professional experience. Li,

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[2] Many of the participants in this study were in their early thirties. Some had been in the field for over fifteen years, as they were sent out to the mission field while still teenagers.

Shengfeng 李聖風 (2015) hopes the development of the MC2030 movement will go through four stages: the missions-awakening period, then the missions-developing period, next the missions-revival period, and finally the missions-maturing period. So far, special meetings have been organised based on focus groups. MC2030 also looks for partnerships with international organisations in the hope of nurturing more cross-cultural missionaries in the future.

1.1.3.3 The Indigenous Mission Movement

The past 20 years saw the beginning of the modern Chinese indigenous missionary movement (IMM). Critical incidents such as the 'Wenchuan' 汶川 earthquake in Sichuan province on 12 May, 2008, and the 'Yushu' 玉樹 earthquake in Qinghai province on 14 April, 2010, raised awareness among Han Chinese Christians of the needs of minority people groups in their own country (Yang, Fenggang et al. 楊鳳崗等, 2018). According to Yu, Jie 于杰 (2013), over 600,000 Christian volunteers helped after the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, accounting for around 60% of the total volunteers. Donations from Christian groups also amounted to RMB 11.3 billion (GBP £1.36 billion). These natural disasters and the monumental needs arising from them stirred up interest among the churches in China as they became aware for the first time that they had responsibilities to society in addition to their internal church needs.

As the Wenchuan and Yushu earthquakes occurred in minority areas, the volunteers from the churches were also exposed to different languages and cultures. More than a decade later, many Christians who initially went as relief workers have remained as long-term missionaries. At the time of the earthquake, untrained workers sent by churches could only help on a short-term basis and with limited scope. However, now the churches have started community work caring for the marginalised, making disciples, and planting

churches. The Chinese Church has emerged as one which meets both the spiritual and social needs of those around her.

Apart from the natural disasters that have brought about the Chinese missionary movement, national policy developments have also created opportunities for cross-cultural work. When President Xi initiated the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, many multilateral trade and talent exchanges were created. While this initiative is focused on developing national economies in Africa, Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, it also encouraged many students from these regions to study in China (Law, Kamyee 羅金義 and Zhao, Zhiyang 趙致洋, 2018). Jones, P. (2017) states that in terms of culture, language, and religion, there is greater diversity in the international student population in China than in many Western countries. An increasing number of local Chinese churches have started to reach out to these students, especially those from Muslim countries.

Even though the Chinese IMM has been going on for 20 years, inadequate cultural awareness and lack of cross-cultural training by immature sending churches have caused many young missionaries to leave the field prematurely. Ai, Hua 愛華 (2018) points out that attrition rates were high (up to 90%) among Chinese missionaries who served outside of China. These missionaries were exhausted, frustrated, and ashamed; some lost their faith and others even committed suicide. These young missionaries had passion but lacked self-awareness, preparation, and support. In the past 10 years, international mission organisations have provided training to the indigenous mission organisations, enabling the IMM agencies to better support their missionaries by improving their screening of missionaries, structures, financial support systems, and member care, including the missionaries' children. Cross-cultural training centres and pre-field courses for missionaries have also helped to equip them for their future service. Based on my personal experience in providing cross-cultural training over the past ten years and the

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research done by Laughlin, T. (2019), the support from international organisations has helped to decrease the attrition rate and increased missionary effectiveness their cross-cultural service.

Whether these cross-cultural mission movements reached out locally or in foreign countries, they were bound to face problems. The support given above only addressed external, practical issues, and not the internal issue of the missionaries' identity. Many challenges arose because the missionaries only had a shallow understanding of their own and Others' identity. The sociologist, Jenkins, R. (2008, 5) theorises that 'we' must know who 'we' are and who others are. Others also need to know who 'we' are, and 'we' need to know who others think 'we' are. This is a multi-dimensional classification of the human world and our place in it, and it is a process of identification.

As more missionaries are sent out in the future, they will need awareness of these issues as they engage with their target people or local host people. This thesis examines identity construction among Chinese missionaries and how identity created tensions in relationships with Others.

1.2.0 Research Problem

1.2.1 Challenges Faced by Missionaries

The first part of this section will present the challenges that the Chinese missionaries faced as they cross cultures and the second part will focus on the research questions that resulted from considering these challenges. Although the churches in China have been passionate in their attitude to cross-cultural missions, Chinese missionaries serving cross-culturally face difficulties as they reach out to Others.

1.2.1.1 Ethnocentrism

Yao, Xiyi 姚西伊 (2014) points out that Chinese missionaries often participate in missions with the baggage of ethnocentrism. This may be what motivated the BTJ movement to

believe that the Chinese Church would carry the last baton of the gospel to accomplish the Great Commission. Increasing numbers of Chinese missionaries now serve in Muslim areas all around the world, yet many encounter difficulties when they do not adapt to the local culture and religious customs. As pointed out by You, Sufu 優素福 (2010), the Han Chinese is the biggest people group in the entire world. Due to their dominant culture and ethnocentrism, when the Han Chinese share the good news with minority groups, they do it from their own perspective and culture while neither understanding nor respecting the Others' cultural values.

The rise of China has increased the Chinese Church's desire to contribute to global missions, along with a wave of missionary commitment. This has led to an attitude of superiority as some feel that the Chinese Church will accomplish the Great Commission itself, rather than it being a joint task of the global church. As Wu, X. (2006) notes in his review of the BTJ movement, there is no biblical basis for the idea that the church in China should 'take up the last baton' and 'finish the Great Commission' by itself.

1.2.1.2 Majority Han Mindset

The census done by the National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China in 2021 found that the Han Chinese accounted for 91.11% of the entire population,[3] suggesting that the mainstream Han culture is more influential than those of minority groups. As Han Chinese missionaries go to minister to minority people groups, they bring with them their own biases. Some of these minority peoples are Chinese by nationality, but are not called 'Chinese' as they are marginalised as ethnic minorities. Law, Kamyee 羅金義 (2009) points out that many minority groups are discriminated against by the Han Chinese, the Uyghurs being one example, as described by Bovingdon, G. (2010) in his book: *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land.*

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[3] http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/202105/t20210510_1817176.html Access date: 2021-04-25

Jones, P. (2017) observed that the multi-century homogeneity of Chinese culture heightens the cultural stress of international students and foreign workers because anyone who is not Chinese-looking is described as a 'foreigner' or an 'other country person'. Even when a Chinese person is living in Country X, they refer to the people of that country as 'foreigners' when it is the Chinese who are the foreigners there.

1.2.1.3 Historical 'Baggage'

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, China experienced nearly a century of foreign aggression. Because of the Opium War (1840-2) and the unequal treaties signed afterwards, Chinese historians have dubbed this 'a Century of Humiliation'. Kaufman, A., in his paper *The 'Century of Humiliation,' Then and Now: Chinese Perceptions of the International Order* (2010, 3) writes: 'In its strongest articulation, the Century of Humiliation narrative may be used to strengthen popular anti-foreign sentiment and to justify belligerent actions on the international stage, all in the name of "never forgetting" (wuwang; 勿忘) the shame of the past.' The 'Century of Humiliation' idea has subconsciously affected Chinese people, including missionaries.

One example of this concerns missionaries called to minister to the Japanese, who have historically been called one of China's enemies. For example, a Japanese missionary serving in China said: Today many people like to travel to Japan, eat Japanese food, buy Japanese fashion and electrical goods. Japanese goods are very popular around the world, but I know that the Japanese are not necessarily popular. We were the invaders of the world, especially of the Chinese people.[4] This complexity of emotions for the sending churches and the Chinese missionaries is a great challenge for them as they seek to share the gospel of peace to 'enemies'. Mitter, R. (2014) reminds us that the relationship between China and Japan is filled with tension because the Sino-Japanese War still

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[4] https://www.efcc.org.hk/files/resources/3213.pdf Access date: 2021-04-05

strongly influences the mindset of this generation's leadership. Decades after the war, regional political tensions between China and Japan have deterred PRC Chinese missionaries from serving in Japan.

1.2.1.4 Encountering Different Religious Values

Chinese missionaries come from different church backgrounds, which can easily create a religious 'us' and 'them' mentality when encountering religious Others. When Chinese missionaries encounter another religion, they will naturally judge Others by their own Christian values. At the same time, they are also being judged by Others with differing religious values, which results in exclusion for the Chinese missionaries. Gu, Mengfei 顧夢飛 (2016) points out that the BTJ movement was started by house churches which were mostly conservative and tended to be exclusive. In their evangelisation, the house church members were not aware that differences in culture or religious values could create even more conflicts between the missionaries and the Others. Even though many of the Chinese missionaries went to Muslim countries, they were unaware that in certain nations strict Islamic doctrines have influenced their secular laws and regulations. For example, Muslims are prohibited to consume alcohol, pork, and unclean food and women are required to cover their heads with scarves to express modesty, privacy, and virtue. Apostasy and blasphemy are also unacceptable; a Muslim converting to another religion may face rejection from their community.

You, Sufu 優素福 (2010) writes that challenges are brought about by differences in gender, social class, and ethnic cultures that Chinese missionaries face when serving in a Muslim context. You, Sufu 優素福 (2010, 32) continues that 'in the Muslim mindset, singles are considered flawed, especially single women. They are even considered to be 'cursed' by Allah.' Most missionaries must serve bi-vocationally in these creative access countries and require a suitable platform to obtain a work visa. However, the Chinese

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missionaries' occupations must be chosen with care. Occupations such hairdressers, beauticians, and actors are seen as 'debased professions' in the Islamic worldview.

1.2.2 Research Questions

The research questions in this thesis resulted from the hypothesis that Chinese missionaries face the above challenges because they have not fully addressed their identity before crossing cultures.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the identity construction of the Han Chinese missionaries encountering such challenges, and present relevant responses to enable future Chinese missionaries to serve effectively in a cross-cultural setting by creating a new paradigm according to traits distilled from Trinitarian theology. Therefore, the research question is: ***How is the identity of the Han Chinese missionaries constructed, and how might Trinitarian traits be applied to a dynamic construction that could lead to greater openness and transformation in cross-cultural ministry?***

Four sub-questions considered in this research are:

1. How do cultural, social, ethnic, and religious factors contribute to the identity of contemporary Han Chinese missionaries?

2. How do Han Chinese missionaries' awareness of their identities affect their relationships with the Others?

3. How may Trinitarian traits respond to the challenges in identity that Chinese missionaries face when entering a different culture?

4. What kind of new paradigm could transform relationships between Chinese missionaries and their Others?

1.3.0 Theoretical Framework

My research utilises Trinitarian traits to reflect on and respond to identity construction among Chinese missionaries. While this topic belongs to practical theology, the analysis also applies concepts from sociology and philosophy as the Chinese missionaries engaged with Others. The main research approach is based on the theory of 'identity' in sociology, which includes culture, social relationships, ethnicity, and religion, to provide a philosophical perspective on the elements of identity construction of the Chinese missionaries.

I apply the combined sociological and philosophical theories to analyse the data collected from the in-depth interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the missionaries' identity in relation to the Others. Thus, I can obtain a more comprehensive view of the Chinese missionaries' identity construction.

The purpose of my research is to discover the roots of the challenges missionaries face in the field. These roots originate within, as well as from their identity construction, and people only become aware of them when they engage with the Others. In addition, a call is made for the Chinese missionaries to respond to their challenges by considering God's Trinitarian attributes. See Figure 1.1 below:
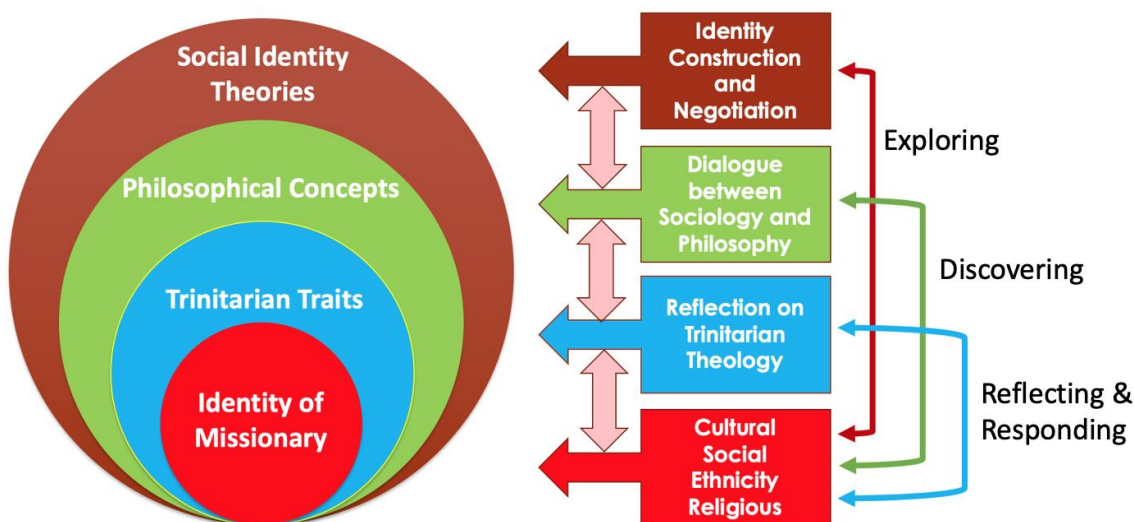
Figure 1.1 The Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework can be divided into three main sections. The first concerns Exploration. I explore the factors that contribute to the construction of Chinese missionaries' identities using theories of social identity from cultural, social, ethnic, and religious lenses. I then use sociological and philosophical analysis to discover and interpret how Chinese missionaries face the challenges of their own identity when they encounter the Others. Finally, I reflect and respond to the challenges of missionaries in the cross-cultural field through four Trinitarian traits.

I focus on Trinitarian theology because it is central to the Christian faith. The Triune God created human beings according to His image, setting up a model of relationship between God and humanity, between human beings, and between humanity and the world. In addition, God's redemptive work in humans as individuals and community is accomplished and applied by the Father, Son, and Spirit together. Edgar, B. (2020, 20-21) points out that: 'Without Trinitarian Theology, our understanding of humanity is lacking, Trinitarian theology affirms the value of the person, indicating that man is a human being because of his relationship with God who is a Person'. Therefore, by reflecting on and responding to the Trinitarian traits, the Chinese missionaries might obtain a theological model for their interaction with Others on the mission field.

1.4.0 The Significance of this Research

1.4.1 Previous Publications

Key articles on Chinese missions and Chinese missionary research over the past 15 years include research on the BTJ movement, MC2030, and IMM. However, the subject of missionary identity is hardly ever mentioned. Among the academic papers is a doctoral thesis written by Jin, Daniel (2018, alias Li, Shengfeng), entitled: 'A Study on the Leadership Development for the Missionary Movement of China's House Churches: A

Strategic Proposal for Mission China 2030'[5]. Since Jin's research focuses mostly on strategy and leadership development, it is highly theoretical and leans towards 'managerial missiology', a term which according to Latin American missiologist Escobar, S. (2000, 109) emerged from the 'Pasadena Think Tank' at Fuller Theological Seminary in California. Escobar, S. (2000, 109) states:

> Missionary action is reduced to a linear task that is translated into logical steps to be followed in a process of management by objectives, in the same way in which the evangelistic task is reduced to a process that can be carried on following marketing principles. Movements that express this approach proliferated as we were approaching the end of the century.

I do not oppose the premise that mission movements need plans and strategies. However, a theoretical study that does not include actual research data from the missionaries' experience will only present a partial picture. The actual context of missions cannot be described solely by theory or strategy when a missionary is an individual living in an unpredictable cross-cultural field. Managerial missiology, with its strong emphasis on strategy and planning, lacks the understanding of the challenges posed by the missionary's own identity in a cross-cultural context.

Laughlin, T. (2019) in his Ph.D. thesis entitled 'Factors Impacting Cultural Adjustment and Retention of Chinese Cross-Cultural Workers', conducted field research on 25 Chinese missionaries serving in cross-cultural missions overseas. His research focuses on how missionaries' long-term service in the field is related to their adjustment and adaptation across cultures, their pre-field preparation, cross-cultural adaptation, and mastery of the host language. However, Laughlin also did not consider how a missionary's identity impacts all the factors that he researched.

Further research on Chinese missionaries has been done by Wei, Hong 魏宏 (2020) entitled: 'A Preliminary Exploration of Mission China 2030'. In the thesis, Wei makes an

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[5] Jin's thesis is written in Korean. The Chinese edition is available in missionary journals, with a summary in English.

objective analysis of the past four MC2030 international conferences from a historical and theological point of view. As a researcher, Wei provides two major criticisms of the Mission China 2030 campaign from an outside perspective: one concerns the goal of sending 20,000 missionaries by 2030, and the other addresses the biblical basis for their vision to bring the gospel back to Jerusalem.[6] Wei also observes that the MC2030 movement seems more concerned with numbers and the accomplishment of tasks than with the quality of the missionaries sent out. He is able to provide an invaluable inside view of the movement by sharing his in-depth observations due to his experience of being on the conferences' planning committee.

Another Ph.D. thesis on the Chinese missionary movement is 'Chinese Missionary Experiences: A Step Towards a Contextualised Member Care Model for Chinese Missionaries' by Cai, W. H. (2020). Cai's research shows that understanding the missionary's sending culture, as part of their identity, influences how missionaries view themselves, and that to be effective, the member care provided to the Chinese missionaries must be consistent with Chinese culture.

1.4.2 Significance of Present Research

Previous publications have mainly focused on the Chinese missionary movement, its history, theology, strategy, training, and member care. There is still a lack of empirical research on the identity construction of Chinese missionaries based on their actual experience on the mission field.

Data from 52 in-depth interviews was analysed through both sociological and philosophical perspectives by narrative inquiry, resulting in theological and missiological reflections. I used this theoretical framework to examine and analyse relationships and

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[6] The vision of Mission China 2030 is not related to the BTJ movement.

attitudes as well as external behaviours, through cultural, social, ethnic, and religious lenses. Through this process, I have identified the main elements of identity construction of the Chinese missionaries and the challenges they faced as they interacted with Others.

In addition, I propose a Tridentity Theory based on four Trinitarian traits to develop the Chinese missionaries' identities further and in hope of enabling them to embrace the Others better. I present the Tridentity Theory to bring a paradigm change to Chinese missionaries serving cross culturally and help transform their sending church culture as they disciple and equip new missionaries for future service.

1.5.0 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Research Scope

The purpose of this study is to investigate challenges that arise within Chinese missionaries' identity as they engage with mission Others. My study covers the period from 2000 to the present and focuses on Han Chinese missionaries sent from Chinese house churches. Their ages ranged from 24 to 60 years. They came from both urban and rural backgrounds, and their education levels ranged from middle school to university and master's degrees. The domestic missionaries were serving in ethnic minority areas in the northwest and southwest of China. Those serving internationally were in the Middle East and other parts of Asia.

1.5.2 Research Limitations

Security considerations were one limitation on this study. Because the Chinese missionaries come from sensitive and restricted areas, and some served in other sensitive areas, their safety affected the collection and use of the information from the interviews.

The Covid-19 pandemic upset many of the original plans. The university libraries in Oxford and Hong Kong were closed during lockdown and the books and articles

necessary for the research could not be accessed in a timely manner. Although the interviews were conducted pre-pandemic, the focus groups could only be conducted online as face-to-face meetings were not possible during lockdown. The virtual meetings were not as conducive to sharing as a face-to-face dialogue might have been.

Finally, the high context of Chinese culture requires indirect communication. Hall, E. T. and Hall, M. R. (1990, 183-84) write: 'In high-context cultures (such as those in Japan, China, and Arab countries), the listener is already "contexted" and does not need to be given much background information.' Guffey, M. E. et al. (2013, 60) further comments:

> High-context cultures are more likely to be intuitive, contemplative, and concerned with the collective. Communicators in high-context cultures pay attention to more than the words spoken – they also pay attention to interpersonal relationships, nonverbal expressions, physical settings, and social settings.

My interviews often took three to four hours and the interpretation of the interview data from the Chinese missionaries may not completely accurately and transparently reflect the views of the interviewees (see Chapter Three on Methodology).

1.6.0 Structure of the Thesis

There are seven chapters in this thesis.

- o Chapter One is the Introduction, giving the background and challenges faced by the Chinese missionaries. The significance of the research and its limitations are also discussed.
- o Chapter Two is the literature review on identity theories from the fields of Sociology, Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology.
- o Chapter Three discusses the research methodology, along with research ethics.
- o Chapter Four is the first part of the findings and analysis concerning the cultural and social perspectives of the identity of the Chinese missionaries.

- Chapter Five is the second part of the findings and analysis concerning the ethnic and religious perspectives of the identity of Chinese missionaries.

- Chapter Six utilises four Trinitarian traits to reflect on and respond to the identity construction among Chinese missionaries.

- Chapter Seven contains the conclusion, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review on Identity Theories from Sociology, Philosophy, and Trinitarian Perspectives

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I described the rise of China's global influence and the growth of the Chinese missionary movement. The challenges that Chinese missionaries encountered due to their own identity clashing with the Others' culture reinforced the impact of identity issues that need to be addressed. However, even though the concept of 'identity' has been explored in fields such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy since the 1970s, the discourse on identity and the relationship to the Others in the context of the Chinese missionary movement is relatively new. Identity construction is a primary factor in missiology as it significantly impacts a missionary's inter-personal relationships with Others. There is also potential for churches and mission agencies to understand and use this to help prepare new missionaries.

I organise the literature review into three sections, with the first two addressing the first two parts of my research questions:

1. How is the identity of contemporary Han Chinese missionaries constructed based on cultural, social, ethnic, and religious factors?

2. How do the Han Chinese missionaries' identities affect their relationships with the Others?

I present an overview of identity theories, especially those of Richard Jenkins, George H. Mead, Erving Goffman, and Fredrik Barth. Secondly, I discuss how Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Social Identity Construction theories can begin to describe how the Chinese missionary identity is constructed. I also review how Tajfel's social categorization, social identification, and social comparison can cause in-group and out-

group tensions, such as prejudice and discrimination, that arise from identity. Thirdly, I discuss how identity can change through Hybrid Identity Theory (HIT) and Identity Negotiation Theory (INT). I then use the domains of culture, society, ethnicity, and religion to discuss the self-identity of the Chinese missionaries. In addition to sociological discourses, I include reviews on the writings on Identity vs. Others by three influential philosophers, Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1985), Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) and Charles M. Taylor (1931-) to address the relationship between the self and the other from a philosophical perspective. Finally, I will integrate the philosophical and sociological views of identity to address the issues raised in the research questions above.

However, neither sociology nor philosophy provide solutions to the problems of interpersonal relationships. Theology is the study of God's revelation to humanity and provides His solution to relationships between sinful humans. Because I propose that understanding the Trinity is central to one's beliefs and actions, this chapter continues with a review of the literature on Trinitarian theology and presents topics that form the foundation of the reflections on Trinitarian theology in Chapter Six. The third section of the literature review addresses the latter two parts of my research questions:

1. How do the traits of the Trinity address the challenges in identity that Chinese missionaries face when entering a different culture?

2. What new paradigm could transform relationships between Chinese missionaries and their Others?

I first review works concerning the Trinity by twentieth century theologians, mainly because they advanced the concept and discourse of a (Social/Relational) Trinitarian theology, which lays an important foundation for subsequent discourse on a pluralistic world. These include the Catholic theologians, Karl Rahner, (1904-84), Catherine Mowry LaCugna, (1952-97); the Reformed theologians, Karl Barth (1886-1968), Colin Ewart Gunton (1941-2003), Jürgen Moltmann (1926-), and Miroslav Volf (1956-); and the

Eastern Orthodox theologians, Vladimir Lossky (1903–58) and John Zizioulas (1931-). I continue by interacting with twenty-first century theologians such as Paul Fiddes (1947-), Kathryn Tanner (1957-) and Karen Kilby (1964-), whose many new concepts are derived from the ideas of the earlier theologians in response to the more diverse and complex relationships of today. The early church was mainly concerned about the ontology of the Trinity. The reason I review these modern scholars is to go beyond ontology in my research and study the 'relational' or 'social' view of the Trinity in order to apply it to identity construction of the Chinese missionaries as they enter a different culture. As Lee, Kamlun 李錦綸 (2004) writes, the twentieth century saw a second phase of the development of Trinitarian doctrine, the focus shifting to 'relationships' in and around the Triune God. This can be further studied in three areas: the relationship of the three Persons in the Godhead, the Triune God and the world, and the impact on human relationships.

As I reviewed the modern literature on Trinitarian theology, I searched for aspects that could contribute to the Chinese missionaries' identity construction and help create a more fruitful context for their interactions with Others on the mission field. Additionally, these should help change the missionaries' attitude concerning their obedience towards God as well as their respect for and acceptance of their mission Others. The attributes of the Trinity and the discourse reviewed concerning the sociological and philosophical aspects of identity are used to construct the 'three-in-one' (sociological, philosophical, and theological) Theoretical Framework for my research (see Figure 1.1). This framework enables me to explore, discover, reflect, and respond to the Chinese missionaries' identity construction and their relationship to the mission Other.

2.1.0 Sociological View of Identity

2.1.1 Definition of Identity and the Development of Identity

Jenkins, R. (2008) argues that identity can only be understood as a process, or a becoming. Such an understanding points to the fact that identity is not fixed (being), but is dynamic and constantly evolving. In his book on Social Identity, Jenkins, R. (2008) draws on the main theories from Mead, Goffman and Barth as a framework: Mead, G. H (1934) distinguishes between the 'I' and the 'me', leading to an exploration of the mind/ego as the embodiment of personal belonging and the socialisation of the generalised other; Goffman, E's (1970) impression management strategy dramatises the interface between self-image and public image. He distinguishes between group identification, which tends towards similarity, and social differentiation, which tends towards difference, and invokes a labelling perspective that enables a distinction to be made between nominal identification and actual identity; Barth, F. (1981) distinguishes between 'boundary', the distinction between an individual and society, and 'content', the distinction between human and object.

Identity is not only a matter of birth and nurture, but also of the relationship between the inner and outer self-image. Mead, G. H. (1934) uses the terms 'I' (the continuum of distinctive individuality) and 'Me' (the internalised attitude of the significant other) to distinguish between the internal and external aspects of identity. The distinction of 'I' and 'Me' leads to a unified model of the self that is a dialectical synthesis of internal and external definitions. Mead, G. H. (1934, 174-75) writes:

> The 'I' reacts to the self which arises through the taking of the attitudes of others. Through taking those attitudes we have introduced the 'me' and we react to it as an 'I'… The 'I' is the response of the organism to others: the 'me' is the organised set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes.

As Mead argues, one cannot see oneself at all if one does not also see oneself from the perspective of others. He further argues that self-consciousness can only be achieved

by taking or presuming the place of others (1934), but also maintains that the mind is an intrinsic social phenomenon, embedded in identity.

Goffman, E. (1969) builds on Mead's discourse and goes further to show that social identity is by no means unidirectional, arguing that the presentation of self is produced in interaction. Goffman uses the strategy of impression management to describe the negotiation that happens between a person's self-image and public image to construct how the person will present himself or herself, especially when the inner self wants to 'be seen' as an 'important person' in order to be able to pursue external goals. Goffman, E. (1970) claims that impression management strategies are important in the construction of social identity; making the interface between self-image and public image dramatic, impression management allows people to notice the performative aspects of social identity as well as their social practice. Therefore, individuals are able to pursue the goal of becoming important by adopting a particular social identity. In the internal and external dialectic of self-image and public image, people not only identify themselves, but also recognise others and are recognised by them. Becker, H. C. (1963) proposes labelling theory, seeing the interaction between (internal) self-definition and (external) definition of others as a process of internalisation. Internalisation can occur when labelling is imposed by authority in an institutional society, but what is important about this process is that people acquire an identity for the labels they are given and authoritatively imposed identity can effectively construct or violate personal experience. Often power has an impact on the assimilation of others, with far-reaching consequences. Becker, H. C. (1963) further maintains that labelling and internalisation, the taking on of the labelled characteristics, can both be resisted. The labelling argument is concerned with deviance and social control, but the model is also relevant in other contexts, with both negative and positive labelling.

Barth, F. (1981) writes that ethnic and social identity are fluid, dependent on context, and in a constant interplay of the self (subject) and the other (object). Barth, F.'s (1981) key proposition is that it is not enough to simply send a message of identity; the message has to be accepted by the significant other in order for the identity to be said to have been 'adopted'. Thus, identity is found and contradicted at the boundary where the internal meets the external. Barth, F. (1969) argues that the nature of group identity is that it is constructed across group boundaries and in the process of interacting with others. It is in these exchanges that a balance is struck between the assimilation of groups and the so-called categorisation of others. Barth also argues that identity is negotiated at boundaries between internal and external encounters. Jenkins, R. (2006) points out that in the internal and external debates between self-image and public image, people not only recognise themselves, but also recognise others and are recognised by others. He also claims that while individual identity emphasises differences, collective identity emphasises similarity. However, they are both interrelated and inextricably entwined, and both are connected to one's society.

Jenkins, R. (2008) discusses identity along two lines: firstly, social identity is a practical achievement and a process; secondly, individual and collective social identity can be understood in terms of the dialectical interaction of internal and external processes of definition. The internal emphasises similarity and the external emphasises difference. Jenkins, R. (1996, 6) asserts that: 'Without social identity, there is, in fact, no society', and that without a framework of similarity and difference people cannot relate to each other in a sustained and meaningful way. Social identity deals with the systematic establishment and representation of relationships of similarity and difference between individuals, between collectives and between individuals and collectives.

Refining this, Social Identity Theory (SIT) as first proposed by social psychologist Tajfel, H. (1978) begins with the premise that individuals define their own identities with

regard to social groups and that such identifications work to protect and bolster self-identity. The creation of group identities involves both the categorisation of one's 'in-group' with regard to an 'out-group' and the tendency to view one's own group with a positive bias vis-à-vis the out-group. Leaper, C. (2011, 362) writes:

> Social identity theory addresses the ways that social identities affect people's attitudes and behaviours regarding their in-group and the out-group. Social identities are most influential when individuals consider membership in a particular group to be central to their self-concept and they feel strong emotional ties to the group.

Everyone derives their individual identities from their personal background, the groups to which they belong, and their roles in society.

Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. (2004) reinforce the idea that in certain contexts, individuals will enter a group with similar interests and form an in-group. This in-group will naturally see those with different interests and values as an out-group. There may be competition and conflicts between the in-group and out-group. Formation of in-group and out-group will consequently lead to the distinct separation between the 'us-group' and the 'them-group'. The in-group and out-group theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner illustrates that people need to find their own identity by finding a sense of belonging with those who have similar beliefs, value systems and habits. However, this also produces a mutual exclusion effect between the in-group and the out-group, and the boundaries between them that emerge from these distinctions lead to prejudice, discrimination, and mutual stereotyping. For Leaper, C. (2011), the key factors associated with social identities include in-group assimilation (pressure to conform to the in-group's norms) and forms of intergroup bias (positively evaluating one's in-group over those in the out-group or in-group favouritism). Further, according to the theory of Turner, J. C. and Reynold, K. J. (2012), self-categorisation is determined by group memberships (the 'we') in addition to the unique ways that individuals define themselves (the 'I').

Identity theory provides an interpretation of the basis on which people can find their identity and the life groups to which they belong in different cultural and social circles. It also provides the basis for this study's interpretation of how the cultural portion of the Chinese missionaries' identity prompted them to cluster together when in a cross-cultural context. Regarding the theory of in-group and out-group, Goffman, E. (1969) further argues that for individuals to find their own identity, they need to identify what cultural values they hold when in a relationship with another. For example, it is common for people to label traits in other groups to highlight their own group's qualities or sense of superiority. In my findings and analysis, I use SIT to interpret how tensions and challenges arise in the relationships between the Chinese missionaries and their mission Others.

Although Tajfel and Turner's social identity and in-group/out-group theory can describe many social phenomena caused by identity issues, SIT cannot fully describe identity in a complex society as defined below. Therefore, I also review how identities are adapted by individuals in a complex society, as proposed by Roccas, S. and Brewer, M. B. (2002)

At the beginning of the 90s, ever more complex social changes and interpersonal relationships continued to emerge. Brewer, M. B. and Pierce, K. P. (2005, 428) write:

> Social identity complexity refers to the way in which individuals subjectively represent the relationships among their multiple in-group memberships. More specifically, individuals with low social identity complexity see their ingroups as highly overlapping and convergent, whereas those with high complexity see their different ingroups as distinct and cross-cutting membership groups.

Roccas, S. and Brewer, M. B. (2002) also write that social identity complexity reflects the overlap of multi-faceted and diversified group identities (i.e., the overlaps of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, political party, and socio-economic status). When one is aware of the overlap of one's identity, one will become more tolerant of and adaptive to complex situations amongst the various group relationships. Brewer, M. B.

and Pierce, K. P. (2005) stress that in a complex society, the individual must have self-awareness of how to relate to others to reduce in-group favouritism and create tolerance towards out-groups and not unconsciously reject others. One's natural tendency is to stay with one's in-group. However, one's identity must adapt to a complex and multi-faceted society due to the complexity in one's interpersonal relationships.

Roccas, Brewer, and Pierce's theories can be used to interpret how identity construction is shaped by complex societies and how people adapt to peaceful interaction with diverse others in a multicultural or cross-cultural context. However, their theories are limited in that interpersonal relationships are not one-sided and do not apply when others do not accept 'us'. Jenkins, R. (2008) writes that self-identity is significant in two ways: The first is a concept of absolute uniformity (or 'this equals that'). The second concept points to a continuing state formed and reformed by the influence of the outside environment. The difference between individual identity and collective/group identity is that the former emphasises differences, while the latter focuses on similarities. Jenkins theorises that identity requires mutual acceptance with others and is not static but ever-changing. Such change occurs when one interacts with the other and accepts the differences between them.

An unwillingness to adjust one's self-identity can ultimately lead to confrontation and challenges in one's relationships with others. Fukuyama, F. (2018) maintains that identity is generated by the difference between an individual's true inner self and external social norms because one's external world does not properly acknowledge the innate value or dignity of the 'Self'. The difference indicates that 'identity' is not just about external social conditions and prescribed norms, but also the internal value of the 'Self'. He further argues that the internal 'Self' is the foundation of human dignity, which is not fixed, but changes over time. The essential significance of 'dignity', however, is always to actualise an acknowledgement from the external world. The above discussion of

identity development over time can be seen in the field of social psychology, which explains the self-identity of individuals in the inner world. It is also important to understand the relationship between the individual and the group/society from a sociological perspective. Fukuyama brings a philosophical perspective to sociology by pointing out how people must adjust their social identity when it comes into conflict with their inner struggles and with ethics. In the second section of this chapter, I will further discuss identity from a philosophical perspective.

2.1.2 Construction and Representation of Identity

Sociologist Giddens, A. (1991) presented the theory of identity construction as a means of understanding identity. He points out that human identity is not a combination of pre-existing characteristics; it is a project, shaped by different times, social conditions, and historical events. In Giddens' theory, the process of socialisation and 'significant others' play a vital role in the construction of one's identity. Thus, 'identity' can be understood as a fluid concept that shapes the relationship between individuals and communities. This theory provides a description of essential elements in identity construction that will be used to analyse the findings of the Chinese missionaries' narratives.

A different perspective on identity construction is presented by Hall, S., a British cultural studies scholar. He examines the process of identity formation from the use of language and from the social performative process. Hall, S. (1990) argues that people can hold multiple identities at the same time, and that these are fluid and even contradictory. These identities are shaped through 'discourse', that is, they are articulated and constructed through a system of discourse and representation. Giddens' theory of identity construction and Hall's theory of identity representation provide two different perspectives to round out the interpretation of my findings. When analysing the missionaries' identity construction ('who am I?'), it is essential to look for common

qualities between individuals in addition to the differences between them. I focus mainly on Hall's theory of identity construction and identity representation because it discusses how ideology and mass media can be viewed as a type of soft power to manipulate the masses. I use Hall's theory to analyse how the Chinese government (CCP) can effectively use ideology and mass media to promote patriotism.

Hall, S. (1990) writes that identity has two dimensions. The first dimension is one's cultural identification, which exists in the collective sharing of a common culture and history. This is the essence of identity and has a fixed and stable framework. The other dimension is an imagined recognition of identification through daily life and social connections, which leads to an identity of 'what I have become'. This constructed and constantly re-adjusting identity is shaped by power. Social class, ethnicity, accomplishments, and cultural encoding all contribute to a person's power and influence. The uneven distribution of power will also create interpersonal distance and hierarchical stratification.

Hall, S. (1990) adds that identity is historical, and people construct their identity and position their relationship within the wider society by constantly recounting the past. In addition to historical aspects, a person's identity is mostly constructed through interpersonal relationships. Hall, S. (1996) argues that an identification under erasure, of being invalidated or invalidating others, is also a kind of identity. Identity is not only a game in which subjects learn about themselves, but also one of rejecting others. Hall's identity theory argues that an individual's identity is constructed by their differences from other people, and that identity is constantly changing.

In his book, *Representation: Culture Representation and Signifying Practices*, Hall, S. (2013) states that there is a series of relationships between systems of concepts, objects, and symbols, and that representation is the process of making connections between these. These concepts determine what people consider meaningful and use to describe the world.

We use symbols to represent concepts, such as a dove representing peace, and in general language is the most commonly used symbol. Hall maintains that identity is constantly being constructed by the people's interaction with their environment and other people's stereotypes of them. An interpersonal relationship may become closer because of certain consensus, or distanced because of ideological differences. Hall, S. (1990) continues that media and symbols are significant tools that can be used to construct a 'reality' and provide an audience with a view of the world. Hall's theory provides a vital theoretical basis for my analysis of how the CCP uses the media effectively to shape China's image in the world and portray it as a great nation.

2.1.3 Factors for Identity Construction

Giddens and Hall point out that identity is not 'one-size-fits-all', but results from a complex interplay of factors. In this section, I discuss three concepts of French anthropologist, Bourdieu, P. (1992), field, habitus, and capital, which I use as a framework for the analysis and interpretation of the behaviour of the Chinese missionaries. Bourdieu's 'reflexive sociology' is a theoretical basis for research that can offer insights into the interplay of structure and agency in human behaviour (Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, J. D., 1992). He combines practice and theory, and his theory is dynamic and open to development in practice, rather than a rigid and closed system.

2.1.3.1 Field

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, J. D. (1992, 16) write:

> A field consists of a set of objectives, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital), while habitus consists of a set of historical relations 'deposited' within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation, and action.

Bourdieu, P. (1998, 39, 41) argues that conventional practices of sociologists, relying mostly on questionnaires and interviews, can only produce 'superficial results', because, in such practices, the individual's opinion is often interpreted as it fits into the

overall social phenomenon. Such analysis can become 'random' and 'lacks correlation with history and social relationships.' The most important task, according to Bourdieu, should therefore be to explore the historical and social milieu in which a subject is placed. Bourdieu's field theory can serve and explain many complex social situations. Moncrieffe, J. (2006, 37) states that 'Bourdieu (1980) accounts for the tensions and contradictions that arise when people encounter and are challenged by different contexts. His theory can be used to explain how people can resist power and domination in one [field] and express complicity in another'.

For Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, J. D. (1992), field theory is based on the fact that society is in a process of gradual differentiation, and that a highly differentiated society is made up of relatively autonomous sub-societies. These objective relationships form different fields (i.e., art, religion, politics, and economy), each with its specific mode of operation. Bourdieu's field theory can provide an understanding of the challenges that Chinese missionaries face when moving from a familiar home 'field' to a different 'field' (mission field), as the change in fields affects their relationships with the local people. Unfamiliar contexts, which include local history, social circumstances, and power structures, become the background for the in-depth analysis and interpretation of the Chinese missionaries in a cross-cultural context.

2.1.3.2 Habitus

In addition, to understand the practicalities that field brings to social actors in terms of identity, Bourdieu also explores how habitus affects self-identity. He (1996, 17) states:

> Habitus are structured structures, generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices… habitus are also structuring structures, different classifying schemes classification principles, different principles of vision and division, different tastes. Habitus make different differences; they implement distinctions between what is good and what is bad, between what is right and what is wrong, between what is distinguished and what is vulgar, and so on, but they are not the same.

Each social actor or society creates their own habitus. However, the individual habitus can influence the habitus for their entire society and vice versa. Bourdieu, P.

(1984, 170) states that habitus is neither a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but created by a kind of interplay between the two over time: 'Dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures and, importantly, that condition our very perceptions of these.' Bonnewitz, P. (2012) explains that Bourdieu's habitus is systematic and persistent and is acquired in an individual's process of socialisation. Bourdieu's theory of habitus explains how past habits, such as church traditions, eating habits, and upbringing, inadvertently influence one's values and affect future behaviour.

Navarro, Z. (2006, 16) mentions that habitus 'is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period'. Habitus can change as an individual's social position changes. This research uses Bourdieu's concept of habitus to interpret how the Chinese missionaries are unconsciously shaped by the politics and ideology of their country, leading them to react unconsciously to their habitus when confronted with missionary Others. Hall, S.' (2013) identity representation theory indicates that identity is not only constructed by the past and the future self, but is also influenced and constructed by language, symbols, and the media. Thus, one's identity may be intentionally manipulated by one's country or government. When missionaries join a mission agency, their habitus will also change depending on the mission agencies' values and beliefs.

2.1.3.3 Capital

Traditionally, capital was defined as economic. However, Bourdieu, P.'s (1992) theory extends this to cultural, and social capital. Here, economic capital is defined in the conventional way and refers to assets such as cash and stocks. Cultural capital refers to cultural and educational resources that people can acquire from society. For example, in a culture that venerates elders, cultural capital can be gained simply with age. An example of educational capital would be a diploma from a well-known university. Social capital

refers to various interpersonal relationships and social responsibilities. These various capitals determine one's social status, and the criteria to evaluate the self and others.

According to Bourdieu, P. (1986), social capital is accumulated. The amount of social capital one possesses depends on the size of one's network of mobilizable ties to the outside world and these ties are influenced by one's economic or cultural capital. Bourdieu, P. (1984) notes that cultural capital is distributed differently among different groups and that this is directly related to class distinctions.

Bourdieu, P. (1986) emphasises that education can influence cultural capital and subsequent practices. Through formal and informal (such as parental) education, people can acquire various levels of cultural capital. For example, those who go to university may have more opportunities to learn classical music, or the dominant class passes on their cultural capital such as superior manners and lifestyles to their children. Through the transfer of cultural capital, upward mobility in a person's social class in turn increases their social capital. Once a person's social capital is regenerated, the person's economic capital can be maintained. One's capital will influence one's relationship with other social actors.

2.1.4 Sources of Identity Change

Turning to identity change, this section reviews how it occurs by looking at Homi Bhabha's (1994) Hybrid Identity Theory (HIT) and Stella Ting-Toomey's (2015) Identity Negotiation Theory (INT). As already seen, Giddens, Hall, and Bourdieu all claim that identity is not static, but is constantly changing in the context of the encounter between the individual and the external other.

2.1.4.1 Hybrid Identity

In his discussion of the relationship between modern Western peoples and the other, Bhabha, H. (1994) introduces the term 'hybridity' from biology, claiming that

heterogeneity has a positive effect on the promotion of equal intercultural exchange, which enriches human society. He (1994, 2) also believes that authorised power in a hybrid culture 'does not depend on the persistence of tradition, it is resourced by the power of tradition to be re-inscribed through conditions of contingency and contradictoriness'. Clothier, I. M. (2005) continues that a hybrid cultural identity is created as time progresses, in part based on contingency. The boundaries of hybrid cultures are negotiated and able to absorb diverse cultural influences: borders are active sites of intersection and overlap, which support the creation of hybrid identities.

In his book, *The Location of Culture* (2004), Bhabha, H. introduces his idea of Third Space Theory to explain the uniqueness of each person, actor, or context as a 'hybrid'. Bhabha explains that there is a vague, heterogeneous 'Third Space of Enunciation' where two cultures come into contact and cultural differences come into play. The product of this space is a cultural hybridity or cultural heterogeneity, which combines the nature of both cultures. As long as there is linguistic and cultural exchange, there will be hybridity.

While Roccas, S., Brewer, M. B. (2002), and Pierce, K. P's (2005) social identity complexity theory discusses how individuals can become more tolerant towards out-groups by changing a strong in-group mentality, Bhabha, H. (2004) goes a step further with his suggestion of a new culture in his Hybridity and Third Space Theory. These two theories provide the basis for this research on how missionaries' arrival in another cultural context can lead to identity transformation, through language learning and interaction with host Others.

2.1.4.2 Identity Negotiation Theory

Thinking more about how identity is negotiated, for Woodward, K. (2000), social identity is a bridge between individuals and others, similarities and differences resulting from contact determining how they can identify with one another. Ting-Toomey, S. (2015, 418) in her Identity Negotiation Theory (INT) provides more detail:

The term 'identity' in INT refers to an individual's multifaceted identities of cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family/relational role, and personal image(s) based on self-reflection and other-categorization social construction processes. According to social identity theory, social (or socio-cultural) identities can include ethnic membership identity, social class identity, family role issues. And personal identities can include any unique attributes that we associate with our individual self in comparison to those of others.

Roccas, S. and Brewer, M. B. (2002) built upon Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.'s Social Identity Theory to create their theory of Social Identity Complexity, and Ting-Toomey developed both of these in her INT, which also used the idea of a 'multi-faceted identity'. Ting-Toomey, S. (2015) proposes that INT consists of various assumptions, which explained the antecedent, process, and outcome of intercultural identity-based communication competence. Individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have basic motivational needs for identity security, inclusion, and predictability on both group-based and person-based identity levels. Identity negotiation is a process of exchange, in which people attempt to protect or challenge their own, or other's identity. By integrating Bourdieu's field, habitus, and capitals into these identity theories, I can investigate the reflexive and multi-faceted nature of identity among Chinese missionaries.

Jun, G. C. (2016, 285) further notes that:

Cultural identity negotiation means finding a midway point to reconcile these competing stances. The perceivers and the target individual should compromise their stances to reach an agreement between the perceivers' expectancies and the target person's cultural self-identity. This congruence provides a common ground for both parties to adapt the status of stable identities, which then allows them to acquire a sense of cultural coherence in cultural behaviour within the multi-cultural setting.

Edwards, R. (2006) writes that a person's sense of self is relational, formed and shaped by interactions with other people. The purpose of identity negotiation is not just to avoid conflict with others, but rather that both parties can be reconstructed with a third culture or position. In INT, Ting-Toomey, S. (2015) also argues that without interaction with others, one's true identity cannot be constructed.

In summary, theories of identity and identity construction, representation, and negotiation can help people see identity in relation to their own perceptions and the relationship between the self and the other. Giddens, A.'s (1991) theory of identity construction presents how identity is constantly being shaped by history and culture. Hall, S.' (2013) theory of identity representation concerns the role of language, symbol, and mass media in shaping one's identity in the future. Bourdieu's reflexive sociology adds the important concepts of field, habitus, and capital. Finally, the Hybrid Identity theory proposed by Bhabha, H. (1994), and the INT proposed by Ting-Toomey (2015) describe how one's identity may be transformed in adapting to a new culture.

2.1.5 Four Domains of Chinese Identity

The previous section provided a framework for the understanding of identity, applicable in all cultures. In applying these theories to the Chinese context and considering the challenges the Chinese missionaries faced as presented in Chapter One, I utilised the four basic domains of culture, society, ethnicity, and religion, which determined the scope of my in-depth interviews with participants. In this section, I review works by both Western and Chinese sociologists to focus on how Chinese identity is constructed. I engage Chinese scholars in dialogue with their Western counterparts to provide a comprehensive understanding of Chinese identity construction to apply to the challenges the missionaries faced in the cross-cultural context.

2.1.5.1 Cultural Domain

Hall, S. (1990) writes that cultural identity has dual significance. The first refers to the identity of those with shared historical background and cultural ethics, while the second concerns how people are influenced by key historical events. For Hall the narrative of history and memory influences the formation of cultural identity. Applying Hall to

Chinese culture, in this section I discuss collectivism and familism, honour and shame culture, and authoritarianism in a Confucian context.

Many scholars write that the Chinese culture is shaped by Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. However, Confucianism has had the deepest impact on Chinese culture by moulding interpersonal relationships, social structure, and the power structure of China (Hwang, Kwangkuo 黃光國, 1989, Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞, 1993, and Tang, Yijie 湯一介, 2014).

2.1.5.1.1 Collectivism and Familism

In his *Individualism and Collectivism*, Triandis, H. (1995) claims that culture is to society what memory is to the individual; it encompasses what has worked in the past. Culture is a huge factor that influences how people think, behave, and interact. He (1995) argues that there is a concrete relationship between social identification and culture which is shown in a culture's tendency towards individualism or collectivism. He believes that 'collectivism' may initially be defined as a social form in which a group of closely related people see themselves as part of one or more collectives, such as family, colleagues, tribe, and nation. In addition, Collectivist societies emphasise the needs, wants, and goals of a group over the needs and desires of an individual.

In the Chinese Confucian context, collectivism is manifested through familism. Xu, Hanhui 徐漢輝 (2013) mentions that the Confucian attitude towards the family requires people to put their family's interests before their own. For Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1995) the social orientation of Chinese people is family-oriented, emphasising the family's continuity, harmony, affluence, and honour. Xu and Yang's concepts of Chinese collectivism point to its family-oriented nature. Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1993) further argues that the Chinese principle of taking care of one's family often means doing what is right for the family unconditionally. Hsu, F. L. K. (1953) notes the strong tendency

towards interdependence among Chinese people; a strong sense of belonging can lead to feelings of preference for the family which manifest as in-group favouritism, as per Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. (1979) and Brewer, M. B. and Pierce, K. P. (2005).

2.1.5.1.2 Honour and Shame Culture

In addition to the familism influence of Confucianism, the culture of honour and shame has also had a profound impact on Chinese identity and behaviour. Feng, Handi 馮涵棣 and Chen, Chienhui 陳倩慧 (2002) point out that a cooperative relationship fosters a 'collectivist' cultural group in which preserving one's honour and preventing shame becomes an important moral cultural value and provides motivation for people to do the 'right' thing. Benedict, R. (1946) asserts that shame culture depends on external sanctions; shame is a response to criticism from another and depends on the existence of an audience, real or imagined. Smith, A. H. (2016), states that Face is one of the primary characteristics of Chinese culture, and Fairbank, J. F. (1962) claims that for the Chinese, Face has social significance, as a person gains honour through appropriate behaviour and recognition by that person's society. Loss of Face or 丟臉 'diulian' is caused by failure to abide by behavioural norms, resulting in a disadvantaged position in other people's eyes. King, Yeochi 金耀基 (2013, 52) holds that 'shame and Face are two sides of a coin. Face is the external demonstration, and shame is the internal feeling. They are inseparable.' He (2013, 53) also suggests that it is not sufficient to translate the Chinese term 面子 'mianzi' by the English word 'Face'. King (2013, 54) points out two layers of 'mianzi'. On one hand, it refers to the recognition by society of one's visible achievements, which can be social status, political power, or academic attainment. On the other hand, it relates to an individual's judgement of whether he or she has followed the norms of appropriate behaviour. 'Face' may refer to the former description of social achievement, but does not touch upon the latter description that to the moral character of an individual. Similarly,

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the English word 'shame' is also significantly different from the Chinese 恥 'chi'. King (2013, 60-62) points out one's 'chi' is not only concerned with one's own shamefulness, but also with the shame of others. The Chinese concept of 'chi' is therefore based on the relationship between people and on mutual respect. King's assertion reflects a need for Asian scholars to understand the construction of Chinese identity.

In his thesis 'A Discourse of Chinese Shame-Oriented Personality Placed in Individual and Cultural Relations', Chu, Chenlou 朱岑樓 (1974) provides an exhaustive list of texts concerning shame culture extracted from the Four Classics (*The Analects*, *Mencius*, *The Great Learning*, and *The Doctrine of the Mean*), which contain core Confucian teaching. From this, Chu demonstrates that Chinese culture is a shame culture or at least, a shame-dominated culture. The research of Tata, J. (2000) points out that as a collective culture emphasises protecting one's Face, it puts more stress on relationships, while Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1993) believes that Face issues emerge from the 'other-focused' Chinese mindset. Bourdieu, P.'s concept of habitus (1992) illustrates how the Chinese would view themselves and others in the habitus of honour and shame. In addition, Chinese sociologists agree that the Chinese identity is constructed within an honour and shame culture. Thus, honour and shame issues affect Chinese relationships and influence their interactions with the other.

2.1.5.1.3 Authoritarianism

Hwang, Kwangkuo 黃光國 (1995) also describes the strong impact of Confucianism on Chinese culture, leading to an emphasis on relationships and Face which has led to a power dynamic in collectivistic and familism relationships. Specifically, Hsu, F. L. K. (1971) suggests that the most important relationship in a Chinese family is that between father and son, and its most significant feature is power distance. Because of a keen sense

of dependence and fear towards the father, who is the absolute authority in the family, a son will show unconditional obedience and fear towards him.

In Confucianism, relationships between people are regarded as 'obligations', each with its own set of responsibilities, which aim to construct a harmonious social structure. Yu, Y. M. (2015) asserts that based on the traditional Chinese social structure, Confucianism has designed a series of behavioural rules, and ethics concerns fulfilling one's obligations in one's place in this structure. Confucianism dictates the hierarchical order of a servant obeying the master, the son obeying the father, and the wife obeying the husband. Liang, Shuming 梁漱溟 (1991, 72) claims that China has hierarchical family relationships at its core, and this cultural value is threaded through Chinese politics, economics, religion, and the whole society. Unfortunately, this 'hierarchical order' with clearly defined dynamics of authority and power may also lead to paternalism.

The research of Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1993) presents the 'family orientation' concept, defined as the habit of transforming a relationship outside of the family into a family relationship. There is a tendency for the Chinese to see the family group as the ideal for other groups, and to generalise family relations and ethics other social settings or groups. Yang defines pan-familism as extending the familial relationship to other non-family organisations or groups.

Hwang, Kwangkuo 黃光國 (1989) defines 'power' as the ability to exercise one's will over that of others and cause changes of attitude or behaviour. The Chinese power structure is built on hierarchical relationships and Fei, Xiaotong 費孝通 (2006) argues that the Chinese 倫 'lun' (human relationships) emphasises differentiation in hierarchy. 'Lun' is a structured order, the standard for all relationships and not forgetting the 'lun' is a call to observe the differences between father and son and those close and distant.

Hu, Shi 胡適 (1991, 83) writes that the Chinese philosophy of life does not emphasise the individual, but the interrelations between people. According to Confucianism, one cannot exist individually, and all behaviours are interrelated with others. These are all considered moral behaviours.

For Chinese sociologists, Liu, J., Li, M. C., and Yue, X.D. (2010), contemporary perspectives on Chinese social identity and intergroup relations require the integration of interdependent and independent selves, theories of social identity and self-categorization, and historical analysis. Liu, J. et al. (2010) continue that indigenous Chinese psychologists in fact understand social identities through the hierarchical system of social relations prescribed by Confucian ethics.

Liu, J. and Hilton, D. (2005) argue that the ethical and relational origins of traditional Chinese social identities allow three culture specific predictions about how Chinese people manage cultural diversity and international relations today. Firstly, Chinese social orientation is based in relationship-centred core values, expressed in terms of Chinese Face and human feelings. Moreover, Chinese identity is defined in terms of role-based social relationships rather than analytical categorised boundaries. Secondly, the traditional Chinese sense of relationship is prescribed by a patriarchal system of benevolent authority. Confucianism can then be considered a universal ethic for dealing with particular social relationships, rather than a way of engaging that demeans members of an outgroup. This view prevails in China today, evidenced in the preferential treatment of ethnic minorities, such as the government providing subsidies especially for ethnic minorities in finance, education, medical, and so on. Thirdly, a defensive response in the form of nationalism is activated by a narrative of great civilisation versus recent historical victimisation. I will discuss and provide more evidence in the upcoming section of Domain of Ethnicity (2.1.5.3).

Chinese culture is influenced by Confucianism, familism, Face culture and authoritarianism that shaped the Chinese habitus (Bourdieu, P. 1992). All these habitus have also influenced the relationship between the Chinese self and others.

2.1.5.2 Social Domain

When one examines the difference between personal identity and social identity, social class and stratification cannot be ignored. People from the same social class identify themselves as one group, different from other groups in political opinion, economic status, social status, knowledge, or lifestyle. People from different social classes may then be isolated from each other and may also reject those from other social classes.

Bourdieu, P. (1992) notes in his reflexive theory of field and habitus that the field shapes the habitus, while the habitus influences the field. The individual's identity is constructed in society and the individual also constructs the larger, social scene. Similarly, Chinese society (the field) has been influenced by Confucianism, which shaped the Chinese habitus of interacting with others. This habitus in turn affects the operation and development of the Chinese society (the field).

2.1.5.2.1 Social Class and Social Stratification

Andersen, M. and Taylor, H. (2009) believe that all societies have a stratified structure, which can be seen in social relationships. They also explain that social stratification is complicated by many factors such as age, occupation, income, education, ethnicity, gender, residential location, people group, and country of origin. These all contribute to a person's social life and impact how they interact with others. These stratification systems place people in various categories and determine how they interact with each other. The relationship between people is not only determined by their role in society through their social class, but also by the boundaries and distances between different classes. Anderson, M. and Taylor, H. (2009) continue that class and stratification of a

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society is also a dynamic process, in which one group of people, having acquired resources, make judgments and exert authority over another.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) proposes a theory of social stratification in which an individual's social status is formed by his or her aesthetic taste or interests. He speculates that taste is unconsciously internalised during childhood, and once formed guides a person towards her or his appropriate social status and behaviours, but also may create a dislike of other 'unacceptable' behaviours.

2.1.5.2.2 Chinese Social Class

Wen, Chongyi 文崇一 (1991) writes that in Chinese history, social classes were determined by various criteria. Political status becomes the decision-making power that one holds. Economic status or wealth comes from owning real estate or from personal possessions. Fame and prestige are based on one's family background, upbringing, personal identity, and success. In traditional Chinese society, academic achievement or knowledge was a key factor in social mobility. Finally, differing lifestyles can also distinguish between various social classes as each social class has its own. Wen also points out that class identity affects whether a person welcomes or rejects others based on the others' social class.

Chinese social class hierarchy has also been deeply influenced by Confucianism. Wen, Chongyi 文崇一 (1988) portrays the hierarchical relationships in traditional Confucian social structure in Figure 2.1. All people know their position in society, and their status determines whom they may approach and with whom they may collaborate. Thus, in a Confucian society, one's social status determines one's social identity and there is little movement from one class to another.
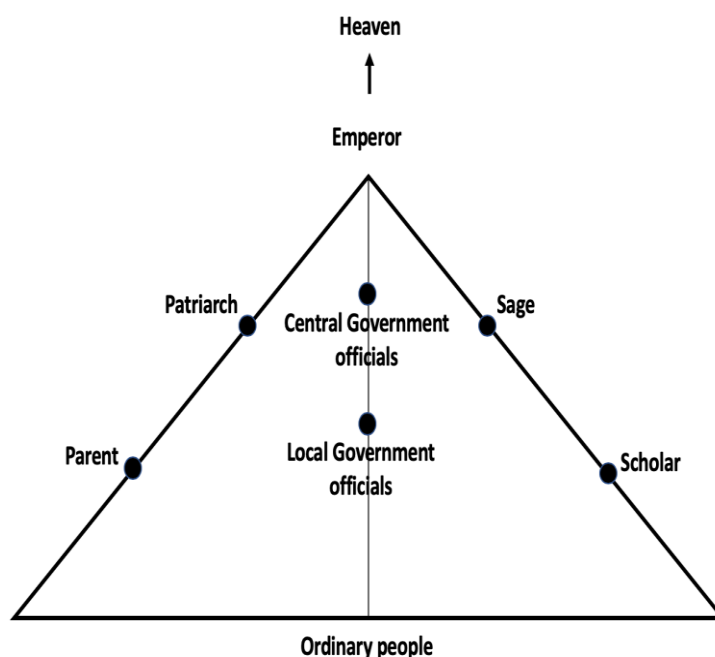
Figure 2.1 Confucian Social Structure (taken from Wen, Chongyi 文崇一, 1988, 57)

Wu, Sung-Tse 吳松澤 (2005), in his research paper on 'Class and Stratum in Chinese Society after 1949', suggests that the determination of social class has changed since Communist rule started in 1949. The driving force of social class division pivoted from economic wealth to political power; there still existed a 'ruling class' and 'ruled classes', but the criteria for determining them had changed.

2.1.5.2.3 Gender in Social Class

One aspect of social class that is often overlooked is the differential treatment of gender. Giddens, A. (2003) claims that gender itself is a far-reaching example of stratification. In some aspects of social life, men have more wealth, social status, and influence than women.

In a patriarchal society, the status of women is inferior. Nash, C. J., (2009) writes:

Patriarchy is an analytical concept referring to a system of political, social, and economic relations and institutions structured around the gender inequality of socially defined men and women. Within patriarchal relations, women are collectively excluded from full participation in political and economic life.[7]

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[7] From 'International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography.' https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/patriarchy Access date: 2020-10-13

The inequality affecting women resulting from a patriarchal society that Nash describes is also present in Chinese society, where the superiority of men over women is emphasised. In the context of social inequality and a society dominated by religion and patriarchy, Dhruvarajan, V. (2002) explores women's strategies for confronting patriarchy and inequality in religion from a feminist perspective. She points out that both men and women need to find meaning and purpose in life through the many principal functions that religion offers to satisfy social life, and that religion also provides answers to the difficulties and uncertainties they encounter in their life experiences. Dhruvarajan, V. (2002) further writes that religion may determine the position of people in the social hierarchy. In a male-dominated gender hierarchy, women are placed in a subordinate position and are considered inferior to men. They may also be considered physically unclean because of menstruation and childbirth, and are morally questionable. Dhruvarajan argues that such inequalities are not only repeated from one generation to the next, but that patriarchal religious rituals and symbols contribute to a strong belief in gender hierarchy as natural.

Gender inequality is viewed as a universal fact (Giddens, A. and Sutton, P. W., 2021), and the discrimination women face is clear. Even when religions do not prescribe gender discrimination, the interpretation of religious beliefs leads to practices within patriarchal societies that create discrimination against women (Dhruvarajan, V., 2002).

2.1.5.2.4 Social Mobility

Giddens, A. and Sutton, P. W. (2021) point out that social mobility refers to the upward or downward movement of individuals or social groups within social class systems. Those whose income or status has increased are said to be moving upwards, while a downward movement suggests the opposite. Tan, Guangding 譚光鼎 (2000) states that a closed society is a traditional form of society in which the class system is obvious. There is little mobility between classes, and the rights and obligations of members of society are not

equal because of class differences. An open society, on the other hand, allows individuals to change their role and to benefit from corresponding changes in status. In both open and closed social class systems, social members may want to move from one social status to another.

According to Bourdieu, P. (1984), different social classes and different members of the same class do not have the same developmental experiences, as even members of the same class have their own specific marks of class habitus. This is the result of the different class trajectories of people. Bourdieu proposes that opportunities for social mobility of an individual can create future motivation to continue in that direction. Thus, Bourdieu's concept of the class trajectory is an important dimension of his class analysis. This concept reveals more about the effects of changes in social structures on individuals, and especially on their mentalities than the empirical models of status attainment in mainstream sociology. Bourdieu is critical of simplified models of social mobility in mainstream sociology in which one's cultural capital, attitudes to life, and class habits are all ignored. His use of class trajectories helps identify an individual's capital (such as culture, education, economic level, social connections, and status), habitus, and motivation for social mobility.

2.1.5.3 Domain of Ethnicity

For Giddens, A. and Sutton, P. W. (2021) an ethnic group is a social circle made up of members who share a distinctive set of ideas about a common cultural identity that sets them apart from other social groups. In this section I will discuss Han-centrism, Chinese ethnocentrism (Sino-centrism), and Nationalism and Patriotism from the domain of Ethnicity.

2.1.5.3.1 Ethnic Identity—Han-centrism

In his book, *A Multicultural Perspective: Research on Value System and Ethnic Identity*, Wan, Minggang 萬明鋼 (2006, 4) writes that ethnic identity refers to one's attitude,

beliefs, and sense of belonging that comes from reflecting on one's identification with one's ethnic culture, language, and history, and through the process of inter-ethnic interaction and exchanges. This reflection results in a certain attitude and sense of affiliation, as well as a recognition of one's own ethnic culture.

Friend, J. M. and Thayer, B. A. (2017, 91) claim that the rise of Han-centrism is:

A form of hyper-nationalism, in contemporary China. As Chinese nationalism has become more ethnocentric since the 1990s, the cultural chauvinism of Han-centrism has become increasingly more influential in the debate over national identity. Within this narrative, Han culture is considered to be the authentic character of the nation; to deviate from the Han identity will only tarnish Chinese exceptionalism and impede China's rise.

The Constitution of China[8] states that in the struggle to maintain national unity, it is necessary to limit not only Han nationalism, but also nationalism in minority areas. The state makes every effort to promote the common prosperity of all nationalities in the country. In reality though, Leibold, J. (2010) claims that Han nationalism advocates the superiority of Han Chinese ethnicity, history, and culture over those of other people groups and the priority of Han Chinese interests in all matters, including politics.

The culture, history, and civilisation that the Chinese possess form the Han-centric identity. Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.'s (2004) theory of in-group and out-group explains how the identity of Han Chinese (in-group) may cause difficulties when they are working among China's ethnic minorities (out-group).

2.1.5.3.2 Chinese Ethnocentrism

Chinese ethnocentrism, sometimes also known as Sino-centrism, is the ideology of seeing China as the centre of the world. This concept began as early as the naming of China as 中國 'zhongguo' literally, the 'Middle Kingdom'. According to the New World Encyclopaedia, the definition of Sino-centrism is as follows:

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[8] Article 4, Chapter I, General Provisions of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China 中華人民共和國憲法第一章總綱第四條 http://www.mod.gov.cn/big5/regulatory/2018-03/22/content_4807615.htm Access date: 2022-10-09

Sino-centrism is an ethnocentric political ideology that regards China to be central or unique relative to other countries. A hierarchical Sinocentric model of international relations, dominated by China, prevailed in East Asia until the weakening of the Qing Dynasty and the encroachment of European and Japanese imperialists in the second half of the nineteenth century.[9]

Han, Dongyu 韓東育 (2019, 200) writes: 'The Hua-Yi [華夷] system was a system of geographic relationships centred on the dynasties in the Central Plains region of China, which persisted for more than 2,000 years in parts of East Asia and Southeast Asia.' Since ancient times, the advocates of 華夷之辨 'huayi zhi bian' (the differentiation between Chinese and Barbarian) considered the Chinese culture as the centre of civilisation and source of ceremony and propriety. China viewed surrounding countries or regions as backward and called their people 'barbarians'. Han, Dongyu 韓東育 (2019, 200) further points out that 'The Hua-Yi 華夷 system that spread in East Asia in the form of tribute relationships during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) began as a system based on China's perceived cultural superiority, but slowly evolved into a system centred on nationalism.' For Wang, Ke 王科 (2012), the Hua-Yi system is also a result of Confucianism, as it emphasises the difference between the civilised and uncivilised. Sun, Xiangchen 孫向晨 (2021) writes that through many dynasties, the Chinese were always self-centred in relating to outsiders, considering themselves more civilised, whereas all outsiders were merely inferior beneficiaries. According to Bourdieu, P.'s habitus theory, the Chinese ethnocentrism can be an ethnic habitus to position self as the centre, and others as the subordinate or the periphery figure.

2.1.5.3.3 Nationalism and Patriotism

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[9] https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/sinocentrism Access date: 2020-10-12

This section reviews the concept of Chinese nationalism which is combined with Chinese patriotism, as mentioned in the Glossary. Griffin, R. (2013) defines nationalism as an ideology that is driven by a sense of affiliation and submission to a certain national group. Adherents of this ideology regard nationalism as a unique cultural collective, which is different from other ethnic groups, whereas their own group is placed in a special position in history. This national group shares common characteristics, such as ethnicity, language, religion, history, politics, and geography.

Following the principles of anthropology, Anderson, B. R. (2016) provides a definition for 'Nation' as an imagined political entity, a unity with limited substance and sovereignty. Politics is imagined as a vital component of one's identity, and is a critical matter for national development. Anderson's suggestion that the emergence of nationalism is directly related to imagined communities also serves to illustrate the development of Chinese nationalism in the modern era, which has been formally constructed through the imagination of the past, the present, and the future.

According to Yu, Ying-shih 余英時 (2002), nationalism concerns the collective identity and dignity of a people group, and is an immense force in modern history. Zhang, Hao 張灝 (2002) reflects on nationalism in modern Chinese history as a product of that history, resulting from a reaction to the foreign concessions during the Qing dynasty in the early 1900s. He believes that nationalism is not a product of traditional Chinese culture, but it has influenced contemporary culture immensely, by supporting the ethnocentrism of Chinese people.

Anderson's definition of nationalism as an imagined political entity can characterise the direction of Xi Jinping's new initiatives focusing on a new future and standing for China's in the world. Since Xi Jinping became president of the PRC in 2013, he has

created the 'China Dream' and the 'Belt and Road Initiative'[10] (BRI), hoping to reshape the future of China by influencing those within and outside of its borders and linking traditional Chinese culture with patriotism, according to the 光明日報 'Guangming Daily' (2019), Xi Jinping declared that China's history and culture must be respected and its people must carry forward the spirit of patriotism. Understanding and accepting the long history and cultural heritage of the homeland is an important condition for the cultivation and development of people's patriotic feelings.[11] China's rise not only covers the economic, political, and military spheres, but also includes an internal increase of nationalism. The rise of China will affect how Chinese missionaries think of themselves, how they think of Others, and how Others in the field perceive and evaluate Chinese missionaries serving there, as well as how they will respond to these external evaluations of themselves.

To fulfil the China Dream, the people need to work hard to contribute to the great revitalisation of the Chinese nation, which in turn will help them realise their personal dreams. Zhao, G. and Deng, Z. (2015) indicate that it is important to sacrifice the small self to fulfil the big self. 'The big self' refers to the country or political direction the government has provided for the nation and its people. In contrast, the 'small self' refers to an individual, or a combination of the non-mainstream people groups. With this sacrifice, a harmonious society can be unified under political leadership.

Xi, Jinping 習近平 (2012) has also striven to develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, announcing that: 'The core of Socialism with Chinese characteristics is to maintain the people's majority position in the country. We must continue to liberate and

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[10] The 'Belt and Road Initiative' is the result of Xi Jinping's vision of the Chinese Dream in 2013. The countries and regions covered include Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Continental Europe.
[11] http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-12/06/c_1125315067.htm Access date: 2020-03-12

develop the productive forces, we must persevere in reformation, we must safeguard social fairness and justice, we must strive for common prosperity, we must promote social harmony, we must pursue peaceful development, and we must uphold the leadership of the Party.'[12] His agenda blurs the distinction between Chinese nationalism and patriotism and the media message seeks to convince the Chinese people to conform to the Communist party line. This is in line with Hall's identity representation theory (2013) and its construction of future imagination through language, symbols, and media.

The Chinese have long valued harmony and unification. To ensure that the 1.3 billion people of the country have a unified concept of national identity, the propaganda department of the PRC has spared no effort in conducting patriotic education to exert an influence on the people's thinking (Xi, Jinping 习近平, 2021).

Turning to religion, Cao, Nanlai 曹南來 (2017, 48) notes that 'in the twenty-first century, after half a century of tremendous social change (urbanization) and with the increasing progress of China's economic growth globally, a new kind of Christian nationalist consciousness is emerging as a new platform for the Sinicization of Christianity.' Cao, Nanlai 曹南來 (2017, 49-50) uses the term 'Spiritual Nationalism' to describe a multi-layered process whereby dominant urban Chinese Christians have internalised the norms of the nation-state, shaped themselves into a modern religious body in line with nation-building, and have adapted and promoted the revival of nationalism in grassroots' society.

2.1.5.4 Domain of Religion

Religion refers to beliefs and behaviours associated with a particular religious organisation or denominational affiliation, including a range of doctrinal traditions and

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[12] http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2012-11/19/c_113722546_2.htm Access date: 2018-11-13

religious practices, while spirituality refers more to an individual's spiritual connection to a divine transcendent power (Preston, J. L., Ritter, R. S., and Hernandez, J. I., 2010).

In this section, I review the relevant literature on religious identity, and the sacred-secular dichotomy of religious identity.

2.1.5.4.1 Religious Identity

A person's identity is defined as a combination of commonly shared beliefs, norms, and values. In the book, *Identity and the Sacred* (1976), Mol, H. J. points out that the formation of religious identity can safeguard the core functions of religion in each society. He also defines religion as identity becoming sacred and argues that in any society, religion is a critical component of an individual's identity construction. On an individual level, religious identity provides one with a safe and stable base on which to cope with external threats.

Xu, Hongxia 徐紅霞 (2005) observed that religion works as a strong forming force for the identity of groups and is a cohesive force behind long-term group stability, as it provides a common subject for worship, doctrines and creeds, rites and sacraments, values, lifestyle, customs, and habits. Liu, Baozhong 劉保中 (2015) claims that fixed and repetitive religious rites are a perpetual force in the construction and maintaining of adherents' identity as a member of a spiritual community. They provide believers with a means of mitigating the differences in religious identity faced in a secular environment. Through mutual support and identity in spiritual communities built around shared rites, members are able to relieve stress and tension in relationships when there is an identity conflict between believers and religious Others. According to Ritter, R. S. and Preston, J. L. (2010), when religious norms and group activities are activated, religious believers tend to relate only to their in-group, categorising those with other religious beliefs automatically into an out-group (Tajfel, H. and Turner, J., 2004).

Wang, Ying 王莹 (2011) uses identity construction and social identity theory as a research approach to explore identity expression and construction of rural Christians through a field study of Christian life in Central China. Wang, Ying 王莹 (2011) suggests that because identity emerges from relationships with the other and is inevitably conditioned by historical and cultural factors, social structures, folk religion and traditional customs, Christian identity is constantly changing. In the process of identity construction, Chinese Christians reflect interaction between Chinese and Western cultures, the active transformation of local cultural traditions (spiritual songs, funerals, ancestor worship, etc.), and efforts to find content in traditional culture compatible with their teachings, resulting in a unique local expression. This dynamic and local process of identity construction is also a form of Christian indigenisation, a process of interaction between ecumenical Christianity and Chinese society.

In addition, responding to social identity theory, Wang, Ying 王莹 (2011) argues that China's social structure is a 差序格局 'differential pattern',[13] with no clear demarcation of group-self relations and an important role played by impersonal, informal secondary relations such as affection. In an 'ethical' and 'relational' Chinese society, therefore, Christians have very limited influence on social groups outside their in-group, which is incompatible with the dominant communist ideology and creates an identity dilemma for Christians. However, as a result of Christians' efforts at cultural integration, the expression of their identity has shifted from individual to social. The structure of

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[13] The 'differential pattern' 差序格局 is a model of Chinese social relations proposed by Fei, Xiaotong 费孝通. The Chinese social structure itself is different from the Western pattern. The differential pattern is like the ripples that occur when a stone is thrown on the surface of the water. Each person is at the centre of the circle to which his social influence is pushed outwards. Those who are pushed by the ripples of the circle become connected. The most important kinship in Chinese society is like the nature of this throwing of stones to form concentric ripples.

Chinese social relations is influenced by these cultural and historical factors, which also play an important role in understanding the construction of believers' religious identity.

In a rapidly urbanising Chinese society, it is important to understand more deeply how Christians relate to each other in terms of cultural traditions and social change. In his book, *Country Churches in Cities: Urbanization and Christianity of Migrant Workers in China*, Huang, Jianbo (2012, 126) points out that since the crisis of traditional culture and social relations should not be a simple matter of 'impact' and 'response',[14] nor a power struggle between 'aggression' and 'resistance', it will not be a simple binary picture of gain and loss, or the triumph of tradition or the domination of foreign (urban) culture. Huang, Jianbo (2012, 127) maintains that what 'we understand by cultural change is a constant "process", a work in present progressiveness'. For example, he believes that in rural churches that serve migrant workers in cities, traditional culture or faith heritage has not completely disappeared due to changes in geography and social structures. On the contrary, Huang, Jianbo (2010, 188-91) argues that 'if the unilateral emphasis on "impact" or "response", "aggression" or "resistance"; "continuation" or "discontinuation", are all understood in the sense of "being", then, the change of society and the traditional culture [inherited by the rural churches] are in the process of integration and "becoming".'

Huang's statement expresses how, despite the rapid development of society, the traditions of the Chinese Church continue to remain in the mindset of believers.

2.1.5.4.2 The Dichotomy of the Sacred vs. Secular World

The Christian identity exists in two conflicting worlds, one spiritual and the other secular. Durkheim, E. (1999) proposes that the foundation of religion is the separation of the sacred and the secular world by a logical line of demarcation. In addition, some people believe there is a separation of the sacred and the secular in the Bible, Liu, Baozhong 劉

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[14] 'Impact-Response' is John Fairbank's Western-centred model for understanding and interpreting social and cultural change in China.

保中 (2015) arguing that in contemporary China, this dichotomy refers to the types of relationships that people have with those who follow God (sacred) and those who do not (secular).

In her study of a rural church, Wang, Ying 王莹 (2011, 108) found that rural Christians believe that life has a 'spiritual' dimension and although they are apparently no different from other people, having Jesus Christ gives their lives a different meaning. They have a special 'holy' identity which requires them to be 'set apart' from the earthly world. Wang goes on to say that rural Christians' worship in church, fellowship, daily prayer and communion with God make them disciples of Jesus, part of the Christian Church, children of God, and brothers and sisters born equally before God, no longer subordinate to any other group, and no longer just a 'regular' human being in the world, but sacred. Hong, Yujian 洪予健 (2009, 4) claims that the 'Chinese Church is deeply influenced by the wrong theological view of "sacred and secular" dichotomy, and the house churches are no exception, so they have failed to take up cross cultural mission and have rarely responded to social injustice with light and salt.'

2.1.6 Summary of Sociological View of Identity

In this section, I combined theories from Chinese and Western sociologists to review the theories of identity, including Identity Construction Theory, Identity Representation Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Identity Negotiation Theory. I then used the domains of culture, society, ethnicity, and religion to introduce factors relating to the self-identity of Chinese missionaries. Western theories are unable to analyse comprehensively the factors that constitute the Chinese identity as they do not consider the impact of Confucianism and Chinese history; the inclusion of Chinese scholars in this review adds a new perspective to the classic sociological theories. Even though Western and Chinese

scholars use the same terminologies (e.g., nationalism, patriotism), in the context of history and current Chinese political ideology the terminology takes on different meanings and connotations. For example, from the religious perspective, Chinese Christians living under political and religious restrictions will have a different identity compared to those who practise Christianity in a Western country.

Based on the literature review of identity as seen through sociology, identity has an individual component and a collective component. Identity can be influenced by internal, psychological factors, as well as external, circumstantial ones. Other than a few inherited and unchangeable factors, such an ethnicity and gender, identity is constructed and moulded by one's environment, history, culture, and religion.

Identity also defines the relationship between the in-group and the out-group, and differentiates the Self from the Other, which can lead to prejudice and conflict between the Self and the Other, as observed in multicultural situations and in diverse social groups, ethnic groups, and religions. Finally, according to Identity Negotiation Theory an individual's identity is not fixed, but may change due to factors such as inter-personal exchange, inter-people group contact, and the external environment. People can also adjust their identity in accordance with their self-awareness and adaptation in their relationship with Others.

I apply the theories on social identity to build a framework to interpret and describe the Chinese missionaries' identity construction and their relationship with Others (see Figure 1.1). However, the sociological theories presented above do not delve into the Self-Other relationship or the moral responsibility of one's relationship with the other. Therefore, in the next section, I explore the Self-Other relationship in identity from a philosophical perspective. By combining the two disciplines together for my research, I can present a more comprehensive exploration of Chinese missionary identity construction.

2.2.0 Philosophical View of Identity and the Other

The discourse of identity concerns not only sociologists, but also philosophers. In the following section, I focus mainly on the writing of three prominent philosophers, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur, and Charles Taylor.

I chose to review the philosophical theories of these three thinkers there are some commonalities. All address the issue of identity and the Self-Other relationship, attempting to supply the missing parts in previous philosophical studies regarding Identity and Self-Other relationship. They have all moved beyond metaphysical philosophical concepts and returned to the foundation of Self-Other relationships when addressing the issues of identity. Levinas, in his effort against the concept of an 'absolute subject', focused on philosophical ethics centred on Others, Ricoeur constructs 'Oneself as Another' through interpretation and narrative, and Taylor is a man of action, promoting 'Communitarianism'. I use these three philosophers' theories as a mirror to reflect on Chinese culture, society, ethnicity, and religion, resulting in new understanding and interpretation.

2.2.1 Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995): Ethics as First Philosophy

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) was a French philosopher who studied phenomenology in Germany. A former student of Edmund G. A. Husserl (1859-1938), he introduced the German concept of phenomenology to France. Martin Heidegger, (1889-1976) also had a profound influence on Levinas. However, Levinas' study in phenomenology went beyond both Husserl's and Heidegger's theories. This can be seen in his criticism of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962). In his book, '*Totality and Infinity*' (1969), Emmanuel Levinas shares his concerns that Heidegger's thought could be used to promote violence, his argument against Heidegger being that his philosophy was self-

centred and self-determining. Heidegger's belief that the Subject has the power to determine their Self (Subject) and denigrate Others (Objects) can lead to radical, self-centred violence that is not accountable to any external factors, as seen in Heidegger's support of Hitler.

Lai, Chunghsiung 賴俊雄 (2014) writes that Levinas used the concept of an 'Absolute Other' to challenge classical Western philosophy's use of the ontological Cartesian Self. Rather than thinking of each individual as a whole in himself, Levinas points out that the Self exists only in relationship with the absolute other. Lai then summarises Levinas' thought on the absolute other, by claiming that the Other has priority over the Self. Secondly, moral responsibility (ethics) has priority over the ontological subject. And, finally, one's responsibility to others is prioritised over one's own freedom and feelings.

Levinas' philosophy of Others has deconstructed the concepts of Self and Other. His ethical philosophy has corrected the Self and Other relationship and has made a breakthrough from stereotypical and rigid interpersonal relationships. Levinas' theory has often been criticised as being hard to understand and impractical, but his critique of Self and Existence reversed the trend of the French post-phenomenological philosophy and his influence is still felt today, serving as a philosophical paradigm in the discourse of globalisation, gender prejudice, ethnic conflict, racism, and other ethical issues.

2.2.1.1 Ethics of the Others

Levinas, E. (1969, 2016) contends that classical Western philosophers, from the ancient Greek Era to the Era of Enlightenment, shared a metaphysical desire to ask: 'What is humankind and what is the world?' They consequently attempted to construct various theories or ontological postulations to categorise humankind. Levinas refutes such ontology as a 'totalising discourse', which endeavoured to find the universal essence of human beings, claiming that Western philosophers wanted to place dynamic humanity

into a fixed linguistic framework. If this could be done, asserts Levinas, humanity would then be homogenous, and individual uniqueness and creativity would disappear. Levinas' critique is reflected in how people categorise others in Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory, which proposes three ongoing processes: social categorisation, social identification, and social comparison, resulting in the delineation of others as 'us' or 'them' (i.e., in-group and out-group). Finally, an example of Levinas's 'totalising discourse' may be seen in Chinese society's constraint of the 'small self', when people are asked to sacrifice the 'small self' to fulfil the 'big self' (Liang, Qichao 梁啓超, 1997). The demands of the whole (totality) over the individual lead to the dissolution of the individual within it.

In the face of totalising discourse, Levinas, E. (1989, 75) proposes a new idea, 'ethics as first philosophy', as a response to classical Western philosophy. Based on the foundation of ethics and the other, his idea stresses the infinite responsibility of the Self to Others. In other words, philosophy no longer interprets Other based on the rational understanding of Self or a fixed concept. Rather, it respects the infinite possibilities of Others, and therefore fulfils Self's ethical responsibility to them. Even though Levinas's reference to ethics is a critique of classical Western philosophy, his argument is equally instructive concerning the Chinese 'lun' (Fei, Xiaotong 費孝通, 2006). Relationships in Chinese culture are hierarchical, thus creating power distance. The subordinate groups (i.e., the younger to elders, the female to male) are marginalised and often lose their voice. On the other hand, Levinas' ethical relationship is based on a philosophy that prioritises the Other, such that mutual respect and equality exist between all people, regardless of class. Levinas, E. (1969, 2016) also asserts that 'the Other' breaks 'the Totality' and opens more possibilities for the relationship with Others. The Subject (Self) chooses to approach and embrace the Other, and through this 'hospitality' makes face-to-face contact with

infinite Others. Such 'hospitality' is an offering of the Subject (Self), but also the Subject's (the Self's) responsibility.

2.2.1.2 Face of the Other

Another important philosophical concept of Levinas is the 'face' of the Other. Note that this 'face' is not the same as the concept of Face in Chinese culture and Confucianism. Lai, Chunghsiung 賴俊雄 (2014) asserts that Levinas describes the face-to-face encounter and relationship with the Other from a phenomenological approach. Levinas, E. (1989, 75) draws attention to the core issue of existence: 'What is the existence of the ethical subject?' and 'How can I maintain a relationship with the Other without depriving the Other of her or his distinctiveness?' The Other is only real in a relationship between the Self and the Other when the individuals are face to face. Sun, Xiangchen 孫向晨 (2015) highlights the most significant difference between Levinas and Heidegger regarding the Self-Other relationship and perception. Heidegger tries to understand Others and their presence from an existential perspective, and coined the term 'Dasein' (being here) to describe the 'co-existing' of the Self and the Other. Such 'co-existing' means that the Self and Other occupy the same space, but there is no engagement. Yet for Levinas, an 'encounter' with Others was more important than 'co-existence'. Levinas (1969) emphasises the ethical responsibility to Others which requires dialogue; he believes that a true Self-Other relationship is only possible when one is 'face-to-face' with the other (i.e., when one interacts with the other in dialogue and is connected to one another relationally). However, Levinas' philosophy is not limited to the ethical dimension; a key element of his thought is that the relationship between Self and Others defines human existence.

There are two aspects to Levinas' Other. The Other is an abstract and metaphysical being, pertaining to such qualities as infinity and transcendence. Secondly, the Other's face signifies its transcendental nature and vulnerability. For instance, orphans, widows,

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and strangers, are a manifestation of such a 'face' of helplessness in Others. Levinas, E. (1961/1969) states that the recognition of being is more important than the determination of its nature through philosophy. Philosophers would subordinate the relationship with others (beings) (ethical relationship) to the relationship with the 'being of beings' (cognitive/conceptual relationship). This latter relationship is impersonal and allows for the mastery and domination of being.

For Chen, Huiqin 陳慧琴 (2011), Levinas' Others-oriented ethical theory has infused new blood into modern philosophy, by reinterpreting the dialectic relationship between Self and Others. Their interaction does not result in the Self overpowering the Others, but in the Others' ethical response and a calling to Self. The construction of the relationship of Self and Others is not based on assimilation, but the Self makes a face-to-face encounter with Others and responds to Others by fulfilling one's responsibility, while maintaining the Other's integrity.

2.2.1.3 Absolute Other

The Divine (God) is a seldom-mentioned topic in sociology or philosophy. Levinas (1969) uses the term 'absolute other' to refer to the other who cannot be assimilated or homogenised. However, he also introduced the concept of a 'Third Party', an absolute 'Other' with an upper-case 'O'. This absolute 'Other' points to one who is different from the lower-case 'other', also known as 'God'. Levinas uses the concept of the 'Third Party' as the object to receive service from 'others'. The concept of the 'Third Party' refers to a 'fraternity', which Levinas emphasises is not based on geographical proximity or ethnic resemblance, but on an individual's multiplicity which cannot be assimilated. This means that the infinite responsibility of the Other is not isolated, but placed in a social group. The Third Party signifies that the issue of responsibility has entered the public realm, or in other words, the political realm. In Levinas' book, '*Proper Names*' (1996), there is a dialogue between Levinas and Martin Buber in which Levinas gives a revision of Martin

Buber's I-Thou concept. He claims that without a Third Party to give a neutral and fair judgment, injustice can happen when 'I' overpowers 'Thou'. Therefore, Levinas, E. (1969) asserts that the appearance of the Third Party is a call for justice: the Third-Party looks at me through the eyes of the Others. In other words, the Self needs to see through the Third Party's eyes to envision the 'Voice' of the others for justice and equality.

The philosophical concept of Levinas' Third Party is a ground-breaking concept that adds a vertical viewpoint that is not available in the sociological discussion of the Self-Other (two-dimensional) relationship. Levinas implicitly puts a 'Divine' perspective on how the Self sees oneself, Others, and how the Other sees itself. I further discuss the view of a third party in the literature review on Trinitarian theology in section 2.3.0.

2.2.2 Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005): Constructing Identity in Narrative

Another French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), sought to reconcile the polarisation of identity between Descartes' unchanging ontological view and the position that identity is permissively fluid with his concept of narrative identity. In his book, *Time and Narrative* (1984), Ricoeur highlights the important role that narrative plays in the process of constructing the subject's identity. Later, Ricoeur wrote *Oneself as Another* (1992), to address the ethics of responsibility to the Others. In this section, I review Narrative Identity and Ethics as proposed by Ricoeur.

2.2.2.1 Narrative identity

Ricoeur, P. (1981) claims that narrative text is the medium through which people can understand themselves, perceiving the construction of self-identity as the narration of one's own life story, in which the narrator and the main character are the same person. This, however, does not mean this person is the sole author of his or her life story, because others are also involved as co-authors. Ricoeur argues that if a person excludes the other, whether as an individual or group, and treats others as an out-group (Tajfel, H. and Turner,

J. 2004), then his or her story is incomplete. In *Time and Narrative* (1985), Ricoeur proposes that narrative identity is about telling a story, who is doing what, and how. One's identity is therefore derived through narrative plots. The narrative serves as the process and medium of self-identity constitution.

Ricoeur uses narrative identity to link the relationship between the Self and the Other. Even though Ricoeur's concept of identity shares a common view with the social identity theories of sociologists like Tajfel, Jenkins, Barth, and Mead on the relationship between the Self and the Other, he goes further by proposing to reconcile the perception of the Self with the Other through narrative.

Xu, Xiaomin 徐小敏 (2016), writes that narrating one's story is about rearranging snapshots of one's life using linguistic tools and then attempting to exposit the significant meaning of the main character's life, as well as the historical construction of this person's identity. By narrating stories of different individuals and connecting and relating them in time-space, an interwoven meta-narrative is created.

2.2.2.2 Ethics

Ricoeur, P. (1992) describes ethics as the narrative of the relationship between Self and Other, asserting that the Self must acknowledge the existence of the Other, and ceases to exist without this otherness. Ricoeur, P. (1992, 165) therefore suggests an 'accountable ethics', with which people must 'account for' Others to be 'counted on' by Others. This 'responsibility' makes a connection between Self's responsibility and the Other's trust as the two parties 'respond' to each other.

For Ricoeur, P. (1992, 296), the foundation of ethics and morality is a combination of one-sided 'recognition' and 'mutual recognition', in which the latter is more important. His concept of mutual recognition and Levinas' 'face-to-face' toward others both suggest that the Self-Other relationship is a moral and ethical responsibility. Ricoeur's and Levinas' theories oppose the strong in-group belief systems in social identity theory

(Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. 1978, 2004). To address strong in-group belief systems, Ricoeur proposes that the Self and the Other must have a mutual recognition system in which one validates the other and vice versa. Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2007, 23) rephrased Ricoeur's statement thus: 'Human beings become human through a system of mediation, which can transform an adversary to a friend.'

According to Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2007), Ricoeur supports collectivism and criticises individualism, yet he is very aware of the danger of individuals being reduced and dissolved into the whole, as seen in his subtle connection with Levinas. Levinas, E. (1969) writes that one's responsibility for Others is rooted in one's subjectivity, which is formed in one's relationship with Others. Subjectivity, therefore, originates from ethics. One's responsibility to Others is not a consequence of our subjectivity, but rather helps constitute one's subjectivity and endows it with meaning and direction. For this reason, Levinas terms ethics as the 'first philosophy', and regards it as the origin of all philosophies.

Ricoeur, P. (1992, 335-36) holds that Levinas builds his entire discourse of philosophy on the idea of a proactive Other in an interpersonal relationship. In fact, this proactive-ness does not lead to any relationship since the Other signifies an absolute external nature and is related to a separate 'self'. This Other hence has dissolved any relationship, and the external nature is defined by this non-relationship. Ricoeur argues that Levinas over-emphasises the nature of otherness. Levinas is sceptical about whether the absolute external Other can enter into a relationship. If a mutual relationship for either the external Other or the 'separated and isolated Self' is not possible, then one remains in a state of isolation. Ricoeur feels that he is different from Levinas in that Levinas has connected uniform identity with the ontology of the whole so closely that self-ness fails to differentiate from 'self', and therefore is not able to operate from the perspective of the subject's dialogue, action, narrative, or moral commitment. Mutual respect and mutual

responsibility can only be achieved in the interaction and relation of the Other and Self based on equality. Only in this way can others perceive 'otherness' in the self, and self-perceived self-ness in Others. The self-ness of every individual must be respected instead of being dissolved.

2.2.3 Charles Taylor (1931-): Source of Identity as Goodness and Morality

Taylor, C. (2001) maintains that self-identity is closely related to goodness and morality. If one did not have a profound understanding of the origin of one's awareness of the good, one would be unable to have a clear understanding of one's own identity. In order to understand their Self and relate to Others, people must work within the framework of goodness and morality. Taylor, C. (2001, 27) writes:

> My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I try to determine from case to case what is good, valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.

2.2.3.1 Morality, the Good, and the Self

In *Sources of the Self* (1989), Taylor, C. offers a reflection on 'secularity', in which he sees 'modernity' as a process of self-identifying, which has become an alternative to God. In his books, *Sources of the Self* (1989) and *A Secular Age* (2007), Taylor, C. follows a chronological timeline to observe how humanity underwent a process from self-awakening to self-centredness, and then to self-reclusiveness alongside the process of modernisation. The consequence of this is the loss of the search for the good and the moral, as well as the loss of oneself in the framework of the good and morality. Taylor does not spend much effort explaining self or identity, but focuses on the 'Good.' He (2001, 3) asserts that the self is a pre-eminently a moral one, declaring that 'Selfhood and the good, or in another way selfhood and morality, turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes.' Taylor, C. (2011) identifies three secular ideas: religion exiting from the public domain, the decline of faith in true beliefs, and a change of religious conditions which

leads to humanism replacing religion. In Tajfel and Turner's (1978) theory of in-group vs. out-group, the in-group belief system divides people unconsciously and is formed between the religion-Self and the religion-Others. Taylor's theory explores secularisation from the perspective of Western modernity in terms of the way in which people view religion, morality, and the good. The challenge faced by Chinese missionaries when encountering different faiths is to focus too much on the differences between their own beliefs and those of mission Others, creating distance. However, the Chinese missionaries overlook an idea that Taylor proposes, that those who follow other religions are also pursuing a kind of goodness and morality. Finally, Taylor claims that unless people return to the system of good and morality, interpersonal relationships will become increasingly divisive.

2.2.3.2 Transcendence

Transcendence is a concept shared by Levinas, Ricoeur, and Taylor. Taylor, C. (2001, 430) claims that all people have a natural desire for transcendence. Religion or faith in God opens the possibility for such desires. Such transcendence pushes people 'outside' and 'beyond' the so-called 'human flourishing' of everyday life. For Christians, transcendence means the love of God, which they do not hesitate to embrace. Taylor, C. (2011) therefore asserts that the affirmation of this 'transcendence' (182) marks the 'beyond life' (184), openness, and change in identity. When people are self-centred, they live in a reclusive time-space; they distance themselves from and are unable to sustain a deep relationship with others. Taylor's idea of transcendence beyond life could be linked to Bhabha, H.'s (1994) theory of hybrid identity and Ting-Toomey, S.'s (2015) theory of identity negotiation, through the willingness to transcend the self and step out of the limits of self-centredness. Taylor, however, puts forward the notion that when people do not have faith, goodness, or morality, their ego tends to move towards self-centredness. Therefore, to transcend the ego, one must turn back to the divine Other. This has similar

implications to Levinas' Absolute Other. I will discuss further the concept of transcendence in section 2.3.0 from the Trinitarian perspective.

Laitinen, A. (2002, 57-76) has rephrased Taylor's statements concerning moral space and its relationship with self in this way: 'Selfhood can naturally be captured in a "moral topography" of self. [Taylor] meant that what space-time metaphors like "moral space", "moral maps", "orientations to good", "direction of a life", "moving toward or away from goods" express, is an inescapable feature of selfhood.' Taylor's claim above points to the fact that people are living in a moral space, without which they will lose direction in life.

Taylor, C. (2001) continues that the everyday world is not a neutral or value-free reality, and that people inevitably experience it in terms of value. Rather than a neutral space, we live in a moral one, which could require us to leave the exclusive in-group space and venture into the out-group space of acceptance of the Other. It is also a space of cultural, social, ethnic, and religious difference in which one puts aside one's sense of superiority to appreciate and embrace Others. Thus, one orients oneself towards the good and it is only through the quest for the source of goodness that one can find direction for life and reach beyond oneself.

2.2.4 Summary of Philosophical View of Identity and the Other

This section has used philosophical perspectives to examine the topic of identity, concluding that identity must be discussed from the perspective of the Other in addition to that of the Self. As for the existence of the Self, this must first be approached from an ethical perspective. Moreover, it is important to note that the Self and the Other are inseparably related, dependent on, and shaped by each other so that the identity that is formed is not just of an individual but also of a community.

Sociology interprets the phenomena of human behaviour by looking at the processes that produce people's habitual activities and the possible factors within them. It also connects external human behaviour and the inner world and addresses the sense of identity arising from interactions between individuals and communities. Philosophy, on the other hand, considers important the ethical and relational links between people.

2.3.0 Theological View of the Trinity and Identity

The Trinity has been a complex concept for the past two thousand years of church history. Christianity's 'One' God has three 'Persons', and is described as One in Three and Three in One. The mystery of God's nature has caused countless debates, and the doctrine of the Trinity was partially responsible for the split between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western Churches (Cross, F. L. and Livingstone, E. A., 2005). As the Catholic theologian Rahner, K. (1904-84) stated: 'If there is an absolute mystery in Christian faith, the Trinity is one of them.' In this section, I will neither address contentious Trinitarian theological issues, nor attempt new ways to comprehend the mystery of the Trinity. Instead, I will reflect theologically on certain qualities of the Trinity, including God's relationality, equality within unity, outgoing nature, embracing, mediation and dynamism. Together, these elements found in the triune God's interaction with others serve as a model for the practice of missionary-other relationships.

Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2007) writes that the understanding of the Trinity influences humanity's relationship with God and humanity's relationship with itself, including within the Church. In the same way, one's understanding of the Triune God also determines how people see their self-identity.

The Old Testament scholar Lai, Jianguo 賴建國 (2011) exegetes the Triune God from three different perspectives: ontological, relational, and functional. The first is the ontological perspective. Ephesians 4:23-24 says that humanity is 'made new in the

attitude of your minds; and [humanity is] to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.' This image refers to Christ's eternal glory and His righteousness and holiness, and it is this image that makes humanity unique. The second is the relational perspective. In all creation, humanity is unique in being able to establish and maintain complex relationships. Adam and Eve were made in the image of God and before the fall could live according to God's will at all times because they had an intimate relationship with Him. However, after the Fall, without a relationship with God, humanity is not be able to completely reflect the Creator's image. The third is the functional perspective, pointing to humanity's work and duty. God has assigned certain tasks to humanity as His image-bearer, commanding people to look after His creation and steward the entire world (Genesis 1:28). These three perspectives are not in conflict with one another, but describe the image of God from different angles. In summary, the image of God affects humanity's internal qualities, external relationships, and the responsibilities humanity must fulfil.

2.3.1 Image of the Triune God

In this section, I will review literature in the discourse of God's image as expressed in His creation of humanity, in relationship, and in the personhood of Jesus Christ. The image of the Triune God is an essential foundation for the human person's identity. As is written in Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV):

> Then God said, 'Let us make [humankind] in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So, God created humanity in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

2.3.1.1 Humanity in God's Image

From the reference to Genesis 1:26-27 above, God created humanity in His image. Rather than a complete revelation of the Trinity, this is a glimpse into God's nature. In his book,

Systematic Theology (2000), Grudem, W. states that Trinitarian doctrine was gradually revealed in the Bible, first implicitly in the Old Testament and then more explicitly in the New Testament.

In *The Message of the Trinity: Life in God*, Edgar, B. (2020) provides an exegesis of sixteen biblical passages, from the Old and the New Testaments, to describe the Trinitarian attributes of God, his concern for humanity, and his willingness to be incarnated with them. Edgar notes that the theology of the Trinity provides a biblical model that includes the attributes of unity, love, and identity and is a pattern for unity and communion within the Church. Secondly, the Trinity is the source of missions because sending the Church into the world is an extension of the love of the Father. God sends the Son and the Holy Spirit out of love; therefore, Trinitarian love is central to the missionary movement of Christianity. For Christians, a proper understanding of the Trinity is vital to the establishment of one's identity, as it affirms the value of personhood and the relationship with a personal God.

Edgar, B. (2020) believes that the Trinitarian doctrine is not only a complicated, abstract metaphysical theory, but also something which impacts Christian practice and social interactions. Edgar's understanding of God's mission is reaching out and relating to people.

Most of the traditional theological understanding of the Trinity has focused on ontological rather than relational concepts, leading to an incomplete understanding of how the relationships within the Triune God could be an example for humanity.

Because of the Fall, human relationships lost some of the imprint of God's image and dichotomies between the Self and the Others caused division between in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel, J. and Turner, H., 2004). In Levinas, E.'s (1969) terms, face-to-face relationships are lacking. This also meshes with Ricoeur, P.'s (1992) concern that people do not recognise and take responsibility for the Other.

Ou, Liren 歐力仁 (2004) summarises Barth's interpretation of the 'image of God' as being perfectly manifested only in Christ. The image of God carries the mandate to glorify God. Humanity was created in the image of God, but is not equal to God as humans are finite. Therefore, humanity is precious to God, but can never presume to replace God.

2.3.1.2 God's Image in Relationship

Cheng, Shun Kai 鄭順佳 (2002) writes that Barth proposed Christology as the foundation for theological anthropology. An individual's identity must first be constructed from his or her relationship with God before he or she can define relationships with Others. Barth, K. (1958) maintains that the doctrine of election is 'the sum of the Gospel (159)' and 'God's freedom in which He is the One who eternally loves' (10) and of 'the power with which set the covenant between God's self and the creation' (11) Similarly, Busch, E. (2004, 127) comments that 'the covenant with creation seals that God is the one who freely coexists, and the creature is the one who is free to coexist.'

Humans were created to enter into covenant with the Triune God, and his image can only be realised within a community. In his book, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (2001, 305), Grenz, S. asserts that:

> The image of God does not lie in the individual *per se*, but in the relationality of persons in community. This assertion calls for a relational ontology that can bring the Divine prototype and the human antitype together.

Humans cannot truly reflect God's image unless they first enter into a relationship with God. Only then can humans develop meaningful relationships with Others. Barth, K. (1958) claims that one's identity must first be built on a relationship with the Trinity before there is any possibility of a loving relationship with the Other.

Furthermore, Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2008, 28-29), in a summary of Barth's works, says that 'God's image is revealed in two dimensions. The first dimension is vertical, indicating the relationship between God and [human], and the second is horizontal,

showing inter-human relationships.' The vertical relationship between humans and God must drive the horizontal one between humans: Jesus commands his followers to first 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind', before giving the second: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22:37-39).

2.3.1.3 God's Image in Jesus Christ

Because Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, humans can approach and have a relationship with the Triune God through him. The apostle Paul states explicitly that Jesus is the concrete embodiment of the image of God. 'The Son is the image of the invisible God' (Colossians: 1: 15). Correspondingly, Cheng, Shun Kai 鄭順佳 (2002), in a discourse on Karl Barth's paradigm of human nature, states that the true nature of human beings is found only in Jesus Christ. In the concept of the image of God in Jesus, a channel is provided for God's people to know God. Since humans are created in the image of the Triune God, they should 'put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator' (Colossians 3:10).

2.3.2 The Trinitarian Relationships

The previous section on the Image of the Triune God discussed how relationship is a vital part of the Image of God. In this section, I discuss three theological concepts: relationship within the Triune God, perichoresis within the Trinitarian relationship, and equality among the three Persons.

2.3.2.1 Relationship within the Triune God

The concept of Trinity was first proposed by the early church father Tertullian (160-220 AD), with the Latin word 'Trinitas', which means nothing more than 'Three and One'. Later, the word was replaced by 'three persons in one substance' to describe the relationships of the three Persons in the Godhead. Zhou, Weichi 周偉馳 (2000) writes that historical debates around the doctrine of the Trinity have led to two conflicting paradigms.

The first is the 'Social Trinity' postulated by the Eastern Church Fathers and the second is termed the 'Ontological Trinity' or the 'Trinity of Psychology' represented by Augustine.

The Eastern Orthodox scholar Zizioulas, J. D. (1985, 16-17) contributes his understanding of the Social Trinity in his work, '*Being as Communion*' (1985), in which he asserts that 'the Being of God is through "personal relationship and personal love".' This concept differs from the ontological understanding of God's 'Oneness' used in the Western Church. Zizioulas, J. D. (1985, 18) also states that 'Being means life, and life means communion,' because true life can only exist in communion. He continues that 'the substance of God…has no ontological content, no true Being, apart from communion.' From Zizioulas' point of view, humans must exist in relationships, and that without loving relationships, humans cannot truly exist. Therefore, a relationship of love is an essential element of identity.

Modern theologians, such as Karl Barth (1886-1968), John Zizioulas (1931), and Jürgen Moltmann (1926) all go beyond the ontological understanding of the Triune God. Barth, K. (1958) argues that the paradigm of 'Three in One' demonstrates dynamic relationships. These relationships look not only at the Oneness of the Three, but pay attention to the relationships that made the Three into One. This view is critical to Barth's understanding of God as a Being-in-relationship.

In his, *Trinity and the God's Kingdom,* Moltmann, J. (2007) argues that the three Persons of the Godhead exist in interconnected loving relationships. Each is independent, yet they are inextricably connected. Each Divine Person also has non-interchangeable roles as part of the ontologically holy Triune God. In addition to the two concepts mentioned above, Moltmann introduces a third concept into his doctrine of the Trinity: the dynamic relationship between the Divine Persons and Others. This concept includes

God's passion towards Others, His self-limitation in incarnation, suffering on the cross, and everlasting relationships with Others in His eternal kingdom.

2.3.2.2 Perichoresis within the Trinitarian relationship

Moltmann, J. (2007) continues that the Trinity and the Trinitarian Relationships must be understood with the Greek term, *perichoresis*, which describes the relational interdependence of the three Persons, the co-indwelling and mutual interpenetration of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. McGrath, A. (2001, 325) writes that *perichoresis* 'allows the individuality of the Persons to be maintained while insisting that each person shares in the life of the other two.' The three Persons in the Trinity cannot stand alone and remain perfect, rather, each must exist in a fellowship that is inter-dependent and inseparable.

Moltmann, J. (2007) broadens the definition of *perichoresis* to represent both the intra-Trinitarian communion of the three Persons, and the reaching out in love of the Triune God to the created world. The Father is the beginning and the origin of God's Being, Jesus the Son is the Light through whom human beings can come before the Father, and the Holy Spirit allows the Son to reveal Himself as, for example, at Jesus' transfiguration. The Trinity is an expression of individual yet indivisible fellowship. Kilby, K. (2000, 434) asserts:

> Our contemporary society's basic understanding of the word, of what it means to be a person, in other words, needs to be reformed by a return to the true Trinitarian understanding. The problem with our usual notion of personhood lies in its connotations of individualism, in the assumption that ultimately each person is an isolated being over against all others. A proper understanding of the Trinity and of the Trinitarian perichoresis counteracts this, in their view, and enables one to understand persons as by their very nature interactive, interdependent, in communion with one another.

2.3.2.3 The Equal Relationships within the Trinity

Chang, Litsen 章立生 (1989) argues that the three Divine Persons of the Godhead are not subordinate to each other but share the same substance, the same glory, and the same status. The Father works through the Son, and the Father and the Son work through the Holy Spirit, each with His specific role. God's Being can be understood in their three

relationships: The Father is the origin and the source, the Son is the manifestation and revelation, and the Holy Spirit is the completion.

Moltmann, J. (2007) writes that the monotheist concept of God as the Father of the universe and what some people see as a stern Patriarch was derived from the hierarchical social structure of pre-modern times. He critiques the traditional concept of a patriarchal Father of the universe with ultimate power. The concept of the Father is not authoritarian, nor should it be politicised as it was in Confucian China (Wen, Chongyi 文崇一, 1988, 1991). Moltmann J. (2007) continues that the Father exists because of the Son and the Son would not exist without the Father. The Father-Son metaphor enables humans to know God, not in a totalitarian relationship, but in a more equal, familial one. This equality in the Father-Son relationship could constitute a new paradigm to counteract authoritarian relationships in the Chinese patriarchal church and society.

2.3.3 Attributes of the Trinity

2.3.3.1 Diversity within the Trinity

Diversity within the Trinity is demonstrated by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each having their own unique personality and role. Moltmann, J. (2007, 181) argues that his interpretation of the Trinity differs from previous ones based on 'monotheism', because a traditional interpretation starts from the philosophical concept of God being 'One' and limits the understanding of the Triune God. He expands the monotheistic interpretation to further our understanding of the true image of the Triune God as revealed in Scripture.

In his book, *History of Doctrine. Vol. I,* Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (1995) concurs with Moltmann about views of the Trinity in the history of Christianity. Lin points out that the Eastern Orthodox Church tradition focused primarily on the 'Tri-' part of the Trinity, in

line with Moltmann's interpretation. The Eastern Church describes the Trinity using the analogy of a societal institution, using the term 'Social Trinity'.

The Triune God is proactive in the world as seen from Creation to Incarnation to Salvation, yet Gunton, C. (1996) distinguishes clearly the roles of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in the work of Creation. The Father is the origin of all, a transcendence of origination. The Son is the means by which God is present in the world. When Jesus was in the world, He did not witness for Himself, but to the Father. The Spirit is often described as the ultimate transcendence of God. Each Person has His own unique identity and role, yet simultaneously does everything for the other. This demonstrates not only God's diversity, but also His unity as seen within His inseparable relationship.

Gunton, C. (2002) states that Hellenistic theism is an ontological hypothesis and account of the attributes of God. He argues that a highly abstracted and theoretical understanding of God's attributes, with its generalised discursive propositions, counteracts God's nature as manifested in action in historical space and time. Gunton argues that the doctrine of God needs to return to the narrative and historical context of the Bible to grasp the particularity of God's economic activity in the world to gain a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the personalised nature of the Trinity.

Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully human, represents particularity and universality. In terms of Jesus' particularity, Chia, Mook Soo 謝木水 (2015, 173) points out that Christian communities often neglect the fact that Jesus was Jewish. He was born into a Jewish family and studied Hebrew and Jewish writings while a child. Thus, some see Christianity as an extension of the Jewish faith. However, an overly Hellenistic view of God has led to a 'de-Judaism' of Christianity. In this case, Jesus Christ loses his human specificity and his identity as a Jew. Chia argues that if Jesus loses his Jewish identity, he loses particularity as a Jew, so He can only be a metaphysical God. Despite Jesus' particularity as a Jew, He still loves the entire world and works towards the salvation of

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Man. How Jesus, as a Jew, reached out to His Gentile Others can be an example to the Chinese missionaries. Jesus' example can also be used to respond to the growing momentum of ethnocentrism and nationalism in China.

Yu, Tat-sum 余達心 (2015) proposes the Triune God's existence as Being-for-Other. He writes that an infinite Triune God does not need to enter His created time-space, yet willingly confined Himself in time and space as a human to save humanity. The Triune God not only enjoys a relationship within Himself, but is also concerned with relationships with Others. God shares His abundance with all creatures and upholds creation continually by His grace. Gunton, C. (2009) states that the incarnation was a selfless act, looking to the interests of Others. God did not give up on humanity despite rejection, but as a Being-for-Other God, He offered salvation out of His mercy and grace. The Triune God is One who is willing to sacrifice Himself for Others.

2.3.3.2 Unity within the Trinity

Lau, Lee Yii 劉利宇 (1999) notes that Barth applied the concept of *homoousion*, which means that the Son Jesus has the same substance/essence as God, to his entire theology of revelation. As a result, *homoousion* becomes a connecting point of God's substantial Being and His revelation in Christ through the work of Salvation. Christ the Son was not becoming another Being. He is of the same Substance as the Father and shares in the same glory and majesty (John 1:1). The Nicene Creed (381 CE) states: 'We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.'[15] The Son and the Father are *homousian*s. Barth, K.

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[15] Nicene Creed taken from https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nicene-Creed. Access date: 2020-09-18

(1975, 296) gives this formula of revelation: 'God reveals Himself. He reveals Himself through Himself. He reveals Himself.' In other words, God the Father is revealed by the actions of God the Son. And through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, humanity can accept Jesus as Lord.

Moltmann, J. (2007) reasons that the unity of the Divine Persons is due to the Father whose divinity is the 'source without a source'. The Son and the Holy Spirit acquire their Divine Personhood through the Father, who is the unifying force of the Trinity. However, the three Persons in the Godhead are still One in Substance, shared equally by all three.

Moltmann, J. (2007) writes that the unity of the Trinity in *perichoresis* is within a relationship of love, the three Persons enjoying mutual communion in their eternal glory. The unity of the Trinity is constructed by the Father, centred in the Son, and enlightened through the Spirit. Kilby, K. (2000, 438) suggests a three-stage process to understand perichoresis:

> First, a concept, perichoresis, is used to name what is not understood, to name whatever it is that makes the three Persons one. Secondly, the concept is filled out rather suggestively with notions borrowed from our own experience of relationships and relatedness. And then, finally, it is presented as an exciting resource Christian theology has to offer the wider world in its reflections upon relationships and relatedness.

Yu, Tat-sum 余達心 (2012) further points out that the essence of God's Being harbours a mysterious union. The mystery lies in the fact that even though the unity is complete, it does not abolish the individuality of the Divine Persons within, but allows them to be preserved in love. Not only is the integrity of the individual preserved, but it is made whole in the unity. The unity of the 'One' in the Trinity is a unity that preserves the individuality of the 'Three'.

In *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, LaCugna, C. M. (1991) states that it is not possible to conduct an analysis on the 'internal' content of God in a theology of the Immanent Trinity. Rather, getting to know the Triune God is a discourse tracing God's self-revelation through the history of salvation. The Immanent Trinity is being revealed

through the Economic Trinity and the Economic Trinity manifests the Immanent Trinity. The attribute of unity within the Trinity is manifested in its internal and external coherence, and the consistency of God's internal relationships and external actions.

Barth, K. (1957) writes that the substance of God is revealed in His actions, and his actions are contained in His substance. He concludes that the internal Self (Substance) and the external (Work) are both revealed in God. The internal aspects concern the relationship of the Father, Son, and the Spirit and the external concerns their relationship with the external world.

2.3.3.3 Outwardness of the Trinity

Social Trinitarian theology emphasises that God is a relational God and extends His relationships by His creation of humans. As LaCugna, C. M. (1991, 225) writes:

> An Immanent Trinitarian theology, in other words, cannot be an analysis of what is "inside" God, but a way of thinking and speaking about the structure or pattern of God's self-expression in Salvation history.

In this section, I discuss the concept of outwardness of the Trinity by considering the outward flow of God's substantial abundance, the sending nature of the Trinity, and how God transcends his infinity of self through self-limitation.

God is rich in His nature, the embodiment of which flows outwards. Yuen, Hoi-san 袁海生 (2004) portrays God's selfless love within the three Persons of the Trinity overflowing and moving out towards humans. The Triune God took the initiative to enter His created Time-Space through Incarnation, to dwell in the fallen world, in order to reinstate the broken relationships resulting from human sin. Salvation is the ultimate outflow of God's great love.

The outward focus of the Trinity is seen in the outward cascading of God's abundant love. Grudem, W. (2000, 199) describes this outward pouring as one of the attributes of the Trinity. He writes:

God's love means that God eternally gives of himself to others. This definition understands love as self-giving for the benefit of others. This attribute of God shows that it is part of his nature to give of himself in order to bring about blessing or good for others.

Zizioulas, J. (1975) describes the concept of personhood in 'Ekstasis', a term widely used in the mystical writings of Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus. Zizioulas, J. (1975, 408) defines Ekstasis as: 'Standing out from, a movement towards communion, a movement of affirmation of the other, a freedom from the whole, freedom for oneself in one's own particularity as bearer of the whole.'

Woods, P. (2015, 155-56) uses the term 'cascading' to describe the outward flow of God's abundance as a natural result of his essential nature. He writes:

> Cascading is important in any theological and missiological response to [Others], and there are several different aspects of it. Simply put, the idea is that certain aspects of God's nature (Otherness, community), character (love, mercy, justice), experience (rejection by His people and liminality), and action (care for the lost and disadvantaged) cascade down from Him, outward and downward to the community of YHWH faith, and then further down into and towards the wider world. It is as if the Godhead is the primary source and from Him through Christ come blessing and obligation to Israel and later the church. The community of faith is to be a pipe rather than a bucket, and pass on good things from God to the world that He cares for. The church takes on this Otherness and liminality as a community which draws from God at its centre and shares life with those around it.

Aspects of God's nature cascade to His church, encouraging His people to do likewise.

Another characteristic of the outwardness of the Trinity is the 'sending' nature of the Triune God. Gunton, C. (2003, 51) writes: 'The essence of God's love is its outgoingness, that is, a dynamic reaching out to the Others.' God's Being is a Being-for-the-Other.

Bevans, S. and Schroeder, R. P. (2011) see the Church as an outward flow of God's sending of the Son and the Spirit. In Acts 1:8, before He ascends to heaven, Jesus sent His disciples to be His witnesses through the power of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The Apostle John also writes: 'I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts

the one who sent me…As the Father has sent me, I am sending you' (John 13:20; 20:21b).

God is a 'sending God'. The Father sent the Son, and the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, through the Church, sends missionaries to share the Good News with Others. These series of acts of sending demonstrate the attribute of outwardness of the Triune God. Fiddes, P. (2000, 6) writes, 'There is no other God than one who is open to others in outward-going love and the God who makes communion in the world must already be communion.' This outwardness shows a God who steps out of himself for the sake of the other.

In *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Bosch, D. (1991) presents the following model of ecumenical mission. Mission is the fellowship of the church with people, the mission of God (*missio Dei*), the communication of God's salvation, the search for righteousness, evangelism, contextualisation, liberation, access to culture, common witness, the ministry of all God's people, witness to people of other faiths, theology, and acting in hope. It is a ministry to all God's people, it is witnessing to people of other faiths, it is theology, it is walking in hope. All these reflect the diversity and richness of contemporary inquiry and expansion of the meaning of mission. In *The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary*, Stott, J. (1975) discusses the role and responsibilities of the Church in Mission and concludes that mission 'requires the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world.'[16] Every believer is obliged to live out his or her mission in a holistic way. In two books, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (2006) and *the Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (2010), Christopher Wright uses biblical narratives to highlight 'God as God in mission' on one hand and emphasise the church's identity as a 'missional people' on the other. He (2006, 2010) argues that when the church

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[16] https://lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-3#6

reconceives God as God in mission and the church as a missional people and embraces the created world as a mission field, the change in worldview will produce an unparalleled mission dynamic.

Karl Barth coined the term of *missio Dei* (the mission of God in the world) at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932. McPhee, A. (2001) writes that Barth thought 'the term "mission" was an expression of the doctrine of the Trinity in the early Church, namely the expression of the Divine sending forth of self, the sending of the Son and Holy Spirit to the world.'[17]

LaCugna, C. M. (1991, 401-02) states that, 'the mission, the "being sent forth" of every Christian, is the same as the mission of Christ and the Spirit: to do the will and work of God, to proclaim the good news of Salvation, to bring peace and concord, to justify hope in the final return of all things to God.'

McGrath, A. (2011) describes the discourse of Christ's kenoticism as widely used to refer to Christ 'emptying Himself' of the attributes of divinity by leaving them behind, or by setting them aside. God's attribute of outwardness, through limiting Himself, shows that He 'transcends His transcendence', going beyond transcendence. Despite being sovereign over all creation, God transcends His transcendence by allowing Himself to live under limitations. Jesus demonstrated this by following a path from infinity to finiteness, from heaven to earth, from king to servant, from eternity to death, from death to resurrection, and from humility to glory (Philippians 2: 6-11).

Moltmann, J. (1993) uses Isaac Luria's doctrine of 'Zimsum' to present the 'outward' aspect of God, which describes God contracting himself for the purpose of creating the world. Moltmann, J. (1993, 109) writes: 'In order to create something "outside" himself, the infinite God must have made room for this finitude beforehand, "in

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[17] Cited from Art McPhee (2001) The *missio Dei* and the Transformation of the Church. *Vision. Pp*
Karl Barth, „Die Theologie und Die Mission in der Gegenwart", in: Zwischen den Zeiten
10, (3/1932), p. 189-215.

himself".' However, God is a transcendent God who can only go beyond transcendence by limiting Himself, so His first act of outwardness is a step 'inwards'. Moltmann, J. (1993, 110) continues: 'Every act outwards is preceded by an act inwards which makes the "outwards" possible... Creation in chaos and out of nothing, which is an act of power, is also a self-humiliation on God's part, a lowering of himself into his own impotence.'

God goes beyond transcendence through Creation, Incarnation, and Salvation. Yu, Tat-sum 余達心 (2012) believes that the incarnation of Christ is an act of God's outwardness, expressing His desire to embrace humanity; by becoming a man, Jesus dwelt among humans and sacrificed Himself on the cross for the purpose of redeeming humanity's broken relationship with God the Father. Yu, Tat-sum 余達心 (2015) further states that God goes beyond transcendence is shown in Christ's self-limitation through His Incarnation and Salvation.

Despite being limitless, the Triune God goes beyond transcendence by self-limitation through Creation, Incarnation, and Salvation. The attribute of outwardness is also expressed when Christ is sent out and voluntarily enters the world and is confined in time and space.

2.3.3.4 Embracing of the Trinity

The Trinity is united in love in Perichoresis. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit embrace one another internally. The Triune God also reaches out to embrace humanity, the 'Other' that He has created. Volf, M. (2007) notes that the Trinity maintains a non-self-isolating sense of identity as the Triune God reaches out and offers to embrace humanity. For example, unredeemed humanity, living in enmity to God, is lovingly embraced as the Other of God.

The Triune God's embrace is based on love and is focused outward to Others. Volf, M. (2007) argues that the self-sacrificing love of the Trinity must be imitated if one is to face a world of injustice. The Trinity models through self-sacrifice how to embrace and

engage others, even in the struggle for truth and justice. Despite its rejection of Christ, humanity was fully embraced by the Triune God at the Cross. Christ bridged the chasm between God and humanity when He allowed Himself to become like the created, in order to embrace the created.

Building on the foundation of the Trinity's sacrificial love, Volf, M. (2007) summarises the embracing process in four steps. The first is the 'Opening of the Arms', signifying the welcoming of the other with the body, representing dissatisfaction with one's own self-isolated identity and at the same time implying a desire for the Other. The second step is 'Waiting'. When reaching out with open arms to Others, one must wait before touching the Other. This allows the Other to respond voluntarily. Without reciprocity (e.g., between God and human, God within Himself, and between human and human) there can be no complete embrace as two pairs of arms are needed. The third step is the 'Closing of the Arms', the completion of the embrace. In an embrace, the host is the guest, but the guest is also the host. Each party needs to enter the space of the Other, to feel the presence of the Other within oneself, and to have one's own presence felt by the Other. The last step is the 'Opening of the Arms' once again. As a final act of embrace, the re-opening the arms emphasises that while the Other may be deeply rooted in one's heart, the Other's otherness cannot be offset by merging the two into an undivided 'we'. Therefore, the Other must be free to leave so that the otherness can be preserved. In a true embrace, one must preserve one's own identity in the embracing process. These four elements of embracing proposed by Volf describe the attribute of Embracing of the Trinity.

Jesus Christ's embrace of sinners was not forced, but He willingly laid down His life because of His determination to embrace His enemies. Volf, M. (2007) describes the cross as where God gave up His ego to break the power of human sin and hatred without violence and to embrace humanity with Divine communion.

Moltmann, J. (1974) states that God cannot be forced into suffering, but was willing to experience it for the greater good. A God who is unable to suffer is a flawed and incomplete God. The Triune God also gives a choice to the Other as to whether to accept this embrace. The self-determination of Christ to suffer on the Cross to forgive humanity enabled the Triune God to embrace humanity and offer Salvation. In Fiddes, P.'s book, *The Creative Suffering of God* (1988, 56), we read, 'God risks himself, so to speak, with the Nothing; he opens himself and pours himself out into nothing ... and in giving himself in this way he places himself in jeopardy... but a God who securely hoarded his Being would be no God and perhaps nothing at all.' The Triune God embraces the other through suffering, and in so doing expresses his complete love.

In an exegesis on the parable of the Prodigal Son from the Gospel of Luke, Volf, M. (2007) demonstrates the unconditional embrace of the father towards his two sons. The elder son enjoys a higher status and responds to a world with fixed rules. However, when the father overturns the rules, the elder son becomes angry with him. Volf, M. (2007) further adds that the father refuses to be bound by the moral norms of his elder son and changes the rules in his embrace of the younger son. However, the father also reminds his elder son that whatever the father owns belongs to him. The father is renegotiating his own identity in light of his sons' identity changes, consistent with Ting-Toomey, S.'s (2015) Identity Negotiation Theory (INT), allowing broken identities and damaged relationships to be rebuilt.

In the above parable, the father sees the restoration of his relationships with his sons as more important than any external moral regulations. With unconditional love, the father suffers through broken relationships with both his sons, yet stands in the gap to help them to reconcile as brothers again. In a polarised and broken relationship, Volf stresses the importance of embracing 'neither side'; this embrace does not choose sides and is not the same as avoidance. It involves placing oneself in the midst of a complex

and broken relationship, risking vulnerability, and embracing the other unconditionally as Jesus did on the cross.

2.3.4 The Trinity as Mediator

The Trinity acts as Mediator in both Creation and Salvation. In his theory of Creation, Gunton, C. (2009, 8) writes of the relationship between God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in terms of mediation theology: 'The Son and the Holy Spirit are expressed as mediators of God's creative action.' Gunton emphasises that the Son, the Word of God, acted as the Mediator when He became flesh and lived among humans.

2.3.4.1 Act of Mediation in the Scriptures

Gunton, C. (2009) points to God's mediation of Divine Action as the way He carried out His work of Creation. Through mediation the Creator God reveals Himself to the world. Gunton, C. (2009) quotes passages from the Old Testament to support his idea that mediation can be found in the Creation account. For example, in Psalm 33, one reads: 'For He spoke and it came to be, He commanded and it stood firm.' God the Father created the world through the Word (the Son), and He gave life to humanity through His breath (the Holy Spirit). For Gunton, the Holy Spirit is not only represented as mediator during God's creation, but also in the act of renewal (Titus 3:5). He also believes that John's use of 'Word' (Logos) in John 1:1 portrays Christ as Mediator, as 'in the beginning there was the Word, and the Word with God, and the Word was God'. In her book, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*, Tanner, K. (2001, 36) claims:

> In order for the whole of the human and natural worlds to be perfected with God's own gifts, they must be assimilated to this perfect relation between God and the created world in Christ, by way of him. Indeed, the Word, with the Spirit, sent by the Father, has, since the beginning of the world in diverse fashions, been working for the embodiment of God's goodness in it.

She writes, 'living our lives in Christ according to the mode of the Son, should involve … our own service to that mission, spreading the gifts of the Father that are ours

in Christ, empowered by the Son's own Spirit' (2001, 68). In creation, redemption and interaction with the human beings He has created, the Triune God connects with one another and with the Other as a mediator.

2.3.4.2 The Two 'Hands' of the Trinity as Mediator

The Theology of Mediation is based on Irenaeus (130-202 AD), who saw the Son and the Holy Spirit as the two Hands of the Father (Gunton, C., 2009). Through these two Hands, God created the world, and with them God sacrificed His only Son, reconciling humanity to God and granting Salvation to all who believe.

According to Gunton, C. (2009), the works of the Incarnate Christ show that the God of Creation is also the God of Salvation. The Triune God creates, then acts as Mediator to save the world He created.

The Son, Jesus Christ, is the mediator between God and humans to reconcile sinful humanity to the holy Triune God. The apostle Paul writes: 'For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.' (1 Timothy 2: 5-6). The apostle Paul continues to describe Christ in Colossians 1:19-20:

> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him [the Son], and through Him [the Son] to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.

Gunton, C. (2009) maintains that the Holy Spirit is also a mediator to create reconciliation between two estranged parties by drawing humanity to the Father through Jesus Christ. Humans can come to the presence of the Father through the Son only after their hearts are moved by the Spirit.

2.3.5 Dynamic Nature of the Trinity

The Triune God is not static, but exists in a dynamic relationship within the three individual Persons in the Godhead.

McCormack, B. (2008, 242) writes about God's dynamic unchanging nature as such:

> The best that the tension-filled witness of the Old Testament can give us is the rather formal statement that God remains what He is precisely in the changes He undergoes. How God can do this is a question left unanswered until the appearance in history of the One who is both God and human, the living God who remains Himself even as He lives a fully human life, suffers, and dies, and is raised for our salvation.

In this section, I will review the dynamic nature within the Trinity and how this is expressed as God interacts with humanity.

2.3.5.1 Immutability vs. Change

Lau, Lee Yii 劉利宇 (2019) writes that the philosophical concept of the Trinity in traditional theology emphasised the ontological, immutable nature of God. This interpretation, influenced by Greek philosophy, focused on the Oneness of God and saw Him as a non-involved and unchangeable 'Supreme Substance'.

Modern theologians, Barth, K. (1958), Moltmann, J. (1981), Zizioulas, J. (1985), and Volf, M. (1998) argue against this traditional interpretation of God as it neglects the relational nature of Him who is both One and Three. They describe the Trinity in terms of a social and relational ontology, a dynamic relationship which is adjusting and changing as the three Persons interact with One another and with humans. Grenz, S. (1994, 76) writes:

> At the heart of the Christian's understanding of God is the declaration that God is triune – Father, Son, and Spirit. This means that in his eternal essence the one God is a social reality, the social Trinity. Because God is the social Trinity, a plurality in unity, the ideal for humankind does not focus on solitary persons, but on persons-in-community.

The dynamic nature of the Trinity is shown when God expresses emotions like regret, which results in a change of attitude or action. When humans feel regret, it is because they have recognised that they have done wrong. One cannot view God's emotion of regret in this way. Barth, K. (1958) argues that it is foolish to think of the ways God changes on the same level as a human's regret leading to repentance. Such a perception does not glorify God, but blasphemes and ultimately denies Him. God's regret is

motivated by His nature and His love and results in changes in His actions as He provides

a way to save sinful humans. Likewise, Lau, Lee Yii 劉利宇 (2019) claims that God's

unchangeability or immutability does not equal immobility. One must not confuse the

two, for otherwise, the Christian God is no different from a human-made idol that cannot

save. Fiddes, P. (2006, 386) argues that:

> While theological metaphysics affirmed the essential immutability of God as
> 'beyond Being', the idea of perichoresis in the Trinity kept alive, within the
> theological system itself, a challenge to any image of God as a dominating authority
> whose power lies in immobility and in being secure from being affected by the
> changing world. Perichoresis was, however, envisaged somewhat differently in
> East and West. Using the metaphor of the dance (which is admittedly anachronistic,
> but a useful interpretive tool), we might say that the Eastern account was a kind of
> "progressive" dance in which participants move outside the inner circle of dancers
> to make contact with others, and then come back in again, bringing other dancers
> with them. Among Eastern theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries God the
> Father was celebrated as the origin (arche) or the fountainhead of the communion
> of persons in God.

Moltmann, J. (1993) continues that a purely philosophical understanding of God is

incomplete and he introduces the dynamic relationship between the Divine Persons and

Others into his doctrine of the Trinity. This is based on the Bible narrative which

encompasses God's passion towards Others, self-limitation in Incarnation, and suffering

on the cross.

2.3.5.2 Being and Becoming

In his book, *God's Being is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology

of Karl Barth*, Jungel, E. (2001) states that God's being is in a process of constantly

becoming. Jungel, E. (2001, 139) asserts that:

> God is at one and the same time the interruption of the coherence of being and its
> intensification; and, therefore, the correspondence between person (mind) and
> reality, which occurs in all true knowledge, means, in the case of knowledge of
> God, a gain to being which at the level of practice makes more possible in the
> actuality of the world than that actuality is capable of granting to itself. If God's
> being is in becoming, then for us, too, more is possible.

Lee, Kam-Lun 李錦綸 (2004, 219) argues that God's Personhood contains both

'Being and Becoming'; Being indicates God's unchanging nature, and Becoming shows

His nature which 'exists-to-relate'. The dynamic nature of the Trinity (Becoming) is expressed in the Incarnation of the Son and His interaction with humans.

The Orthodox Church does not use terms such as Economic/Immanent to describe the Trinity. Rather, the terms 'God's essence' and 'energy' are used. They also use the word 'communion' to describe the relationship between God and humankind. Lossky, V. (1991, 70), an Orthodox theologian, describes the differences between God's essence and energy as:

> [The] distinction is that between the essence of God or His nature, properly so-called, which is inaccessible, unknowable, and incommunicable; and the energies or divine operations, forces proper to and inseparable from God's essence, in which He goes forth from Himself, manifests, communicates, and gives Himself.

God's essence (Being) is unchangeable, but His energies or divine actions (Becoming) show His dynamic nature. Lossky, V. (1991, 67-68) quotes the Byzantine theologian Evagrius Ponticus (346-399 AD), who asserted that:

> [T]o know the mystery of the Trinity in its fullness is to enter into perfect union with God and to attain to the deification of the human creature: in other words, to enter into the Divine life, the very life of the Holy Trinity, and to become, in the Apostle Peter's words, "partakers of the Divine nature".

This deification process involves humankind's constant transformation. God is willing to allow people to participate in His presence and to be transformed by His 'energy'.

2.3.5.3 Actualisation of God's Kingdom

The dynamic Trinity can also be understood by considering the actualisation of God's Kingdom. Moltmann, J. (1996) states that in the Christian view, the end time is the actualisation of the kingdom of God, while Gunton, C. (2009) proposes a dynamic view of creation with an eschatological dimension. He noted that when God finished Creation, He saw that it was good. This does not mean that the creation was already in a perfect state, but that it had the potential to reach perfection under the guidance of the Spirit, giving glory to God. The kingdom of God encompasses the 'already' and the 'not yet'.

In his book, T*he Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1977), Moltmann, J. introduces Charismatic Ecclesiology. According to Moltmann, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life, possessing Divine creativity and initiating a dynamic transformation in individual believers, the Christian community, and the world. This transformation liberates the believer and brings rebirth and sanctification. Finally, the Holy Spirit also empowers His people to reach out and minister to Others to fulfil God's mission and the actualisation of His Kingdom.

Moltmann, J. (2009) desires that Christians change their thinking from 'the Kingdom of God is Church-oriented' to 'the Church is Kingdom-of-God-oriented'. The Kingdom of God does not exist for the Church; rather the Church should exist for God and His Kingdom. This actualisation is not accomplished through the strength of humans, but is a dynamic process, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the discourse around Identity, the Self, and the Other in both sociological and philosophical literature, and examined the development of identity theories and identity construction. It also presented the manifestation of identity in cultural, social, ethnic, and religious domains. I reviewed the malleability of identity using identity negotiation theories and hybrid identity theories. Turning to philosophical literature, I presented and critiqued the theories of three major philosophers, which revealed that identity is inseparable from a relationship with the Other. The philosophers brought the issue of identity to the realms of ethics, morality, and religion. For the purposes of this study, the discourse on identity is no longer regarded only as a social phenomenon, but also has philosophical aspects. The sociological and philosophical theories provided an overall theoretical framework for this research.

After reviewing the sociological and philosophical perspectives on identity, I found several limitations. Firstly, sociological theories helped me to effectively observe and interpret the construction of Chinese missionaries' identities and the challenges they encounter with the other in the cross-cultural sphere. However, they did not provide any solutions to these problems. Secondly, the philosophy of Self and Other can present the ethical and latent spiritual aspirations of the human heart, but is also unable to propose a concrete framework that can be put into practice by missionaries in the mission field. Thirdly, as the Chinese missionaries are Christians, sociology and philosophy still lack a doctrinal perspective and a normative approach in the practice of faith.

In view of these limitations, I explored how the theological perspective of the Trinitarian attributes can be contextualised for Chinese missionaries in terms of identity construction and service to the mission Others. Through the relational, outward, embracing, mediating, and dynamic attributes of the Triune God, the unity in diversity of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) within Himself is manifested in love. This also is manifested in the relationship between God and the human beings He has created. Such qualities can serve as an inspiration for the construction of a Chinese missionary's identity. As in the theoretical framework mentioned in Chapter One, the attributes of the Triune God will become reflective and responsive elements in the construction of the Chinese missionary identity.

<div align="center">**Chapter Three**</div>

<div align="center">**Research Methodology**</div>

Introduction

This chapter describes the choice of the methods and discusses them from practical, theoretical, and philosophical angles. The chapter is divided into five sections:

o   Research Methodology and Selection

o   Researcher and Participants

o   Research Data Collection and Analysis

o   Research Validity and Reliability

o   Research Ethics

This study aims to explore the identity construction of Chinese missionaries and how their identity affects their relationships and interactions with Others. In this chapter, I explain why I utilise narrative inquiry and the limitations of this method. Secondly, I describe my role and background as the researcher and the background of the participants. I also describe how the data was collected, processed, and analysed and then explain how I keep the validity and reliability of this method. Finally, I show how this thesis strictly follows the academic requirements and processes of academic ethics.

3.1.0 Research Methodology and Selection

Confucius once said: 'A workman must (first) sharpen his tools if he is to do his work well.' 論語: 衛靈公 (The Analects of Confucius Wei Ling Gong, 549-493 B.C.). Good tools and methods are a prerequisite for doing a job well. This thesis utilises qualitative research methodology to explore the challenges that the missionaries faced when interacting with Others (such as language barriers, cultural conflicts, team disagreements,

political restraints, and backgrounds of faith), and to find the reasons as well as the causal relations between them.

3.1.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methods were chosen to explore and understand the feelings and inner world of the Chinese missionaries. Qualitative research methods were chosen over quantitative ones because it would be difficult to describe the missionaries' emotions and their complex relationships in an objective, statistical way. Qualitative research is based on the missionaries' direct behaviour, reactions, and the interpretations of those actions. For Shi, Wenling 施文玲 (2016), experiencing a process is the most effective approach to understanding it. Hence, qualitative research emphasises the depth and complexity of a phenomenon. Chien, Chun-An 簡春安 and Chou, Pi-I 鄒平儀(2004) point out that there are five elements of qualitative research:

o   Entering an unfamiliar social milieu;

o   Staying in a situation without control or formal authority;

o   Keeping the conceptualization and theoretical construction at a low level;

o   Describing a complex social phenomenon;

o   Forming a new concept or hypothesis.

Narrative inquiry was chosen as the main methodology to understand and describe the missionaries' past experiences and how their complex social milieu was formed.

3.1.1.1 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a social science approach to understanding lived experience which uses storytelling. It focuses on the subjectivity of lived experience and language as a tool for personal experience and the presentation of self-reality. Narrative inquiry examines language, storytelling and narrative, and the revelations and implications for individuals and society. Using this method, I organise and construct a narrative based on a person's

lived experience in a context or a series of related contexts, over a period of time (Clandinin, D. J. and Connelly, F. M., 2003). According to Riessman, C. A. (1993), narrative inquiry is not necessarily orderly, nor does it fit with any set of disciplinary rules as it is interdisciplinary by nature. Clandinin, D. J. and Connelly, F. M. (2003) also write that narrative inquiry helps tackle complex situations and link fragmented stories and experiences together. As I studied the transformation of a missionary going from a familiar and relatively monocultural context into an entirely different cross-cultural community, the method of narrative inquiry enabled me to enter and explore the missionaries' inner worlds as they responded to transitions in their outer world. This research included in-depth interviews, participation observation, data collection, and analysis as part of the narrative inquiry.

Cai, Dunhao 蔡敦浩 (2011) summarised six necessary steps of narrative inquiry: asking questions to probe critical issues, collecting experiences, analysing narration, producing narrative text, mining for repeated patterns or themes, and summarising the research topics. Based on these six steps, I designed open-ended questions based on my literature review and the participants' backgrounds (see Appendix One). Secondly, through in-depth interviews, I collected information on the participants' cross-cultural experiences in the field. I then analysed the data using the domains of culture, social networks, ethnicity, and religion. From this analysis, I was able to draw out the storyline for each participant through narrative analysis and look for critical themes created by this narrative. The summary of the findings and analyses are presented in Chapters Four and Five.

3.1.1.2 Narrative and Identity

Riessman, C. A. (1993) states that one's life can be rediscovered or reshaped through storytelling. Narrative inquiry is the process of interpreting and tracing the origin of one's identity. Ricoeur, P. (2013) stresses that one's identity cannot be separated from one's

relationships, and so the narrative inquiry process was used to describe the situations faced by the Chinese missionaries as they interacted with Others. The relationship between the missionaries' own identity and interaction with Others creates a narrative of their challenges as they transition to a different culture and face new uncertainties. Hu, Shaojia 胡紹嘉 (2008) states that a narrative is an important way to expose the existential meaning of humanity, since human existence is not fixed but an entity that can be continuously reconstructed and reshaped.

3.1.1.3 Narrative and Context

Clandinin, D. J. and Connelly, F. M. (2003) consider narrative inquiry as one method of empirical research. Since narrative inquiry describes life experiences through narrated stories, they point out that it should have three dimensions:

o The interactions between individual and society, and between internal and external forces.

o The temporal continuity between past, present, and future.

o The context of the local culture.

Utilising Clandinin and Connelly's three dimensions, one can identify the emotions and behaviours of Chinese missionaries in their personal interactions with others. One can also explore how their past experiences have influenced their present and future possibilities. Finally, one can assess how the missionary's presence in a cross-cultural context affects their lives and ministries.

In addition to the three different dimensions of narrative inquiries discussed by Clandinin and Connelly, Hermanns, H. (1995) adds that three questions should be posed concerning the features of the narrative: How did everything start? How did things develop? And what are the outcomes? Missionaries begin their journeys of encountering Others as soon as they enter their mission fields. Their life and work become a process of entering other people's lives and cultures, involving interaction between the individual

and the society, and between their inner world and external surroundings. Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995) notes that the narrative form of storytelling preserves the complexity and traceability of related human activities in their temporal sequence. When these events are put together and organised into one entity, they become a narrative.

Narrative inquiry is useful for understanding changes in identity, as it allows the researcher to explore the field, habitus, and capitals (Bourdieu, 1979) of the missionaries by recording and analysing their stories.

Furthermore, I can evaluate the impact of the missionaries' initial entrance into the mission field based on the missionary's past, present, and future.

3.1.1.4 Narrative and Interpretation

Concerning Ricoeur's view on narratives and interpretation, Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2007, 4) remarks: 'To discuss narrative is to discuss history. When we think about the concept of self, this self comes with a history, and each self has certain narrative features, therefore the concept of self cannot exist without narratives.' When studying the experience of missionaries, I must construct a narrative of their histories and find the self in time-space. Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2007, 8) continues: 'The rise of hermeneutics is a feature of modern philosophy, and this is closely related to the concepts of the Self and the Other, since to discuss the relationship between the Self and the Other is to talk about the Self's interpretation of the Other'. Hence, I learn more about the missionary and Others through the analysis of their relationships by narrative inquiry.

3.1.1.5 Narratives and Theological Reflections

The narrative approach helps the researcher understand each individual's life experience and story and discover the various challenges encountered in lived experience. Therefore, in this study, I propose a new way of facing these difficulties in the life of faith through theological reflection. As Kinast, R. (1990, 3) writes:

Theological reflection is the discipline of exploring our individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage. The conversation is a genuine dialogue that seeks to hear from our own beliefs, actions, and perspectives, as well as from those of the tradition. It respects the integrity of both. Theological reflection therefore may confirm, challenge, clarify and expand how we understand our experience and how we understand the religious tradition. The outcome is new truth and meaning for living.

In addition to exploring how the identity of Chinese missionaries is constructed through qualitative narrative research and narrative inquiry, this thesis explores how four Trinitarian traits can be applied to help the missionary reflect and respond to Others in their cross-cultural situations.

The Chinese theologian, Song, Choan Seng 宋泉盛 (2017, 23) in his book, *Story Theology: In the Beginning Were Stories, Not Texts* (2017) points out that:

In the beginning, there was a story. Life began with the story. The whole universe began with the story. Creation began not with the Big Bang Theory, but with a story, an epic story about how God created the universe. God is the source of the story.

Therefore, based on the above, to reflect on the human created by God, it is necessary to return to God the Creator and His story.

Song, Choan Seng 宋泉盛 (2017, 45-69) goes a step further by stating that:

Theology and story are inextricably linked. There is theology in every story. A true story captures the depths of your heart, forces you to look deep into yourself and to observe humanity, and it also drives you to examine the relationship between you and others, man and nature, creation, and between man and God... The story invites us to reflect on the foundations of our existence, on who we are, on the world around us, and, more fundamentally, in reflecting on who God is and His nature. The story is the mother of theology.

The story brings to light what is happening in one's inner world, and reveals the hidden dimensions of one's heart. The dialogue between story and narrative theology produces a reflection of one's life in addition to changing and renewing one's life.

McAlpin, K. (2009, 7) writes: 'Theological reflection is a way of doing theology that starts from the experiences of life and leads to searching in faith, for deeper meaning, and for the living God. However, it is deciding how to live out of this reflective search that is the critical intention of the process of theological reflection.' By combining the

missionary's story with Trinitarian theological reflection, I explore how the missionaries might continually transform themselves through theological reflection. Steffen, T. A. (2019) depicts mission through intercultural narrative and links cross-cultural ministries to God's incarnational story. Theological reflection also allows me to interpret theology through narrative. Trokan, J. (1997, 144) indicates that:

> Theological reflection is an excellent tool to enable [researchers] to systematically explore life's experiences, to reflect critically upon their meaning, and to theologise explicitly about the God event in their lives in light of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

For all the Chinese missionaries serving cross-culturally, I analysed each of their cases, drew out their narrative and determined the basis of their identity. I then compared the basis of the missionary identity with my analysis of the four Trinitarian traits (see Chapter Six) as a theological reflection which provides recommendations for future missionaries as they prepare to cross cultures.

3.1.1.6 Conceptual Framework: Practical Theology

Practical theologians have terminology such as Pastoral Cycle or Four Tasks to analyse each situation. Paul Ballard and John Pritchard's (2006) 'Pastoral Cycle' includes Experience, Exploration, Reflection, and Action. Osmer, R.'s (2008, 4) 'Four Tasks' consist of empirical, interpretive, theological analysis in addition to application. Doong, Jia Hwa 董家驊 (2019a) employs approaches to practical theology similar to those described above, but he specifically adds culture to the analysis and addresses practical theology in the Chinese context. Doong focuses on the Chinese identity, with particularly the relationship between virtue and theology. Doong's extension of practical theology emphasises four steps in the process:

1) Describe the Moment: that describes the present and the external happenings.

2) Explore the Situation: that compares the findings with different perspectives to create a profound thick description (see Section 3.4.4).

3) Theological Reflection: performs a theological reflection on the first two steps. This can result in the formation of a paradigm change in which the missionary can better discern the nature of the Triune God and how that knowledge would affect their ministry.

4) Renewal of Practice: Lastly, application on how the missionary can demonstrate the sovereignty and heart of Triune God in their present context.

I utilised Doong's four steps in practical theology to explore the challenges the missionaries faced, using Trinitarian theology to analyse the missionaries' challenges, and, finally, putting forward the applications of renewal and practice. (See Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1 Four Steps in Practical Theology (Doong, Jia Hwa 董家驊, 2019a, 104)

3.1.1.7 Narrative Inquiry Limitations

While the narrative inquiry method can be effective in understanding the participants in a truthful and in-depth way, it also has limitations, which Cai, Dunhao 蔡敦浩, et al., (2011) point out. Firstly, qualitative research faces difficulties in data collection. Secondly, the process, including data collection and analysis, is time-consuming. And finally, the choice of the subject of the study has a decisive impact on the results.

There are also issues about ensuring the authenticity of the data collected. Some missionaries shared openly in their interviews whereas some were more reticent. It was also hard to determine how authentic they were as the cultural tendency is only to report

positive aspects while downplaying negative issues as per Zhang, Wei 張維 (2016). I could only use data from 52 out of 58 interviews. Finally, I asked open-ended questions and the missionary sometimes went off on tangents and some interviews lasted more than 3 hours without producing any usable stories.

Another limitation was having to do in-depth face to face interviews with missionaries in different parts of the world. Because relationships are important to the Chinese, it was a necessary but time-consuming process to build a mutually trusting relationship with the participants before the in-depth interview could be conducted. The missionary's personality also affected how they responded to the questions.

Lastly, since Chinese relationships are affected by Face (King, Yeochi 金耀基, 2013), are generally high in context, and utilise indirect communication, full authenticity of the narrative was hard to attain (Hall, E. T., 1989). I expended significant effort to ensure the participants felt comfortable sharing their real and complete stories in a natural way.

3.2.0 Researcher and Participants

3.2.1 The Researcher's Position

3.2.1.1 Intersubjectivity

According to Oxford Reference, intersubjectivity is: 'The process and product of sharing experiences, knowledge, understandings, and expectations with others…, the mutual construction of relationships through shared subjectivity.'[18] In addition, Husserl, E.'s (1970) theory of intersubjectivity emphasises that every individual has a transcendental self in the cognitive subject, which allows him or her to gain knowledge of the Other and

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[18] https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100008603 Access date: 2019-10-10

the Self to shape cognitive common ground or empathy. Husserl claims that each person lives in their own 'lifeworld,' and cannot apply their life world to analyse another's life. Intersubjectivity means that one cannot think of the other as a cognitive object under their control; one must see the world from the other's perspective. Buber, M. (1970) writes that intersubjectivity is based on an 'I and You' relationship, with an acknowledgement of the other and a commitment to listen and accept one another.

I applied the principles of intersubjectivity to construct a relationship with participants in which both the Self and the Other are intersubjective. In qualitative research, apart from phenomenological approaches, many other approaches borrow this concept to highlight the relation between the researcher and the participants. The researcher must see the participant as another subject and respect their free will to participate in the research. Only when there is a mutually respectful and intersubjective bond can the participant open his world of experience and present the truth of the phenomena.

As I was born and raised in Taiwan, my past life experiences have shaped 'me' as a subject that is different from others who were born and raised in mainland China. I can easily fall into the trap of seeing myself as the subject which studies and analyses the other—the object of my research. On the other hand, I was also brought up in a Chinese culture, which may also contribute to the risk of being blinded by the 'self'. Therefore, my self-awareness is essential in this research. During the interview process, I proactively reminded myself to hold onto the principle and relationships defined by intersubjectivity.

Hwang, Kwangkuo 黃光國 (2014) points out that both the researcher and the subjects have their own horizons due to their different life experiences. Intersubjectivity promotes mutual understanding through continuous communication and debates, resulting in the fusion of various horizons. From a practical point of view, the

intersubjectivity approach helped me acquire varied frames of reference in different methods.

3.2.1.2 Research Tools:

According to Cassell, C. (2005), a researcher is an instrument for research and Atieno, O. P. (2009) claims that the qualitative researcher is the primary means of data collection and analysis. Esterberg, K. G. (2001) points out that during the process, the researcher's character, and relationship and interaction with the participants, will affect the progress of the research. These factors will together determine the data and information perceptible and collectable by the researcher. Based on this concept, there is a close relationship between how I see my role as a researcher and my participation in developing the function of the research tools. My self-understanding and my effort to build trust with participants naturally are crucial to the interviews.

3.2.1.3 Emic and Etic

Punch, K. F. (1998) writes that a researcher must be a participating observer. On the one hand, the researcher must wholeheartedly participate in the activity or phenomenon like an insider; on the other hand, the researcher must sometimes act like an outsider and observe from an objective point of view. The researcher stands between the two positions: first, as an insider (Emic), then as an outsider (Etic), and vice versa. Hennink, M. (et al., 2011) points out that the Emic viewpoint comes from people's perception and beliefs, and reflects cultural meanings that people attach to specific historical incidents. The Etic viewpoint interprets the views and opinions from an outside perspective. I have attended a few conferences organised by Chinese sending agencies, during which I listened to the sharing and reports of the missionaries from an outsider's point of view. However, during conversations over meals, I could dialogue with the missionaries about their time on the

mission field. I asked questions to encourage them to develop more awareness and to help them express their views. I also occasionally shared my similar experiences. Thus, I was accepted as an insider in those situations.

Mason, J. (2002) claims that to have a comprehensive observation, the researcher must invest in various kinds of participation and communication and a range of other forms of thinking.

3.2.1.4 Reflexive Researcher

Hertz, R. (1997) stresses that a reflexive researcher not only reports simple facts or truth, but also actively constructs the interpretations of one's experience in the field and questions the origin of these interpretations. Bourdieu, P. (1999, 608) also states that: 'Only... a reflex reflexivity based on craft, on a sociological "feel" or "eye", allows one to perceive and monitor on the spot, as the interview is actually taking place, the effects of the social structure within which it is occurring.' As Etherington, K. (2004, 19) states:

> Reflexivity is [....] an ability to notice our responses to the world around us, other people, and events, and to use that knowledge to inform our actions, communications, and understandings. To be reflexive we need to be aware of our personal responses and to be able to make choices about how to use them. We also need to be aware of the personal, social, and cultural contexts in which we and others live and work and to understand how this impact on the ways we interpret our world.

I used a reflexive approach to understanding and interpreting the participants' stories. This applied not only to the interviews with the participants, but also to my interpretation of their stories. I used a reflexive perspective to construct a more comprehensive narrative of the Chinese missionaries, which included their culture, social context, and religious background.

3.2.2 The Researcher's Background

3.2.2.1 Researcher's Family Background

My family background is complex. My father was born into an overseas Chinese family in Indonesia in 1917 and sent to mainland China by my grandfather to study medicine. By the time my father finished his studies in 1940, the Sino-Japanese war had started. He was recruited by the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and served in the military as a doctor. Eight years of war ended with the unconditional surrender of the Japanese armed forces. However, the KMT and Communist parties switched from fighting the Japanese to fighting each other for power and a civil war ensued. In 1949, when the KMT lost to the Communist Party, my father fled to Taiwan, and I was born there in 1962.

Taiwan also has a multicultural history. In addition to the indigenous culture, the Dutch colonised it from 1624-62 and then Taiwan was ruled by the Japanese for fifty years from 1895-1945. As I grew up in Taiwan, I had a deep sense that even though I was native-born, I carried the identity of a foreigner and was treated as a stranger. Because the political power was held by the KMT army, I belonged politically to the 'mainstream of power' group. But for a long time, I was called a 'mainlander' or an outsider, because both my parents migrated to Taiwan from mainland China, and we did not speak the local dialect. Therefore, I felt marginalised and was vulnerable in my early years. My experience of growing up gave me a deep understanding of the roles that growth, life experience, society, and politics can play in our identity construction.

3.2.2.2 Researcher's Cultural Background

I am Chinese by ethnicity, but not by nationality. Even though I share many cultural values with the participants, I was not truly one of them. I did not experience any of the PRC historical events, such as the liberation of China by the Communist Party in 1949, the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, and the Reform and Opening programme which reconnected the country with the rest of the world which began in 1978.

My timeline started in Taiwan, where the traditional Chinese heritage was preserved. From 1985 to 1994, I studied and worked in the USA and had my first cross-

cultural experiences there. From 1994 to 2006, I lived in Singapore, a diverse society with multiple ethnic groups, religions, and cultures, which gave me first-hand experience of living in a globalised and multicultural country. From 2006 to 2016, I ministered in Hong Kong, a city with mixed Chinese and British cultures. I witnessed Hong Kong society's many attempts to respond to its post-colonial identity, and different generations' struggles since Hong Kong's return to China in 1997. In the past thirty years, I have had many cross-cultural experiences, each one bringing new challenges and new insights. My understanding of my own identity was also stretched and transformed. My background allowed me to understand and empathise with the expatriate Chinese missionaries who participated in my study, and while interviewing them I was both an insider and an outsider.

3.2.2.3 Researcher's Professional Background

I am a missionary myself and have served in an international mission agency for the past 27 years. This agency has over 150 years of history, with missionaries from over 20 countries involved in cross-cultural ministries in East Asia. In the past, my main responsibility was to lead a team of over 400 missionaries, mostly working in and around China. Now, as a mission mentor and educator as I journey with missional churches and local sending agencies in their leadership development and cross-cultural ministries. As a missionary, I have experienced many challenges in my relationships within multicultural teams and target host cultures and feel well qualified to relate to the participants' stories from an insider position and share their emotions, and also examine the identify challenges faced by Chinese missionaries from an outsider perspective. During the interviews, I was challenged to set aside my own worldview and listen to the participants' voices and stories from their perspectives. In this way, once I put aside my 'experienced' missionary identity, I was able to encourage the participants to share their stories in a natural and relaxed environment.

3.2.3 The Participants

3.2.3.1 Participants' Background

In my research, the participants are all Han Chinese missionaries of varying ages, genders, education, and church backgrounds (See Tables 3.1 and 3.2). They were all working in cross-cultural ministries, either domestically or overseas. Some of the participants were sent by local mission agencies while others were sent by their home churches or commissioned by overseas mission agencies.

3.2.3.2 Limitations of Participant Selection

The participants of this study were chosen in three different ways:

1. They were recommended by local Chinese mission agencies.

2. They were recommended by other missionaries.

3. They were missionaries whom I already knew.

As I started the interviews, I discovered new challenges. Since the missionaries were of different ages with differing social and theological backgrounds, and working in cross-cultural contexts in different cultures, the information collected from them might not be representative of all Chinese missionaries. Secondly, as the missionary movement in China is still in its infancy, missionaries with varying lengths of service may react differently to their contexts. Thirdly, certain mission fields are in restricted access nations in which religion, social convention, and politics are extremely sensitive. Because China is also a restricted access sending country, yet another limitation is not having easy access to a large sample of Chinese missionaries.[19] Lastly, some participants, for different reasons (personality, safety concerns and reservations about my questions), were not able to be entirely open and transparent. When I was inviting people for in-depth interviews, people felt that the word 'interview' was too formal. Hence, to help the participants to

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[19] http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/access.htm Access date: 2019-10-12

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talk about their stories more naturally, I often told them that my main purpose of meeting them was to listen to their 'life stories'.

3.2.3.3 Basic Information of Participants

There was a total of 52 interviewees, of which 75% were missionaries sent from rural areas in China, and 25% from urban centres. The reason that the rural churches had more missionaries is due to their longer history of sending cross-cultural missionaries compared to newer urban churches.

The ages of the participants ranged from ages 24 to 60. Their educational backgrounds ranged from Middle School (up to ninth grade), Vocational Secondary School (up to tenth grade), High School (up to twelfth grade), and University to Post-graduate studies. Their lengths of service in missions ranged from two years to 16 years. The domestic missionaries were working with Tibetan Buddhists, Animists, and Islamic minority groups whereas those working internationally (mostly in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East) were working with Buddhist or Muslim people groups. (For more details, see Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below). All participants have been given an alias to protect their identity.

Table 3.1 Table of Domestic Cross-Cultural Workers

Alias	Gender	Age	Education*	Area of Service	Length of Service (in years)
Alex	M	39	Middle School	XJ	8
Brian	M	29	University	TB	6
Darren	M	37	Middle School	QH	5
Diane	F	32	Post-graduate	CN	5
Faith	F	41	Vocational HS	XJ	3
Frank	M	36	University	TB	9
Gloria	F	27	University	QH	5
Harry	M	39	University	TB	5
Jack	M	--	High School	CN	--
Joe	M	32	University	XJ	8
John	M	52	University	TB	15
Kevin	M	45	Vocational HS	XJ	3
Larry	M	39	Middle School	TB	10
Lucy	F	34	University	GX	2
Mary	F	30	University	TB	8
Mia	F	43	Middle School	XJ	4
Penny	F	34	Middle School	QH	5
Sean	M	48	Middle School	SC	5
Seth	M	--	High School	CN	--
Sherry	F	39	Vocational HS	TB	5
Steve	M	49	Middle School	XJ	14
Walter	M	43	Middle School	XJ	6

*Note:
Middle school = grades 7-9
High school = grades 10-12
Vocational High School is for ages 14-16 (equivalent to grades 8-10)

Table 3.2 Table of International Cross-Cultural Workers

Alias	Gender	Age	Education*	Area of Service	Length of Service (in years)
Andrew	M	28	Middle School	JD	6
Bob	M	35	Middle School	PK	12
Bonnie	F	24	University	JD	3
Carol	F	29	Post-graduate	JD	2
Charles	M	29	Middle School	PK	10
Daniel	M	30	Middle School	TK	6
Edward	M	36	Middle School	PK	10
Eva	F	33	Middle School	PK	13
Faye	F	32	Vocational HS	JD	4
George	M	--	--	TK	--
Holly	F	29	Vocational HS	AG	5
Iona	F	31	University	JD	8
Janelle	F	31	Middle School	PK	12
Jason	M	28	High School	PK	5
Jill	F	35	University	JD	16
Joshua	M	35	University	JD	15
Julia	F	34	Middle School	PK	10
Justin	M	45	Middle School	JD	5
Kirsty	F	--	University	KT	--
Lori	F	42	Middle School	JD	10
Matthew	M	33	University	ID	5
Parker	M	--	University	KT	--
Peter	M	32	Middle School	PK	12
Priscilla	F	60	High School	TH	4
Sally	F	38	Middle School	PK	10
Scott	M	31	Middle School	PK	12
Sophie	F	33	University	ID	5
Tom	M	--	--	JP	--
Tricia	F	32	Middle School	PK	12
Warren	M	29	Post-graduate	JD	2

*Note:
Middle school = grades 7-9
High school = grades 10-12
Vocational High School is for ages 14-16 (equivalent to grades 8-10)

3.2.3.4 Supplemental Participants

In addition to the Chinese missionaries (the participants of this study), I also interviewed six others from non-Chinese backgrounds (see Table 3.3), all senior missionaries from different international organisations with extensive experience of working together with Chinese missionaries. Through their participation, I was given a different perspective on this research. By using their outsider's perspective to compare and contrast with the narratives of Chinese missionaries, I was able to extract more verifiable information through the Triangulation method. I gathered their perceptions and knowledge of Chinese missionaries through open-ended in-depth interviews.

Table 3.3 Table of Third-Party Interviewees

Alias	Gender	Nationality	Length of Service	Type of ministry
SA	M	Malaysia	20	Minority people group
VD	M	Finland	20	Language acquisition
PP	M	USA	30	Member Care
NP	F	USA	30	Member Care
TB	M	Hong Kong SAR, China	12	Field Director[20]
JW	F	USA	15	Regional Leader[21]

3.3.0 The Collection and Analysis of Research Data

Clandinin, D. J. and Connelly, F. M. (2003) believe that the life experiences of the research participants are the subject of narrative inquiry. Therefore, the collection of data concerning these experiences forms the core of such an inquiry. The data appear in many different forms and the data provided on the mission field create a narrative that describes

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[20] Responsible for the leadership of a mission field, providing direction, strategy, support, and leadership to the team.

[21] Regional leaders are responsible for coordinating regional mission fields, and providing resources, information, and leadership.

recordable data, such as biographies, letters, conversations, and family history. These materials can collectively witness to a life story. The data collection for the missionaries' narratives consisted of in-depth interviews, mission diaries, prayer letters, mission reports, ministry testimonies, surveys, casual conversations during meals, and chats on social media. These materials were then woven into Chinese missionaries' narratives.

3.3.1 Data Collection

Data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group meetings, participant observations, and a survey to study the missionaries' responses to the Covid-19 epidemic. All the in-depth interviews were done face to face prior to the pandemic. If further clarification was needed, follow-up interviews were done virtually over WhatsApp, Signal, or Zoom.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967, 61-62) stressed that the researcher must keep sampling until:

- No more new data appear in any given category.

- The data in each category are so developed that the different parts are closely connected and demonstrate progress and variation.

- Relationships can be built between the different categories and are internally verified.

Following Glaser and Strauss' methodology, I did not stop sampling until the data reached theoretical saturation in each chosen category.

Data saturation is of critical importance in qualitative research as results are not theoretically complete without it. Despite noticing some repetition in the information shared by the thirty-fifth interview, each new interview still offered new ideas so the themes for the narrative could not be finalised. Therefore, I interviewed 23 more respondents, for a total of 58, to have a more comprehensive and representative

perspective. Based on the conditions of theoretical data saturation, I stopped collecting data at that point. However, in the end, I was only able to use data from 52 respondents as six participants did not answer the questions that were asked or were too emotionally distraught to finish the interview. The main reason for this was the hurt they had experienced during their ministry (including external pressure and cultural shock about their children being bullied in a foreign country). Although they were later unable to continue with the interviews, their experiences resonated with those of some who did complete the interviews.

3.3.1.1 In-Depth Interviews

Kahn, R. and Cannell, C. (1957) describe an interview as a type of purposeful conversation. The advantage of in-depth interviews is that the participants can offer rich data and answer sensitive questions. A trusting relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee influences the topics that may be discussed. The interviewer should observe the participants' reactions and adjust the approach accordingly and maintain their objectivity. I personally conducted all the in-depth interviews to explore and gather the missionary experiences and reflections in their cross-cultural contexts. This enabled me to understand the missionaries' background, life and cross-cultural experiences and narrate their stories. To help the participants and the researcher to focus on the conversation, and acquire systematic interview data, I adopted semi-structured interviews using serial topics in a similar way to Babbie, E. R. (2013, 231-32). I also asked open-ended questions to initiate the dialogues with my interviewees to acquire data with depth and completeness. (For more details, see Appendix Two.)

3.3.1.2 Focus Groups

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (2006) believe that, compared with individual interviews, focus group interviews have the advantage of being socially oriented. Such that interviewees can share their views and opinions in a more natural and relaxed setting.

After I completed the 52 in-depth interviews, on 4 January 2021, I invited seven Chinese missionaries to participate in a focus group through Zoom. The names of the participants are listed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Focus Group Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Domestic/Overseas	Length of Service
Bob	M	35	Overseas	14
Diane	F	32	Domestic	7
Daphne[22]	F	--	Domestic	--
Frank	M	36	Domestic	11
John	M	52	Domestic	17
Matthew	M	33	Overseas	7
Tom	M	--	Overseas	--

I presented the focus group with the results of my Findings and Analyses and asked for feedback. I also presented the Trinitarian attributes that I discovered from my literature review (see Chapter Two) and asked for their feedback. Finally, in Chapter Six, I incorporated their comments into the reflections and responses.

Krueger, R. and Casey, M. (2009) mention that the advantages of the focus group method are that relevant data can be collected relatively quickly and cheaply, and processed immediately. For Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (2006), the greatest disadvantage of such an approach is the power dynamics in the focus group. My observations showed this to be true; in mixed age and status groups, the senior members spoke out, while younger, and especially female participants, did not have a voice. Secondly, Chinese culture is an honour and shame culture, so participants are not willing to share negative or challenging experiences, which can result in superficial interactions

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[22] Daphne was not one of the 52 participants listed above, but was an invited guest to the focus group because of her experience in sending missionaries from a local Chinese agency.

and replies. Therefore, unless the researcher has a good understanding of the participants and forms focus groups accordingly, data will not be completely accurate or descriptive.

Based on the above challenges, I adjusted the members of the focus group to facilitate open discussion and improved data collection. Firstly, I formed a more homogeneous focus group that considered the age, gender, seniority, and educational background of the participants. In this way, the restrictions caused by the cultural characteristics of the Chinese were avoided. Secondly, as I facilitated, I encouraged dialogue in a safe environment by having participants first introduce themselves and by crafting open questions. And as I got to know the participants, I specifically identified those who were able to express themselves well and reflect on their situations to join the focus groups.

3.3.1.3 Participant Observation

Huang, Guoyan 黃國彥 (2000) writes that participant observation is a type of observational research method in which the observer becomes a member of the group being observed and participates in the activity or life of the observed. The researcher plays the role of participant on the one hand and observer on the other. As a result, the observer is not seen as an outsider, the natural context of the observation is maintained, and the observer is less likely to defend himself or herself and the behaviour he or she exhibits is more authentic. Participant observation is the process of entering a group of people with a shared identity through natural interactions to gain an understanding of their community.

Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M. (1998) note that participation can manifest multiple dimensions, either in a stable, long-term environment, such as a school, mission fields, office locations, or in a special environment, such as in a retreat that lasts for a few days. Esterberg, K. G. (2002) thinks that the researcher can sometimes present himself or herself as a participant, sometimes as an observer, and sometimes both a participant and

an observer. It is worth noting that during these observations, the researcher might encounter ethical problems. Esterberg, K. G. (2002, 61) notes: 'While it may be ethical to engage in covert observation in open and public places, in more private places covert research may be unethical.' Therefore, I always asked the participants to give consent before I began my interaction with them. I then made decisions about whether to use the data collected from participation observations based on their consent, to avoid a breach of ethics.

Various methods were used to interact with the participants and collect data. I collected relevant research data through observation while participating in workshops and panel discussions at conferences for missionaries. I also offered cross-cultural training courses and used these as opportunities to observe how the participants reacted and responded while in class. In another case, I had the chance to live with missionary families and observe their relationships with Others in their lives, including their emotions and tensions in their dialogue and interactions. Finally, I was also able to observe how Others viewed and reacted to the Chinese missionary family.

3.3.2 The Sorting and Analysis of Data

Sorting and analysis of data are important parts of qualitative research. In this process of seeking meaningful interpretation from the raw data, the researcher must meticulously sort and analyse the data to develop themes and create stories that would reflect the participants' life experiences. The sorting of data mainly involves inductive analysis: qualitative research must produce concepts, patterns, and themes through analytical sorting of the collected data.

3.3.2.1 Transcription and Translation

After the in-depth interviews, the next stage was transcribing the recorded files into text files (See Appendix Five for samples of the transcription and translation into English).

Producing a word-for-word transcription was a long and complex process. Because it was time-consuming, after doing the transcriptions for five interviews, I engaged the help of two transcription assistants and gave them an orientation on the transcription process. After the transcript was finished, I listened again to the recordings and read the transcripts to ensure the validity and credibility of its contents. During the transcription process, I found that some participants' expressions were different from those recorded by the transcription assistants. In cases where the participants' words were not recorded clearly, the assistants would record the time of the recording and mark it on the transcript so that I could review the recording and clarify the meaning. This also deepened my familiarity with the contents of the interviews.

Because of the subtlety and complexity of the Chinese language and culture, I first did the analysis of the data in Chinese and then translated the results into English so that the results would better reflect what the missionaries experienced. As Wang, Y. and Chen, J. (2013) found in their research, the differences between Chinese and English writing are mainly due to differences in thinking and organisation. In English, one usually presents a topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph, whereas in Chinese, the main topic is covered at the end of the paragraph after all the introductory areas have been covered. Other differences Wang and Chen highlight are:

Table 3.5 Differences in Chinese and English Writing Patterns from Wang, Y. and Chen, J. (2013)

Chinese	English
Visual Thinking	Rational Thinking
Generalised Thinking	Analytical Thinking
Circuitous Thinking	Straight Thinking
Backward Thinking	Predictive Thinking
Dialectical Thinking	Logical Thinking

Therefore, translating the more image-driven, holistic Chinese thinking patterns directly into English thinking and then doing the data analysis would greatly reduce the meaning and context that the interviewees intended to express. Thus, I decided to interpret and analyse the Chinese way of thinking before translating the resulting text into English. This also was another crucial factor in the validity and credibility of the data.

3.3.2.2 Coding

After collecting the data from the participants, it was coded to identify segments of meaning in data and label them with 'a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data' (Saldaña, J. 2015, 3). I adapted the five-step process in framework analysis from Ritchie and Spencer (1994).

The literature review suggested that the missionaries' identity construction was strongly influenced by themes of culture, social context, ethnicity, and religion. The point of open coding is for the researcher to discover the story from the data, rather than imposing interpretations based on pre-existing theories. Therefore, as I collected the data, I first performed a theoretical and analytical classification using open coding in a Chinese context. Then, as I considered the challenges the Chinese missionaries faced as they crossed cultures, I found four basic domains: culture, society, ethnicity, and religion. These in turn became the scope of my in-depth interviews with the participants.

3.3.2.3 Analysis

After the above encoding process, I combined similar data according to the coding system to distinguish the differences in the data and find the links in the data. I used the software NVivo to organise the files, perform the coding, edit the data, and then do the classification and in-depth analysis of the data. Chen, Xiangming 陳向明 (2002) states that in-depth analysis further condenses data, finds topics or storylines in the content of the data, establishes the necessary relationship between them, and draws preliminary

conclusions for the results of the study. Initially, I manually encoded during the process of data collation and analysis. However, I found that my in-depth interview data set was growing rapidly after 15 interviews, and I realised that manual methods were too time-consuming and made effective comparison extremely difficult. Later, I switched to NVivo as my primary research tool for classification, analysis, and integration. It also provided valuable charts and displays which helped in my analysis.

In my research, I also combined categorisation analysis with contextualisation analysis. Chen, Xiangming 陳向明 (2002) writes that categorisation analysis is a process of looking for recurring phenomena in the data and seeking important concepts to explain those phenomena. In this process, data with the same attributes are placed in the same category. Chen, Xiangming 陳向明 (2002) claims that one of the strengths of categorisation analysis is that it extracts a portion of the data (i.e. a concept or topic) from the participant's context and highlights their relationships. The advantage of contextualisation analysis is that the context is similar to daily life, closer to the real-life of the participants. The combination of these two methods of analyses can produce a more comprehensive narrative.

3.4.0 Research Validity and Reliability

According to Chen, Xiangming 陳向明 (2002), validity is a criterion for quantitative studies aimed at finding a pattern through objective measurement and quantitative inference. Qualitative research follows a different thinking paradigm from quantitative analysis, focusing not on accurate classification, but on the process of constructing social facts and people's experiences and interpreting these considering specific social and cultural situations. Bernard, H. R. (2006, 41) defines validity in qualitative analysis as 'the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data, and findings in research'. Validity

was increased by having clear operational definitions, and I adhered to these definitions for the entire research process.

Chen, Xiangming 陳向明 (2002) writes that the concept of trust comes from quantitative studies, which emphasise the repeatability of the results. However, qualitative research allows researchers to draw out each participant's uniqueness. In the narrative inquiry method used in this study, each participant's background can be highlighted in their stories. Wang, Wenke 王文科 and Wang, Zhihong 王志弘 (2010) point out that qualitative researchers, while also using reliability in their research, do not evaluate the reliability of tools or tests, but, instead, the source (the where) of the data and skills (the how) needed for data collection.

Ying, Xing 應星 (2006) says that narrative inquiry is ideal for exploring the development of Chinese society in three areas. First, the flexibility of the functioning of China's indirect social system. Second, the process of China's social transformation practice. Third, the ambiguity of daily life in Chinese society. Using the narrative inquiry methods of plot, background and time characterisation can give meaning and bring the story to life.

3.4.1 Triangulation Method

Based on the limitations of narrative inquiry covered above, I used a triangulation method to ensure the validity of this study. This method included using continuous comparisons of the collected data with other researchers and missionaries who are not from China, self-reflexivity, effective use of text and thick descriptions, and the use of computer software to deal with the challenges to the validity of the study.

Denzin, N. K. (1970) distinguished four types of triangulations:

o   Data triangulation: Using diverse sources of data in research.

o   Researcher triangulation: Using different researchers and evaluators to analyse the data obtained.

o   Theoretical triangulation: Using a variety of perspectives to interpret a set of data.

o   Methodological triangulation: Using a variety of methods to research a problem.

In this study, I used researcher triangulation to ensure reliability. I interviewed the six non-Chinese missionaries already introduced. Because I constructed a triangular relationship between an outside observer, interviewee, and myself (the researcher), I was able to verify the data I collected from my interviews. The outside observers also critiqued my interpretation of the data and helped point out the biases from my personal background. Triangulation, or triangular cross-viewing, allows researchers to collect different data from different perspectives, and can also help researchers seek trustworthy explanations to gain a deep and complete understanding of the phenomena, form the basis of knowledge-building and practice, and obtain a profound description of the phenomena of the study according to Chien, Chun-An 簡春安 and Chou, Pi-I 鄒平儀 (2004).

3.4.2 Continuous Observation and Comparison

My research was not based on just one interview per participant. I collected data by making multiple observations to confirm the characteristics of the data. I compared the educational background of the participants, the contexts and target groups where the participants were serving, whether they came from rural or urban areas, their denominational affiliation, and cases where counter themes stood out. Gibbs, R. G. (2010) claims that the underlying concept of contrast is an attempt to bring out a unique part of the text and its content. When developing classification codes, ongoing comparisons test their consistency. In addition, continuous observation and comparison also identified the variations in the activities and experiences that have been coded.

3.4.3 Self-Reflexivity

Given the limitations and challenges of the researcher mentioned in section 3.2 of this chapter, I was intentional in reflecting on and preventing any possible biases in my own in data collection. As Wang, Wenke 王文科 and Wang, Zhihong 王志弘 (2010) argue, the reflection of the records in the data analysis process can help researchers increase self-awareness, helping them adjust and control their own biases to obtain evidence based on the control of bias. Knowing my own biases, I reminded myself consistently to examine my own motivations and subjective perceptions through a reflexive approach. This prompted me to listen carefully and patiently to the voices of the participants (recorded and transcribed data) before any analysis and interpretation. This process also encouraged me to see beyond my perspective in interpreting what the participants shared in their interviews.

3.4.4 Use of Thick Descriptions

Thick descriptions are an essential element in the processing of the participants' narrative experiences into research texts, as each story is complex. Anthropologist Geertz, C. (1973) argues that because cultures are extremely complex human-made concepts, researchers should not try to look for patterns and laws that explain them. Instead, cultural analysis researchers should try to explore and explain the ways people make meaning of their lives. Geertz's (1973, 318) claims that: 'most of what we need to comprehend a particular event, ritual, custom, idea, or whatever, is insinuated as background information before the thing itself is directly examined.' The role of the thick description is therefore not just to describe what the participant has said, but also how it is interpreted. Ponterotto, J. G. (2006, 542) writes: 'Thick description involves accurately describing and interpreting social actions within the appropriate context in which the social action took place.' Wang, Wenke 王文科 and Wang, Zhihong 王志弘 (2010) remind researchers to use a variety of

low-inference descriptions, either verbatim or directly quoted in the participant's narrative, to assist the reader in experiencing the participant's world. A thick description approach helps in the understanding of the research context and provides a reference for the evidence. In the analysis and findings section of Chapters Four and Five, I fully cite the narratives of the participants to ensure a comprehensive presentation of their original story. I also formulate thick descriptions of the participants' narratives utilising social identity theories to ensure the validity and credibility of the study.

3.4.5 The Use of Computer Software

NVivo is the computer program that I used to manage, categorise, and code the data to increase validity and credibility. NVivo can effectively identify the most frequently occurring words and patterns, however to find less obvious or atypical themes and patterns, I had to return to the original language of the transcriptions and manually mark and extract topics that were more difficult for NVivo.

3.5.0 Research Ethics

Wiles, R. (2013) argues that many research methodologies have come into being in the past one or two decades, and some of them are problematic due to major variations from traditional scientific practices. Clandinin, D. J. (2007) stressed that as narrative inquiry is a study based on deep relationships, research ethics will play a key role throughout and even beyond the study itself. I was proactive in learning the rules concerning relationships with participants and data confidentiality and abided by them to ensure that I conducted this research within ethical boundaries.

In addition, I also submitted all relevant interview questions to the Research Ethics Committee of OCMS for approval. I made every effort to ensure that all the interview data, the information about the missionaries' stories and their ministry fields were dealt

with in accordance with 'Research Ethics at OCMS/Middlesex: Principles, Guidance and Procedures' (see Appendix Two).

Before I conducted any individual or focus group interviews, I first obtained permission from the missionaries' supervisors. Also, before each interview, I thoroughly explained the purpose and methodology of my research, and only used the participants' information and stories after having gained their full consent. Finally, I asked all the participants to sign a consent form (see Appendix Three). I also created aliases to keep their names and locations 'confidentially and anonymously' (Farrimond, H. 2013). If at any point a participant for any reason wished to withdraw from the study, or expressed regret for their participation before the publication of the research result, I respected their decision and accepted their withdrawal. I also promised that the published study would not present any information or conclusions related to the withdrawn participant(s) according to the procedure described by Miller, T. and Bell, T. (2002, 2012). All except two participants willingly signed the 'Informed Consent' document and their data was not included in this study. Finally, the two stenographers hired to do the transcriptions of the interviews also signed confidentiality agreements (see Appendix Four).

Conclusion

This methodology chapter links the theoretical framework of the literature review to practical research methods. Through narrative inquiry with qualitative research, I was able to explore the process of the missionary's identity construction and the challenges they faced on the cross-cultural mission field. The following two chapters are the findings and analysis based on the methods outlined in this chapter.

<center>**Chapter Four**</center>

<center>**Findings and Analysis Part One: Cultural and Social Perspectives**</center>

Introduction

Chapter Four and Chapter Five focus on the findings from the in-depth interviews and the analyses based on thick descriptions. The results are divided into two chapters because of length. All the names of the missionaries are pseudonyms and further information (age, gender, area of service, etc.) about each participant is listed in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Four concepts affecting the missionary's identity emerged from the analyses:

o Cultural traditions

o Hierarchical social relationships

o Ethnicity

o Religion

 This chapter covers the first two concepts: The effect of cultural traditions and hierarchical relationships on the missionary's identity. Chapter Five covers the effect of the ethnic and religious dimensions.

4.1.0 Cultural Traditions

Like all people, missionaries are nurtured and formed by their culture at a young age (Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, J. D., 2008). Using the method introduced by Cai, Dunhao 蔡敦浩 (2011), repeating patterns from the missionaries' stories were categorised into themes. In the cultural domain, there were three themes: the role of the extended family; 'Face' culture; and the response to the power distance in hierarchical levels of authority. These three themes all influenced the missionaries' cultural identity.

4.1.1 Stories about Family

In this chapter, I have deliberately placed familism ahead of face culture. Although face culture is more frequently identified by participants than familism, face culture is derived from inter-family relations. Zhai, Xuewei 翟學偉 (2004) points out that in Chinese society, since an individual is a part of the family chain, his or her behaviour, career and, reputation are not just personal issues, but closely related to the family. Therefore, I put familism ahead of face. Burgess, E. W., Harvey, J., and Locke, H. J. (1971) view familism as a system of attitudes with the five following elements: a keen sense of belonging, the pursuit of family achievement, sharing family property, protection from outside attack, and preservation of the family's honour and reputation. These attitudes were emphasised in many of my interviews.

Frank was born in 1984, in the fifth year after the Reform and Opening policy began.[1] He grew up in a place situated between a village and a city. While growing up, he witnessed how his surroundings changed in a single decade from farm fields to a city of high rise buildings. Even though Frank's hometown is now considered a newly developed urban area, he feels that his family's mindset is still bound by tradition and more like that of a rural village. The main characteristic of rural life is that everyone in a five-mile radius is related. The extended family gathers during festivals, and when it is harvest time, everyone joins in to do the work. Men work in the fields while women take care of the household chores. Frank described how: 'People in my hometown would never go beyond where they cannot see the smoke from the chimney on their roof.' He also described the students in his city in this way:

> They will never leave our home province, even our city, the city where they live. They will find a job in their hometown. Moreover, this cultural concept is the same as what the older generation always says: 'A house of gold and silver does not compare with your own house of grass'. Therefore,

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[1] The Chinese economic reform (改革开放) that was pioneered by Deng Xiaoping in 1979. It is also referred to as 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics' or 'socialist market economy'. https://www.china-briefing.com/news/economic-reform-china-opening-up-future-prospects/ Access date: 2020-05-12

it is hard for people in my hometown to step out into the unknown. Take marriage as an example. You are not supposed to marry someone from too far away but instead start (seeking your future spouse) from those living around you. If someone from the south side of our district wants to move to the north for marriage, his family would have a hard time accepting that, let alone moving to a different city for marriage... That is our cultural norm.

Frank went against the wishes and pressure of his family as he moved from his hometown for university studies and then went to serve as a missionary in a rural area of a different province. He, his wife, and two children have served there for more than a decade and he has now become the field director of his mission agency.

Frank's story was not the only one that mentioned family. Bob grew up in a rural area in a large extended family. In rural China, everyone lives in a closely-knit community where almost every neighbour is a member of the family clan. Growing up in this environment, Bob is used to communal living. He said: 'Chinese people like to 抱團 "baotuan" which means to stick together and have mutual support in that communal relationship.' Thirteen years ago, he left the only home that he had ever known to serve in Country PK at the start of his new life as a cross-cultural missionary. He observed that even though Chinese missionaries have left their hometown, they still cluster with other Chinese people. Although they might not necessarily be their family members or people that they knew before, they were of the same culture. He further pointed out that when many Chinese missionaries entered the mission field, they tended to live in the same cultural enclave, to encourage and support each other. When Chinese missionaries get together to serve, they might sometimes find more strength in serving, but more often they grow dependent on each other. Bob was concerned that over-reliance on the cultural trait of *baotuan* affected their ministry when he said: 'That way we are disabled from going to new places and sharing the Gospel where it is most needed.' Gu, Dao 谷道 (2020) writes that, the Chinese mindset is closed and selfish. Chinese people often believe that one should not interfere with another's business before a person has solved their own

problems. This is a manifestation of Chinese cultural isolation. Such cultural distinctives will aggravate the challenges that Chinese missionaries face as they serve cross-culturally.

Jill, a mother of two children, was doing business as mission with her husband in Country JD in the Middle East. Her feelings about leaving her Chinese team and moving to a large City A with her family because of a change in their work situation were thus:

> I greatly cherish the memory, and treasure the relationships and connection I had within the previous group. I believe that an emphasis on relationships and unity will bring a positive impact. The power of unity is strong, and it can bring great results to our ministry. Personally, I hope I can be deeply connected with others, because I have previous experiences in ministry where people are united. I believe that it makes it easier for me to move forward when brothers and sisters are supporting each other and are like a large family. In this case, with help from each other, it becomes easier for one to take a farther step. If there are no other people that can help and if one is all by oneself, then it will be challenging.

4.1.1.1 Analysis: Family

In the above stories, three missionary units were sent to various places to serve, yet all were affected by the importance of family (or the feeling of belonging) and its effect on them. Chinese family culture deeply impacted the missionaries, as was evident in their desire to form a cluster with a familiar community, especially when living in cross-cultural settings. Stepping out of one's comfort zone into a cross-cultural environment is not a painless process and often re-enforces the need for self-protection found in a family.

Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (2004) claims that collectivism has the strongest impact in Chinese social relationships, while the second strongest would be the family, with emphasis on harmony and the prosperity, honour, and continuity of the family. In my interviews, six participants mentioned the importance of community life and 14 participants talked about their family relationships. A total of 34 people made references to their original family and talked about how their family relationships had influenced the way they served cross-culturally. It was clear from the NVivo analysis that both collectivism and familism have a strong impact upon the missionaries' identity.

Familism (Triandis, H., 1995) is an in-group relation (Tajfel, H. and Turner, J., 2004), with a strong sense of both unity and exclusiveness. This was a constant struggle

for the Chinese missionaries in the field. Because their time and energy were focused on the needs of their in-group, many found it difficult to reach out to Others in a cross-cultural situation.

When Chinese missionaries choose to cluster in an in-group of their own culture, they will be unable to interact and connect effectively with Others from a different background. As the missionaries cross cultures, familiar relationships have an even deeper influence on their behaviour pattern and habitus (Bourdieu, P., 1996). Clustering together does provides mutual support, but the disadvantage is unconscious exclusivity.

4.1.2 Stories about Face

It is a given that Chinese culture esteems one's Face or reputation (hereafter denoted by using a capital F). As early as 1894, Arthur Henderson Smith (1845-1932), an American missionary with 54 years of ministry in China, pointed out how Face influenced Chinese culture in his book, *Chinese Characteristics*. Hu, H. C. (1944) distinguishes between 臉 'lian' and 面子 'mianzi'. 'Lian' is the respect given to people with a high moral standard in a community, while 'mianzi' is gained through efforts or tactics to reach a specific social status. 'Lian' is associated with morality, but 'mianzi' with social recognition. One is a moral Face, while the other, a social Face.

When I interviewed Frank, he said indignantly: 'It seems like this cultural tradition of Face is deeply ingrained in our blood, and is always manifested in our lives. In church, many people often tend to wear "masks", but they also avoid discussing this issue directly.'

In Frank's experience, maintaining peaceful and respectful relationships preserved Face. However, to maintain harmony, Frank has had to compromise in some critical situations due to Face issues. Sometimes, he needed to with submission and at other times he chose not to provide the whole picture to the church leadership. He was unable to

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express himself freely in front of his elders. As a result, although everyone seemed to be on good terms, their relationship was rather superficial.

Carol was converted to Christianity through the influence of an expatriate professor during her university years in China. After she finished her master's degree, she worked as an engineer. Later, as she developed more relationships with missionaries, she decided to venture out as a missionary herself. Carol was sent to live with a local family in Country JD. During her interview, she said:

> Some of the deepest values in Chinese culture are similar to Middle Eastern cultural values. For example, we all speak indirectly and euphemistically. We do not face conflicts directly and we tend to cherish harmony. This is the most significant feeling I have living with my local roommate for one year. We had deep mutual cultural values and I can relate to what she thought.

But Carol also pointed out that the negative result of Face culture is the lack of conflict resolution:

> I do not tend to face conflict directly. Even if I finally decide to try to resolve a conflict, the other party could also avoid dealing with the issue. It is challenging enough for me to face a conflict, but when the other party also avoids dealing with it, that will make things even harder to ever resolve. In that way, Face culture becomes a barrier in our attempt to developing a closer relationship with each other.

Before coming to the Middle East, Andrew visited several countries in South-East Asia and had experience interacting with people from different cultures. He thought that the most significant challenge when meeting people from different places was:

> Whenever the locals do not show me respect, I would feel very miserable in my heart, and I would think that he is not giving me Face. That is probably my weakness, but I cannot help but take that very seriously. So, because of this, my relationship with others might become distanced. That is such a disturbing thing to me.

He also said that even though it might hurt his feelings, he always protected Others' Face. He valued giving Face to Others, even when it hurt. This was because 'you can show respect to Others by giving them Face, and you cannot speak about their weaknesses directly.'

Edward shared his experience on a team:

> Sometimes, there are barriers in the communication between my superior and me. This is because when I talk with my superior, I would feel awkward and embarrassed to ask for help. It might be that I am too mindful of keeping a perfect image, a perfect image [repeated twice] in front of the leadership.

According to Jenkins, R. (2006), everyone wants to present a positive or an ideal image to others. From Edward's words, it can be seen that he not only cared about how his leaders saw him from the outside, but on the inside, he also hoped to project an ideal, a perfect self-image.

Joshua pointed out that protecting Face has prevented him from building friendships:

> Because I always must be aware of my Face, and sometimes, I am too reserved in my relationship with others. I am not willing to make myself vulnerable, and that creates an obstacle for relationships to develop further, even to the point of coming to a full stop or taking a much slower process. If you can decrease the emphasis on Face and our own way of thinking, and not focus on ourselves, you will realise that the process of building a relationship can be much faster.

4.1.2.1 Analysis: Face

The data from the in-depth interviews from narrative inquiry showed that, among the 52 interviewees, more than 50% expressed that Face culture played a vital role in their relationships with Others. Face-works helped the missionaries guard their behaviour to protect their own honour and the Other's honour, e.g. showing respect to the elderly and towards their leadership.

Goffman, E. (1955), Brown, P., and Levinson, S. C. (1987) believed that it is not just the Chinese who need to deal with Face culture. Doing 'Face-work', the communication and behavioural strategies of saving Face and to avoid losing Face, is a common phenomenon in interactions in all human societies. Goffman, E., (1955) further pointed out that Face-work is a ritualised manifestation of inter-relational behaviour in society.

The research of Tata, J. (2000) points out that collective culture, where the collective voice is more important the individual, emphasises the saving of Face, but can put stress on relationships. In a collective culture, giving and receiving Face is crucial to developing relationships with others. As Chinese culture emphasises community, giving and receiving Face is essential to developing and maintaining relationships. Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1983) claims that one problem with Face culture is the overemphasis on

reputation. One's attitude and behaviour are greatly influenced by how others see you. In the book, *Chinese Mentality* (1988), Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 and King, Yeochi's 金耀基 article on Face, shame, and Chinese behaviour points out that the Chinese have a powerful sense of 'Face-awareness' which can lead to hypocrisy (perfunctory Face) and formalism (importance of Face), as well as other Face-works.

In addition, Hwang, Kwangkuo 黃光國 and Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1989) claim that one's Face is not only related to one's behaviour but also includes the behaviour of others in the family or clan. This led to the phenomenon of 'Face-sharing' in which other's actions give us more Face (i.e., when a child receives good marks, his family is honoured). On the other hand, Han, Guixiang 韓貴香 and Li, Meizhi 李美枝 (2011) indicate that when an individual fails to behave appropriately, their entire family will lose Face and are shamed. This is expressed in these two Chinese idioms: 光宗耀祖 'guangzong yaozu' (One should bring glory to one's family-line and ancestors); 與有榮焉 'yuyou rongyan' (One is honoured alongside of someone honourable). These Chinese idioms show the importance of Face-work in Chinese relationships. Face is a commodity which can bring honour or shame not only to an individual, but also to their family, clan, or unit. Thus, Face-sharing plays a significant role if a missionary 'fails' in the field. They feel shameful and are reluctant to return home and bring loss of Face to the mission agency or sending church.

In the interviews, most participants expressed adverse effects on their cross-cultural relationships because of Face culture. Even though Face culture keeps relationships in harmony, it enables people to avoid interacting with one another in ways that cause direct conflict. My research found that over-attention to Face negatively impacted relationships, as participants shared the following:

o   Superficial interpersonal relationships in which there is a lack of authenticity.

- Presentation of an overly idealised self to maintain one's Face.

- Compromising facts and truth for the sake of protecting Others' Face.

- Legalism and moralism result when Face culture becomes too much of an ethical restriction.

- Taking extreme action to protect ones' family honour or to avoid bringing shame to the family. In my in-depth interviews, one interviewee pointed out that when someone on their team could not handle staying on in the mission field, he chose to commit suicide because he was ashamed of having to face his home church and the family that had supported him throughout.

4.1.3 Stories about Power Distance

Power distance refers to the inequality of social status between people and is a common phenomenon in all socio-cultural groups. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J. and Minkov, M. (2010, 61) define power distance 'as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions are the basic elements of society, such as the family, the school, and the community; organisations are the places where people work.' Frank is a third generation Christian. His church began when his family members, relatives and neighbours started gathering at their house for fellowship. For Frank, the church is like a big family and church elders are as authoritative as his own father and grandfather. The elders always sit in the front row, and when the sermon ends, they would be asked to pray to conclude the service. In Chinese culture, whoever speaks last is the most influential and of the greatest importance. The most authoritative figure in the Chinese family or church is usually the eldest male (Yu, Y. M. 2015). His one glimpse, nod, or cough can dictate everyone's actions. Children must never interrupt or contradict their elders. As a result, decisions are mainly made by the patriarch, who also shoulders all the

responsibilities for critical events (Liang, S. M. 梁漱溟 1991). Frank said: 'Of course, when we encounter conflicts, the church tends to solve the problem by demanding obedience to tradition. When problems occur, we, the younger generation, must obey the older generation.'

Frank became interested in missions when he got involved in relief work after the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008. He was moved by the needs and felt called to go on behalf of the church as a volunteer. In 2010, he decided to bring his wife and young child to serve together as full-time missionaries in that area. As the church supported them financially, the team that Frank led was required to send ministry progress reports regularly. The church wanted to ensure that these missionaries were practising the same conservative church traditions (such as patriarchal leadership style and top-down decision-making) on the mission field. This had caused much stress and tension for Frank and his team as they were unable to contextualise and fully immerse themselves into ministry because of the pressure from their home church to conform. Frank, as the field leader, suffered as he was caught between church tradition and the needs on the mission field. While on one hand Frank understood the actual situation on the mission field and the needs of his team members, on the other he also needed to report to their home church, whose culture was one of spiritual authority that demanded total submission. Frank then said:

> I think that this kind of authoritative culture will affect the growth of a church. Even though we acknowledge the spiritual foresight and insights of our elders, we cannot guarantee that every elder sees everything through a completely spiritual perspective. Everyone has his weaknesses, and one would naturally bring one's value, ideas, and thoughts into one's understanding and opinion; therefore, one's decision may not be absolutely correct. However, because the church emphasises obedience, giving Face, and avoiding confrontation when a problem occurs, one must always defer to the elders and never give a contrary opinion in public. It is normal for one to have emotions, but if any negative emotions are not dealt with properly, that will influence the direction of the church, even to the point of preventing the church from growing.

Harry served in a church that proclaimed that every believer was a priest and everyone was a brother. They believed that a church was not an organisation in society and therefore refused titles such as pastor, elder or leader. He had served in the mission

field for five years and was subsequently assigned a vital role back in his home church. This church is regarded as without hierarchy, but there is still an unspoken authority structure. He comments:

> My church leader emphasises the obedience of believers and the idea that he represents authority. In general, from a historical perspective, I believe this is somehow related to Chinese culture, which is paternalistic. My church is Chinese, so obviously, it is also paternalistic. We must propose what we want to do, give a report for the result, ask for permission, and make sure certain people are properly informed before we can take on something new.

Harry believed that in a pyramid structure that emphasised authority from top to bottom, the greatest loss would be 'a lack of independent thinking in which the younger generation loses their creativity. As a result, I do not think it is possible for the church to have transformational thinking in this age.' He also asked: 'When it comes to cross-cultural missions, why are we not seeing Chinese young adults pioneering in the field to start something new? Alternatively, why are the churches in China disadvantaged in joining in cross-cultural missions? One of the primary causes is the lack of independent thinking.'

Faye led a team of international members to the Middle Eastern Country JD. Being a young female leader, taking up the role of leadership made her feel proud, yet it was not without its struggles. She felt that tension both in leading Others in a team and when she was supervised by her leaders.

> In Chinese culture, you cannot challenge your boss, your leader or your elder. For me, I noticed that I also could not take being questioned about too many details when I was leading my peers, because I would feel that I was not trusted and that I was being challenged, and I would become offended.

4.1.3.1 Analysis: Power Distance

From what the missionaries have shared above, they respect authority. However, authority is usually in the hands of a few, and cannot be challenged easily. Due to the father's absolute authority in the family, the son must show unconditional obedience. Hence, a power difference between father and son is formed (Hsu, F. L. K., 1971).

The absolute authority of a father can bring stability and direction to a community. In his article in Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 *Chinese Mentality* (1989), Hwang, Kwangkuo 黃

光國 (1989) defined power as the ability to exercise one's will over that of others and cause changes of attitude, motivation, or behaviour. However, this type of authoritarian leadership can suppress individuality. Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1988, 19) analysed this from a psychological perspective. He claims that Chinese live and act in a family circle formed by their own people within which the emphasis is on what is best for the entire clan and how to maintain good relationships among themselves. Individual desires and needs are easily suppressed, which can create a sense of frustration. Hu, Shi 胡適 (1991) believed that the Chinese philosophy of life does not emphasise individuals but interrelations between men. In Chinese culture, the 'big-self' (collective) and the 'little-self' (individual) are weighed in interpersonal relationships. The Chinese saying, 犧牲小我 'xisheng xiaowo' (sacrificing my 'little-self'), 完成大我 'wan cheng da wo' (to achieve the common goal of my 'big-self' or community) reflects the value that a Chinese would forfeit a personal goal for the family to achieve a larger goal. This Chinese idiom also reflects how a top-down authoritarian leader could override an individual.

Paternalistic authoritarian leadership is not only seen in the family, but its influence can be extended to the leadership style of organisations, societies and even countries. The research of Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1993, 385-86) presents the concept of family orientation, which was defined in section (2.1.5.1.3). Yang called familism extended to other non-family groups 'pan-familism' or 'pan-family orientation'. This cultural value was also seen when the home church sought to control the missionaries on the mission field and the interactions between the missionaries and the churches they planted in the host culture.

Yang, Kuoshu 楊國樞 (1988) states that the Chinese patriarchal leadership style is reflected in the emphasis on top-down interpersonal relationships determined by age,

status, gender, etc. Therefore, an individual must constantly be evaluating their ranking in the hierarchy to find appropriate ways to relate to Others.

4.1.4 An Alternate Narrative

Matthew served among the Muslims in Country ID with an international mission agency and was proactive in learning the local language. He acquired the language well and effectively reached out to the local host people. There were many Chinese living close to where he served, and a large Chinese diaspora church. Such an environment caused him confusion, and he wondered whether he should be an active part of the Chinese community there. However, he made an impactful, albeit difficult decision to be more focused more on the host language and culture. He said:

> I deliberately avoided contacting other Chinese. I did it purposely. Deep down inside me, I wanted to stay in touch with Chinese. However, I purposely stayed away from them when doing language study. I did it very deliberately. I only contacted other Chinese briefly when it is urgent and necessary. I know inside of me I wanted this regulation required of all team members (to not be clustering with people of your own culture).

> When I entered a culture different from mine, I did not want to mingle only with Chinese. I did not want to be like others who just started a church for the Chinese people in a foreign land. When I stepped out of my comfort zone, I told myself I wanted to focus on interacting with the local people. Even though it was difficult for me personally to avoid contacting other Chinese, I still wanted to join my team and to reach out and serve the locals together. I was so afraid of going back to the Chinese mode that once you started the work among the Chinese and WZ people, you were so involved that once you are in their circle, there was no way out. I did this very deliberately.

Note how Matthew expressed a few times that he 'deliberately' stayed away from the familiar Chinese community. His experience confirmed that the tight-knit relationships and interdependency within the family group adversely affected his relationship with Others. Therefore, missionaries need to have a powerful sense of self-awareness and intentionally pursue those outside of their cultural enclave.

The most significant difference between Matthew's experience and that of other interviewees is that he made a point to stay away from the Chinese community. My findings and analysis of Matthew's case were as follows: First, he joined an international organisation and served in a multi-cultural team, gaining experience and sensitivity

working with those from other cultures. Secondly, during our interview, Matthew mentioned that his team leader had requested that all team members not attend the local Christian churches while serving among the Muslims. They were also asked to avoid contacting communities from their home culture. The rationale was to avoid creating the impression of in-group and out-group when serving in the context of a different religion, culture, and ethnicity. Thirdly, Matthew has a good educational background and can think independently. He was conscious of, and even rebelled against the cohesive family culture of his hometown. This not only enabled him to be more self-aware, but also motivated him to stay away from the familiar community of his hometown and take the initiative to stay close to the local host community.

Carol was a single female missionary in the Middle East working in an international mission agency. She engaged with the local community by teaching English alongside a team from North America. As soon as she arrived in Country JD, it was arranged for her to live with a local family. She described her situation as follows:

> I came from one collective culture to serve in another collective culture; however, I served on an individualistic North American team. I am proud to be in the middle of three cultures, and I think it caused me to have a closer connection with the locals, and with my local roommate.

Because of the different structures of society, politics, and culture, Chinese family-oriented collectivism and Islamic collectivism have different manifestations.

Carol and Matthew's cases were similar in that they both belonged to international mission agencies and served in multi-cultural teams. Carol is a professional engineer with a master's degree and Matthew has a university degree.

Diane's experience was also similar to Matthew's and Carol's. She grew up in a first-tier city in China and completed her master's degree in cross-cultural studies overseas. She was also part of an international mission agency, and she shared her observations and experiences while serving as an intern in a Muslim country. She mentioned a strategy to enter a place to share the good news by meeting practical needs:

When I served as part of the team in Country ID, we (missionaries from different nationalities and cultures) formed a team and moved to a Muslim community. While we were living in that area as foreigners, the community was able to not only see one person, or just one family, but how our whole team interacted with one another. We modelled having loving and respectful relationships as we worked together in unity. We were also transparent to this community, and I felt that this was attractive to them. They were able to observe how our multi-cultural team could interact among ourselves and how we could interact with them.

The advantage that our team has is that we were scattered among them (Muslim friends), yet they did not know that we were from the same team while independently we made friends with neighbours around us. Hence, the locals had an opportunity to see the different aspects of the whole team of Jesus-followers. We had two houses with married couples with children and singles. They were able to see us from a different perspective and this allowed a change of their impression of Jesus followers. Of course, it took a very long time for this to happen.

Diane's story further pointed out that her multi-cultural and international team deliberately put missionaries from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds together to live in a community whose culture and faith was different from theirs. That resulted in great curiosity from the local community towards their team of mixed culture and ethnicity, and interest in how such a diverse group could share the same faith.

In a conversation with one of the third-party participants from USA, Judy shared from her experience as a cross-cultural missionary in the Middle East for over fifteen years:

I belonged to an international organisation whose members come from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Each of us needed to go through a 'double culture shock'. The first layer of cultural shock was internal. It was the cultural shock when people of different cultural backgrounds work together. The cultural shock is from the people that we serve. In the team, everyone feels the pain of working together. Because of the huge cultural gap, we need to learn about each other through prolonged listening.

But we are in a safe zone because we have a common belief, a common calling, and a common mission. So, we can be inclusive and committed to mutual understanding. After going through these shocks, we become more acute and sensitive as we enter the field to interact with the people that we serve. We can avoid many unnecessary mistakes and adjust our words and deeds from the perspective of understanding the others' culture.

Judy's sharing was a testimony of how Chinese missionaries can transform their cultural traditions and move into the lives of Others by being a part of an international organisation and multi-cultural teams.

The above cases showed that when Chinese missionaries were placed on multi-cultural teams, they began to negotiate their identity according to Roccas, S. and Brewer, M. B's. (2002) social identity theory in a complex situation. The missionaries developed more tolerance towards the out-group and were not over-reliant on other Chinese

missionaries. These cases also showed that a team with a diverse background helped individuals to integrate and live more effectively in cross-cultural situations. In other words, they become more self-aware toward different cultures, which was helpful in their adaptations. However, intentionally avoiding collective behaviour (leading to in-group effects and exclusivity) required deliberate effort. Finally, when missionaries of different cultures were put together in a multi-cultural team, despite certain challenges, they experienced true unity in diversity as they had a shared faith and vision to work together to reach their goal.

4.1.5 Summary of Cultural Traditions (Close and Distant)

Of the major philosophies and religions in China, Confucianism has had the greatest impact on Chinese culture. The five ethical principles of Confucianism are the five virtues of the Five Rites, which generally refer to the appropriate relationships between rulers and subjects, fathers and sons, husbands and wives, brothers and friends, and other human relationships. In the term 'five ethics', the word 'ethics' refers to the relationship between human beings. The book of *Zhongyong* 中庸 states the five major relationships in Confucianism are: ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, and friend. These were derived from a system of feudal politics and patriarchal society. There are several reasons why Confucianism still has such a strong influence on missionaries in a rapidly developing urban Chinese society. Firstly, most of the participants in my study came from rural backgrounds. Their thinking and family relationships are still strongly influenced by Confucian traditions. Secondly, the Chinese house churches, many of which started as communities within a family, have a deep sense of clannishness, patriarchal leadership, and moral and ethical teachings that are still reflected in the church. In this environment, missionaries also inherit the traditional Confucian mindset and ethical relationships. In the clan society, the patriarch and parents

have absolute power, almost comparable to a monarch. This can still be seen in the interactions between missionaries and sending churches today.

Confucianism's goal was to establish a social order with harmony as the most important core value. The main mechanism to accomplish this goal was 禮 'li', which means 'etiquette' or 'protocol'. Fei Xiaotong 費孝通 (2006, 53) said: '"Li" is a socially recognised and appropriate code of conduct, which is to say that these acts are appropriate if they are done correctly.' Traditional Chinese society emphasises protocol, so the rule of 'li' ensured everyone was given a certain identity and role to play. 'Li' determines what is appropriate and what is not, what is right or wrong, what is good or bad. The concept of preserving Face, collective thinking and the 'rule of li' forces individuals to behave appropriately. King, Yeochi 金耀基 (2013) points out that Chinese Face-work is based on the premise of recognising that others also have Face. The basic strategy in our behaviour is to preserve our own Face while avoiding making others lose theirs. Such a strategy can create superficial relationships which lack authenticity. So, while Face-work may create superficial harmony on the outside, heart feelings can still be far apart internally. Levinas, E. (2016) emphasised ethics as the first philosophy, arguing that the relationship between the self and the other is by its nature 'ethical' in its origin and fundamentals, and that these ethics must be built into the inter-relationship and life with the other. The interpersonal relationships that Levinas emphasised are different from those arising from the power structure of Confucianism. His emphasis on ethical relationships is based on the nature of the human being rather than on the Confucian's 'li' of external behaviour.

Based on the above Confucian values and my findings, I introduce the dichotomy of 'Close' and 'Distant' in the missionary's cultural traditions, which describes extremes in family structure, Face culture, and power distance generated by cultural traditions that

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shaped the missionaries' identity. The findings of this section relate to three themes, Familism, Face culture, and Power Distance, which all relate to the Close versus Distant cultural values. The dichotomy of Close and Distant also defines the boundary between family members and outsiders, the difference between the in-group and the out-group.

This emphasis on relationships and Face reflects the personal interaction between the Close and Distant. In analysing this data, I found challenges that need to be addressed:

o The inner cohesion caused by the prominence of family ties may lead to exclusiveness. The habit of emphasising formal and superficial interactions caused by Face culture may lead to difficulties in building deep personal relationships.

o The power structure derived from extensive familism led to paternalism and authoritarian rule. It may also adversely affect missionaries on the frontline, suppressing independence, creativity, and autonomy.

o Compared to mono-cultural teams, multi-cultural ministry teams could help prepare missionaries to become more sensitive to Others' culture in a cross-cultural setting, enabling them to adjust appropriately to their new host culture.

The above observations lead to some further reflection. Missionaries must develop self-awareness and be constantly learning and adjusting their behaviours to avoid over-reliance on home culture values. They must also nurture their ability to think independently and critically. When the situation permits, I propose that Chinese missionaries serve in multi-cultural teams to learn how to work appropriately in communities of different cultures as they minister to their host target group. They need to learn to embrace the differences in cultures to be a witness of unity and mutual acceptance in their host community. Cai, W. H. (2020) in her research showed that member care must be provided with cultural sensitivity to be effective.

Missionaries in cross-cultural ministry are to reflect authentic faith, establish deep relationships, and recognise their vulnerability and own need for redemption. Face culture

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can hinder in this process. The issue is how people can recognise and accept each other in their weaknesses. Flanders, C. L. (2011) states that the ideal situation would be to form relationships that would save God's Face, or to give honour to God.

4.2.0 Hierarchical Social Relationships

This section explores how the Chinese missionaries' relationships affect their adjustment to a different host culture. As they cross cultures, awareness of their own self-image, cultural values within their team and among Others are vital to their ultimate adjustment. The effects of social status on the relationship with Others, gender discrimination, and breakthroughs in social mobility are presented in detail in this section.

4.2.1 Stories about Social Class

4.2.1.1 Social Class within China

Alex grew up in the countryside and only had a middle school education. He has served in Northwest China for eight years. This is his account of how he chose to share the gospel with his target people group:

> Because of my background, I have more opportunities to get in touch with people at the grass roots, but less opportunity to encounter the upper class. I get to know people here as a worker. This is a natural way to meet people. When I was in a factory, I got to know many of the workers there. In recent years I often did business in the dried food market, consequently I was able to know many of the vendors in the market.

Walter also shared in a similar vein:

> In my mission field there are many co-workers. But no single missionary can deal with people from all social groups. Therefore, we need to know our own strength and find our target group accordingly. We have several co-workers who have university-level or above education. They formed a team to target the university students. But in my own team, members share a similar background to mine. We can only target the peasants, who belong to a lower social class. I am from the countryside, and I can easily become integrated with the peasants. I also had some experience of doing business, so I can interact with businesspeople with ease.

Darren commented on the social background of his upbringing and his opinion on social class:

> In my hometown there used to be many social classes. However, currently there are only two classes—the rich and the poor. All other matters are not so important. So, in my hometown people are classified according to how much money they have.

Serving in a Tibetan region, he has the following comment:

> The Tibetans have a strong sense of social class. Their primary idea is about their recognition of the aristocracy, and the second idea is about social status, by 'social status' I mean that their concept is that the monks (lamas) are completely different from the commoners. The monk's status is high, and the commoner's status is low. An aristocrat is in between, lower than the monk but higher than the commoner. Putting an aristocrat and a monk together, the monk will be respected more. So, in a Tibetan region, the monk enjoys the highest social status. For example, if there is a poor family, and if a child of this family becomes a monk, the family's status in the village will instantly be elevated. Furthermore, the Tibetans show considerable respect to the outsiders. An outsider, especially if he is recognised as a teacher, will enjoy much respect.

The above cases showed that missionaries decided who would become their mission Others usually based on their own social class and status. Their social classification was based not only on education level but also various forms of capital.

Mia gave the following description:

> I think I can associate with those who are poorer than me, or who are at the same level as myself. Whether in terms of education or wealth, I feel I can get closer to them if they are like me. Maybe it is because I have a sense of inferiority. I do not feel I can get close to those who are better educated or richer than I am. I always have a feeling that they are at a much higher place, and I am unable to communicate with them openly or to build a good relationship. Naturally, I want to stay away from them. Such feeling has an influence on what people group I can minister in. I tend to approach people of the lower class.

One's present social classification influences one's image and how one perceives Others. Because of this, China now has so-called white-collar churches, migrant churches, churches of businessmen, etc. If missionaries bring their home cultural values and social standing to the mission field, this could hinder their cultural acquisition, making it difficult to contextualise in the host culture.

As a leader of a mission team, Frank related that his team members encounter challenges when there is a clash in social class. He said:

> In our team, it could become a serious problem because team members come from different social classes, which could become an obstacle to their fellowship with each other. I often need to solve internal conflicts and correct their improper attitude caused by differences in social class. I need to correct their thinking and frequently need to remind them to avoid prejudice. Other people's attitude and speaking can be a mirror, giving off a true image of ourselves. Many times, we are not even aware that our manner was ostentatious or haughty. True fellowship cannot exist if members are not standing on equal terms. This self-awareness is critical to our team relationships.

Frank's point was that the existence of class and social status division can influence a missionary's relationship with the Others on the team and with the target people group. He continues his observation and understanding of his mission team:

> We all grew up in a society with social classes. Every missionary has his/her own particular social identity, profession, and family background. These things already existed before they became missionaries. For example, we have some team members from a wealthy background and their families are well off. There are some other members who are from the remote and extremely poor countryside. When these people come together, they cannot help but evaluate one another. I think this is a normal process, but it can become an obstacle to their relationship with one another. It is not easy for these people to serve in the same team. In my own team, I can also observe this. Certain team members form their own clique and communicate more with those in their clique, whereas some other members form another group of their own. The difference between the groups may be about how wealthy they are. There is an insurmountable obstacle between the groups.

The above account shows how social class inequality influenced the way missionaries within China see themselves and their relationship with Others. On the other hand, local people on the mission field can also be influenced by their awareness of social class when receiving the missionaries. Frank described the challenges and tensions his team faced because of differences in social backgrounds among the team members; one can imagine how difficult it would be to overcome the even larger social gap between them and the ethnic minority they serve.

4.2.1.2 Social Class Outside of China

This section will look at Chinese missionaries serving internationally. The following examples show how they perceive their own social identity in a different cultural setting and what tensions exist in their interaction with the local people groups.

Bob related his social background while he was growing up in China and how he sees himself:

> I did not have any significant social identity when I was in China. In a sense, I belonged to a vulnerable social group. I was classified as a self-employed worker and a private business owner. In China, I belonged to the 'well-off' peasant group. I was not yet a 'poor peasant', because I could still get by. I was not in the 'middle class' yet, but I could live reasonably well. This did not mean I had a high status in China. I was just an ordinary person. I did not have a high status. And I have never been in a prestigious occupation.

In 2006, Bob moved to Country PK where social class is even more rigid and divided than in China. He shared his impression when he met with a local church leader for the first time:

> PK is a country where people regard your social status as something extremely important. You must have a social identity to carry out your work and ministry. You will need to have a sufficiently high social status as well as enough financial support to match the social status of the people you intend to serve. After I arrived in this country, I was frequently confused. I often asked myself: 'Why does every local pastor want to make friends with the rich people, or people with great power, fame, or status?' I found I was in an awkward situation because I was not an 'ordained' minister, nor did I

have a teacher's certificate, or any kind of certificate (Bob smiled wryly). In such circumstances, how should I continue my ministry? The local people in Country PK regard their own social status as something extremely important as well.

Obviously, being part of the society, even the church, could not prevent differences originating from social class distinctions, especially economic ones. Bob also shared about his frustration when interacting with the local churches in Country PK:

> In the first few years after we came to Country PK, I did not care much about my social identity. When I was in China, I served in my church as a pastor, but not an 'ordained' minister. In churches in China, we don't have the titles of 'ordained minister' or 'junior pastor'. We just came together to serve the Lord. Some people become leaders, and others do not. But when I was in Country PK, a local pastor once asked me: 'Are you an ordained pastor?' I said: 'No, I am not ordained yet. But if you consider how much I have served as a pastor, I am quite qualified. I have ministered many churches and I am still ministering one.' He said: 'You are not ordained yet. I got it. Goodbye!' Another local pastor of Country PK came to me and said: 'Brother, we need you to help our church.' I said: 'We can supply manpower. We can also supply some theological teachers.' They said: 'We need money.' I said: 'This is not something I have (smiling).' That was the end of our relationship.

Scott is a missionary who served in Country PK at the same time as Bob. He shared his experience:

> In Country PK there are many poor people. The rich people would never hug them. These poor people belong to the 'servant' class. The rich, upper-class people do everything to avoid contacting the poor and the lower-class people. But when I was there, I deliberately approached the lower-class people. For example, I addressed my local employees as brothers. When I just arrived here, a senior missionary advised me that I should not address these workers as brothers, because I needed to maintain a status to win people's respect. Then they would listen to what I say. But in my mind, I often thought what Jesus would do if he were here. Should my relationship with the others be based on their local social classes, or should I treat people from different social classes in different ways? I struggled for a long time with this issue.

Carol has a master's degree and has been in Country JD for two years. This is how she learned to navigate social status in this country:

> I live in a city where there are a great number of rich people. I consequently had more contact with the rich people of this Muslim society. My instinct told me that I was not welcomed by them. I started to feel this was a very indifferent society, because the local people did not welcome me. I have been to other countries, such as the US, and some African and some Asian countries, where the local people all welcomed me and were happy to make friends with me. Since I am an extravert, if I can make friends, I will not be afraid of any other challenges. Afterward, an Arab friend reminded me that I should tell others I was an engineer, because people in this profession are much respected in this culture. I listened to his advice. Ever since then, I have never felt I was treated as a person of lower class. If I tell them my professional identity and my education background, they will show me full respect.

Chinese missionaries who serve overseas face a greater challenge than those serving domestically in dealing with social class gaps and value systems. However, this is also decided by the social condition of a particular country the missionaries are located. For

example, Carol's description of her experience in the US differed greatly from that in a Middle Eastern Muslim country.

4.2.1.3 Breaking into a New Social Class

A society with many social classes naturally creates gaps between individuals and other groups according to their identity and background, causing bias and prejudice. Nevertheless, this research revealed that some missionaries managed to break out of such social class confinement. Bob expressed frankly:

> Although I do not have a noble identity (in other people's eyes), nor am I in a prestigious profession, if we look at it through spiritual eyes, I am still a servant of God, and I always see myself as a servant of God. God's servant should be humble, and should not care about one's own, or other people's social status. I do not care about my own social status. I do not care how people look at me, whether they are richer or poorer than I. Whatever identity I have, I am always a servant of God first. It was with this identity that I came to Country PK. I do not have to relegate myself to the bottom of the society to share the gospel. Neither will I look down on others because of their social status. You need to treat others as people. Being a missionary, I must embrace all their culture and social classes.

Since Scott only has a middle school education, he had a strong sense of inferiority at the beginning of his missionary service. He was unable to overcome this sense of inferiority and questions from others about his educational background. But his transformation has started:

> My education level is low. People asked about my education all the time. A few days ago, a rich man of Country PK asked me again. He said: 'What educational degree do you have?' I could have told him falsely that I was a university graduate, but I did not do that. I told him my education level is low. I do not think I have to gain self-confidence from my educational background. My self-identity is decided by how God looks at me. God has taken me to this place, and He has also given me sufficient competence. But it was only after a long time that I made such a conclusion. I still need more breakthroughs. I feel if I did not find my true identity in God, I would not have been able to find peace in my heart, like I do today. Now I can look at my self-identity in a more balanced way.

Bonnie came to Country JD after graduating from university. She said: 'First of all, I will not look at them [the local people] as inferior to me. I will speak to them on an equal level. I see them as my equal. I do not have any prejudice against them.'

It should not be taken for granted that Bonnie did not have prejudice against those she serves. She admitted that she, too, saw her herself as better than Others. She said:

> The reason why I treat them in this way is probably because my attitude has changed. So, when I am with the local people, I will not look at the difference between our social statuses. I was not like this before. In the past I did see them as inferior, and I was superior. But now when I am with them, I will absolutely not have any reckless, discriminating expressions. I always maintain a humble and courteous attitude. I will let them know that I am approachable.

Bonnie described how she realised the gap between herself and Others affected her interactions and relationships with Others. Not only that, the relationship also works both ways. Even if she can look at Others from a perspective of equality, that does not mean that Others will do the same. But because Bonnie is committed to this attitude towards Others, she allowed Others to break through their own identity in their social class:

> I tend to be more willing to associate with people from the lower class, and I am reluctant to associate with people from higher class. There may be some barrier there. For me, I see myself as middle-class. I have friends from the lower classes, and I also have friends from the upper classes. There was misunderstanding when I associated with people of lower class because of our different value systems. Because of these experiences, I learnt how to associate with those in the lower-classes, and how to associate with those in the upper-classes. I learnt some skills from my experience. When I am in touch with people of lower class, I do not see them as of lower class. I treat them and speak to them in a way that shows we are on equal terms. I do not have any prejudice against them. From their side, they might have a sense of self-inferiority when they first meet me. They might be afraid of me at first. But after they saw how I treat them, and after they realised that I treat them as my equals, we can befriend each other. They will gradually get rid of their fear and become my intimate friends.

Not only did Bonnie share her breakthrough in her interaction with those who were of a lower social class, but she also experienced breakthroughs in her engagement with people of a higher social class. In particular, she used 'humble' to describe her attitude towards those of a higher social status than herself. This seemed to show that pride is reflected not only among people of higher social class but also among people of lower social status.

Bonnie adds:

> When I associate with people of the upper class, I will try to humble myself. Usually, these people of upper class tend to speak to others in a condescending manner. Their listeners are supposed to listen to them and follow their instructions humbly. They are also supposed to somewhat submissive to the upper-class people. But I do have my own principles. If there is anything against my principles, I will say no to them. I will tell them that I am different from others. This is how I see myself and how I stick to my principles. They may see me differently, as an inferior. But as they find out that I always stick to my principles and I am confident, they will start to show respect to me. In this way I will also have elevated myself to a level where we can stand on equal ground.

4.2.1.4 Analysis: Social Class

According to Gale, T. (2007) a social class is a group of people in a society with similar social and economic status. Class differences normally involve inequalities and prejudices between members of the different groups, such as between executive corporate officers and wage earners in factories. Life chances at education and jobs are highly

influenced by the class a person is born into; the higher one's social status, the better their chances for a solid education and meaningful career. Bourdieu, P.'s (1989) concept of capital provides a means of understanding Chinese missionaries' status in their field of ministry and how this affected their interaction with the host Others.

Social class values have been clearly manifested throughout China's history. Historically, China has always been a hierarchical society. Wen, Chongyi 文崇一 (1989, 46) asserts that Chinese people were classified according to their social value: On the top were the emperor and the royal family; below them were government officials (including central government and local government officials of various levels); the third class was the gentry; the fourth class, merchants; the fifth, peasants and labourers; the sixth, slaves, unemployed and idlers. Economic status was the principal criterion in classifying people.

Members of society are often unconsciously influenced by these social values when forming their own recognition of their value and social class affiliation. Wen, Chongyi 文崇一 (1993) points out that the Chinese value system creates a rigid class society. For example, politically, the ruler dominated the ruled, the aristocracy the civilians, and the royal family and court officials the commoners. Economically, landlords dominated the peasants who were their tenants. Although Chinese society has undergone massive transitions over the past 70 years, these social patterns still distinguish two main classes: the 'ruling class' and the 'ruled classes', according to Wu, Sung-Tse 吳松澤 (2005). Huang, Jianbo 黃劍波 (2007, 49) points out that the rapid urbanisation of Chinese society, has also seen a move of the church from rural to urban areas. However, 'from the perspective of the composition of the believers, the main body of Christianity in China is still the rural church.' Although churches are found in the cities, their rural church habitus continue to accompany them.

These social values have also influenced the Chinese missionaries regarding their value judgment of themselves as well as on Others.

The observations from the participants' stories were:

o   Social class division does have an influence on the missionaries. Their social values can affect which people group they choose to serve. Generally, they tended to serve people with a similar social status to their own or of lower status than themselves.

o   The judgment of social status depended on the level of education, the gap between the rich and the poor, and the capital of political power and social status.

o   The influence of social class is not only shown by how people group them together, but also helps to form one's internal criteria to evaluate oneself and Others, creating prejudice and discrimination.

o   The Chinese missionaries' perception of their own social class affected how they judged Others in the mission field. However, more variation was observed in the treatment of Others among missionaries serving overseas.

o   Missionaries will have to be aware of their own self-image and accept their social identity before being able to treat the Others in equal terms. The more they can accept their own identity, the easier it will become to treat Others as their equals. This was especially clear in Bob's case, because he was aware of his own social standing and able to accept his social identity. Thus, he was able to apply the principles of identity negotiation proposed by Ting-Toomey, S. (2015) as he reached out to Others.

4.2.2 Stories about Female Missionaries Who Faced Gender Discrimination

Women usually have a relatively low social status in a patriarchal society and China is no exception. However, the significance of the phrase 'women can hold up half the sky' in Mao's time is reflected in an emphasis on encouraging women to step out of their

traditional roles and enter the political and public spheres to participate in socialist construction and socialist revolution. As Mao Zedong pointed out, 'The times are different, men and women are the same, and what can be done by male comrades can also be done by female comrades.'[2] Mao continued, 'true equality between men and women can only be achieved in the socialist transformation of society as a whole.'[3] Women's status has improved significantly alongside the feminist movement in the West. However, the Confucian culture persists and China remains a patriarchal society dominated by men. When a Chinese female missionary leaves home and arrives in an even more conservative Islamic country, such male domination can be felt even more acutely. Many sociologists put gender differences in the category of social class and in my research interviews, I saw quite a few participants persistently raise the issue of gender discrimination, encouraging me to explore the challenges that Chinese female missionaries face.

Faye served in Country JD for four years. She recounts how a woman can be humiliated in a Muslim society:

> I do not like those people who ask me provoking questions or flirt with me. I tend to avoid talking to them. I feel women here are really treated by men as objects, as having no value. In many aspects, I can feel the arrogance of the men.

Jill, who has served in Country JD for 16 years, relates that most of her excitement and joy was from her being welcomed into the local society and local culture, but she also mentions the biggest obstacle she faced:

> Being a woman, it is very difficult to integrate into this Muslim society! First, this is a country without freedom. Women are confined, and this becomes a big challenge to me. For example, a woman cannot go out alone. She must be accompanied by someone else. This is very different from contemporary China. Although I have got used to staying home and doing housekeeping work, my experience in Country PK still makes me very depressed. I once stayed home for 10 months without going out. I felt I was suffering from depression. After returning to China, it took me a long time to recover. It was such a difficult process.

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[2] 'Chairman Mao and Chairman Liu talk freely about the Thirteen Lakes Reservoir', People's Daily, 27 May 1965, newsletter, 1965 年 5 月 27 日《人民日報》通訊《毛主席劉主席暢談十三陵水庫》。

[3] Mao Zedong: 'Commentary on the article "Women Took to the Labour Front", in The Collected Works of Mao Zedong, vol. 6, People's Publishing House, 1999, p. 453. 毛澤東：《〈婦女走上了勞動戰線〉一文按語》，中共中央文獻研究室編：《毛澤東文集》第 6 卷，人民出版社 1999 年版，第 453 頁。

Julia lived and served in Country PK for 10 years. She shares her experience:

> As a woman, my first challenge was to step out of our front door. Once when I was walking on the street in Country PK, a local man happened to walk toward me, as we were almost passing by each other, he suddenly stooped and pinched my thigh. In this place almost, all women have been harassed like this: being pinched on the buttocks, in the face, or someone bumping into your chest, or touching some other sensitive place on your body. The local men are extremely rude. Of course, we wear the local women's clothing when we go out, but they can immediately recognise that we are Chinese, because our eyes and nose are different from the local women. The men often harass us when there is a crowd and when they think they will not be noticed. You can imagine my feeling. It is extremely uncomfortable. I feel I want to hate them. I no longer want to love these people, let alone to share the gospel with them. I feel like I want to chop them into pieces and send them to Hell. I abhor them because I have been assaulted by them!

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that the Chinese female missionaries are filled with fear. Julia says:

> All the women missionaries on our team do not dare to walk outside alone. I think this is a big difference from life in China, where we can go anywhere freely. Here we must be escorted by our male friends. If our friend walks behind us, he cannot stop people harassing us from the front. So, we must have male friends walking both in the front and behind us. The first time I went out, I was very afraid, really afraid. This happened after I had stayed here for half a year. I wanted to go out to buy some vegetables and practice speaking the local language. I was terrified while outside. People here are so scary. They literally stare at you all the time until you have walked off a long distance. This is very terrifying. Being a woman, it is a big security issue walking outside of the house.

Joshua, Julia's husband, says:

> Living in a Muslim country, I have an impression that it is not easy for my wife to go out and do something alone. She will have to encounter many males, such as the shopkeepers, etc. It is not easy for her to go out and do something alone. So, either I will have to deal with such things by myself or we do it together. In this way, I feel it uses up all my time and it makes me tired. In this culture, a woman's safety must be considered. As a result, although we are both here, we are unable to do as much as two people can actually do if we were still in China.

Even though these quotes are from female missionaries serving in different Islamic countries, they shared similar challenges. The gender discrimination that they faced created feelings of fear and rejection in the female missionaries and a barrier to their reaching out to Others.

4.2.2.1 Social Identity Negotiation

Eva served in Country PK for more than 13 years and shared how she overcame her fear and sense of injustice by learning more about her new culture:

> I think this country is very unfair to women. I do like the biblical account of creation, in which God created Adam first, and then Eve, who is supposed to be a helper. But in this country where the male has absolute domination over the female, it brought us a great challenge, especially in the first few years we were here. When the local people saw us, they thought we were prostitutes, because many Chinese women had come here to work in the brothels before we arrived. But we have been gradually learning. We used to be ignorant, but now we know a lot, and I am now much stronger. To protect myself I must be strong. I have also begun to overcome fear and confinement.

Faye, who has been in Country JD for five years, shared how she used her standing as a mother and a wife to see things from the local women's perspective. This process helped her to cope in a society where gender discrimination is strong. She said:

> In a Middle Eastern society, we cannot communicate with the men. We must first communicate with the women. Since we are both women, we are either mothers or wives, it is easier for us to become close. I think the Middle Eastern women suffer more in psychological respects. Being a woman myself, I cannot accept polygamy. Even though I am from another country, I am still a woman. From the perspective of a woman, I feel for what the local women must be suffering. We stand on the same ground in this respect, and it is easier for me to approach the women here.

4.2.2.2 Analysis: Gender Discrimination

Ritzer, G. (2011) states that gender inequality is caused by women having fewer social resources, social status, power, and opportunities for self-realisation. Such inequality is not caused by physical gender differences, but by the social structure. Women are placed in a position where they are unable to acquire power, resulting in an inability to realise themselves as men could.

Among the 52 participants interviewed, 23 participants were female. Their mission fields were predominantly societies where males dominate females. Other than one exception where a female missionary was serving in a matriarchal Muslim community[4] the female missionaries have had to face unequal treatment or confinement because of their gender. The experience of these women in this study was that a male-dominated society caused them to live in fear. Leaving their homes, these missionaries had intended to live among Others and integrate into their life. But once they realised this was a society in which women are not respected at all, they experienced resentment against Others. Their instinctive reaction often was to seek self-protection and self-isolation. They suffered from discrimination and intimidation, and were also physically confined within

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[4] Sue served in a Muslim, matriarchal society in Country ID. During her time in that area, she was well received by the women in the local society.

their homes. Consequently, their physical, mental, and spiritual health were significantly affected, and their spouse and other family members had to take up an extra burden.

When these female missionaries moved to a new social setting, they found that the local people had stereotypical views of them. Since women were already marginalised in the local society, female missionaries could be easily and falsely labelled as prostitutes. In such circumstances, Chinese women missionaries were seen as lowly and unworthy, causing further difficulties and challenges for them.

In summary, the Chinese female missionaries' experience of humiliation in South Asian and Middle Eastern Muslim societies is widespread. However, it must also be noted that their experience is not only due to the patriarchal social environment, but also because Muslim men have a stereotyped image of Chinese women, and act inappropriately towards them. Nevertheless, in this research, I discovered that some female missionaries successfully applied the principles of identity negotiation to overcome these difficulties.

Some female missionaries were able to achieve breakthroughs by joining the local women's community, obtaining support as they shared 'oppression' with local women. As their perspective changed, so did their attitude and behaviour. Being women, wives, and mothers, they could more readily recognise themselves as in the same category as local women and treat them with more empathy. This commonality enabled them to negotiate their identity in line with theories put forward by Bhabha, H. (1994), and Ting-Toomey, S. (2015). Furthermore, the unfriendly situation and confinement forced the female missionaries to become more resilient.

4.2.3 Story of Transformation

In this research, one special case was found which represented a counter theme of the rigidly classified society. Bob had an experience different from all the others. The following is a brief account, from his first arrival in Country PK, when the local social

class gap was felt acutely and he struggled desperately to overcome the gaps to reach the

Others until he had a breakthrough a few years later.

4.2.3.1 From Peasant to Landlord

Bob shared his story:

> At first, I rented a piece of farmland. My intention was simple. I wanted to use this opportunity to get in touch with the local people and share the love of Jesus with them. There is not much love in this society. Afterward, I hired a Muslim labourer to work for me. I show my love to him by working alongside him in the field. Even though I was the boss, and he was my hired hand, we worked in the same field. Then he pointed at me with his forefinger and said to me, 'You are really unwise. How come you farm this way? You won't make any money.' I was surprised and thought in my heart, 'Why did you treat me like this? (laughing) After all, I am the boss, and I pay your wages. You were not respecting me. I loved you, but you didn't respect me.'

> Afterward, a local friend explained to me, 'Hey brother, this is not the way you do your job here. You must be like the local landlords. Since you are the boss, whether you are a big boss or a small boss, you will have to be like the local landlords. You will need to stand behind your workers, supervise over them, and direct them to do this and that. You should never do the work yourself. If you do, you will bring yourself down to their level. You will then be despised by your workers. No one will respect you. That was why your labourer dared to accuse you by pointing his forefinger to your face. This is the class difference in the local society'. After this occasion, I would always make sure that I stood behind my hired laborers and directed their work.

4.2.3.2 From Landlord to Agriculture Expert

Furthermore, Bob also shared how he managed to upgrade his professional skills and

made breakthroughs in associating with people from different social classes:

> I didn't have a prestigious family background. But because of what I have learned to do here, I have modified my speaking, my behaviour, and my multilingual skills to make an impression that I am from the upper class (laughing). In this place, people from lower class will not be able to have so much social experience like me. They will not have so much opportunity to learn.

> Since I love to study agriculture, I identified myself as an agriculture expert. If I travel to somewhere and the local people ask me who I am, I will tell them that I do farming. If they ask me why I do farming, I will tell them it was because I love agriculture, and I am an agriculture expert. Then I will start to explain the farming techniques. Some of the big landlords will come to invite me to their place. They will tell me that they have got several hundred acres of farming land, and ask me if I can instruct their laborers how to grow crops better, how to increase the harvest, and how to make more profit.

> I think no matter what profession I undertake; I must make a breakthrough. I must bring some help to the local people. In this way we can win their respect, and we can become helpful to them. Many landlords like to make friends with me because I can help make their land more productive. I have several friends who are landlords or government officials. On the other hand, I also have friends from the lower class. These people are very poor, and we approach them as if we were members of an NGO. We participate in natural disaster relief, and help them in practical ways to show that we love them. They do acknowledge us, and they also love us. When we help them, we eat with them, and we drink with them, because we want to let them know that they are not different from us. Instead, we want to dwell among them and love them. They acknowledge us and respect us. For these reasons we are welcomed by the local people.

4.2.3.3 From Monolingual to Multilingual

Bob also shared how he was able to associate with people of the upper class. He says:

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After I became a missionary, I spent two entire years to learn two languages. One was the local dialect of Country PK, and the second was English. I needed to learn English because when I was learning the local language, it was taught in English. These two years was a nightmare for me. It was a painful and unforgettable experience. Often when it was after midnight and when everyone else was asleep, I was still praying to God for more gifting in languages. But after I have gone through these two years, I was able to serve more ably in Country PK. Not only so, since I can also speak English, I am able to make friends with people of the upper class. Usually, people from upper class refuse to speak the local dialect. They only speak English to show off their social status and to demonstrate that they are different from people of the lower class. God helped me to master several languages so that I can associate with people from different social classes in Country PK.

4.2.3.4 From Weak to Strong

When Bob became multilingual, a landlord, an agricultural expert, and founder of an educational institution, he made a great breakthrough and overcame his original social identity. He excitedly described how he saw his role as an ambassador of the gospel:

We certainly want the Muslim people in Country PK to receive the gospel, but being messengers of the gospel does not mean we have to humble ourselves until people start to despise us. If we do, people will be convinced that once they receive Jesus, they will be cast down to a lower social class like you. No one likes to move from a higher class to a lower class, lose their social status, and be despised by others. I believe our gospel is something precious and glorious. We need to be proud of our Christian identity. The Muslims are proud of their Islamic faith and believe Allah is the greatest 'God'. They do not think our God is the greatest. They think our God is inferior, so they are not willing to abandon their great 'God' and accept our inferior God. But in fact, our God is the greatest, and our God is superior to their 'God'.

We Christians therefore must be proud of our faith. I have learnt to overcome my old identity. Only in this way can we have the courage to share the gospel with them. If you have not overcome your original identity, you will not be able to elevate yourself to the same level as the local people. They will not accept you if your status is lower than theirs. Therefore, when I approach them, I tend to assume an air of superiority, but I am not haughty, or ostentatious. But since Christ's life is in me, I am superior. Our God is the most superior God. Bearing this attitude, they will be more ready to accept me when I try to approach them. They will listen to me when I speak to them. They will become open when I share the gospel with them. When I share with them that Christ is superior, they will agree and say that my faith is better than their faith, and my God is more powerful than their god.

4.2.3.5 Analysis: Social mobility

In the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Education* (2000), Yang, Ying 楊瑩 writes that social mobility exists in a society where social stratification is not fixed and a person is able to move from one social stratum to another, upward, downward, or horizontally. Social mobility could be caused by an individual's intelligence, effort, and opportunity such as described in Bourdieu, P.'s (1984) class trajectories. Bob's experience fleshed out this understanding of social mobility. From peasant to landlord, from landlord to agricultural

expert, from monolingual to multilingual, he moved upward along the social stratification through continued learning and upgrading.

In a society with distinct social class divisions, a missionary must keep a healthy attitude toward his social identity and self-identity. He must see Others from God's perspective and treat Others as his equal. An internal incentive for Bob's social mobility was his desire to share his faith effectively with the people groups he was targeting. His primary motivation was most likely his self-identity as a 'missionary'. He proactively worked to upgrade his social status by changing his profession, learning new languages and academic skills.

Bob and Bonnie identify themselves as 'missionaries', which determined how they interact with Others. When Bob embraced the Others, and when Bonnie treated them as her equals, they did not see them as someone from a different social class. Instead, their attitude transcended class divisions. Their awareness of social class difference serves only as a tool to help them interact with the Others in the most appropriate way. In Bob's case, his missionary identity has apparently transcended his conventional social identity.

Bob's story reminded us of how Paul describes his 'social mobility' in 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23:

> Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself to slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I, myself am not under the law), to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Bob's social mobility gave him more opportunities to develop relationships with Others in various social contexts. In addition, he was able to negotiate his missionary identity to adjust to a new cross-cultural society and develop more opportunities to share the gospel with those mission Others.

4.2.4 Identity Negotiation

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As missionaries face a multi-faceted society in the mission field, their identity will change. Bhabha, H. (1994) states that heterogeneity has a positive effect on the promotion of equal intercultural exchange, which enriches human society.

Bob's story is a case of social mobility in which an individual makes a great achievement through his strong Christian faith, and persistence in self-upgrading, resulting in active participation in different social groups. In many nations or ethnic groups, social class is based on familial relations and kinship, such as the caste system in India. In a rigidly stratified society, people from different strata or classes are not able to interact or communicate effectively. Aloofness and rejection are the norms. Bob's story is a rare case, because he managed to interact with and move between social classes, and was welcomed by them. His success led me to consider that while social mobility is usually said to be achieved through education, the challenge is how to create it in a traditional, rigidly stratified society. In Country PK, Christianity is commonly thought of as the faith of people of the lowest class, and members of the upper classes tend to reject it because of their social status. Using Bob's example, Christians of a lower class could possibly improve their social status with the help of their faith and consequently break out of the social confinement and the segregation they feel.

The theory of identity negotiation explained the process Bob went through, one of constant adjustment from home to host identity. Just as Ting-Toomey, S. (2015, 418) writes:

> The competent identity negotiation process emphasises the importance of integrating the necessary intercultural identity-based knowledge, mindfulness, and interaction skills to communicate appropriately, effectively, and adaptively with culturally dissimilar Others. Satisfactory identity negotiation outcomes include the feeling of being understood, respected, and affirmatively valued.

Bob's transformation was tied to his living and working in a different cultural context. If he had been living in China, his chances of success would have been greatly

reduced. The missionaries' challenges and opportunities are amplified simultaneously as they cross-cultures.

By analysing Bob's case, I found that differences between his original cultural and his personal background contributed to his transformation. For example, he had a background in agriculture, but in China, without private ownership of land, farmers would never be able to become landowners and he could not use his agricultural skills to advance his social identity. However, this obstacle disappeared once he went to Country PK. Just a change in external conditions does not guarantee transformation and much also depends on one's background and effort. If Bob had gone to a mission field without an agricultural sector, such as the Middle Eastern oil-producing countries, his agricultural skills would not have been as useful. On the contrary, if a Chinese missionary had a background in the oil industry, his chances of rising in social status there might be greater.

Ricoeur, P. (1986) wrote that narrative serves as the process and medium of self-identity constitution. The story becomes a medium that connects the past, present and possible future. A more significant story is formed between each story through a process of change, of identity negotiation. Bob's story of constant transformation could be a model for future missionaries; through such stories, more Chinese missionaries could be encouraged to step out of their self-limiting beliefs and move towards a constantly transforming and transcending identity. Research would need to be done by China's mission sending organisations to see if a rise in social status would result in a better relationship with the target people group.

4.2.5 Summary of Hierarchical Social Relationships (High and Low)

This section looks at three important factors in a society with rigid class divisions: social class, gender discrimination, and social mobility. Being placed in a new social setting, the missionary must consider how to treat Others in the mission field, but also how Others

treat the missionaries based on their own social position and perspective (Bourdieu, P., 1986). The attitudes of both sides decide their relationship and whether missionaries can be accepted and welcomed by Others. How missionaries respond to Others' attitudes is a decisive factor in their willingness to approach Others.

The missionaries' self-identity greatly influenced how they perceived Others. Their existing social identity can also determine how they are viewed by Others in the host society. The findings and analysis in this section showed that:

o The way missionaries perceive themselves and Others is based on their pre-existing belief of social class division and social values.

o Missionaries had already been socially classified unconsciously in their upbringing. Their perception of their 'self' and the 'others' is based on this pre-existing condition in their home country.

o When missionaries arrive at the cross-cultural field, the concept of high and low social status affected how they evaluated themselves, as well as how they treated Others.

o Once on the mission field, missionaries tend to approach people having similar backgrounds and social statuses as their own or those who belong to a lower class.

o Missionaries can be treated differently when placed in different social strata. They will either be welcomed or rejected due to such factors as their social status such as educational background, professional experience, economic status, gender.

o In a host society where the male dominates the female, female missionaries will face a lot of challenges. This has caused many female missionaries to be unable to reach out effectively to Others and share in their lives on the mission field.

Notwithstanding this, breakthroughs occurred when the missionaries allowed the context to mould them to work more effectively. They might be rejected and discriminated against in the host society, but their willingness to adjust their attitude and

perspective was a key to success. The missionaries had more chances to be accepted by Others or to move to a different social stratum if they were able to proactively upgrade themselves in terms of language learning or by gaining new professional skills. A missionary who already had a higher social status could approach people from lower social classes but must maintain a humble attitude. A missionary's success in social mobility encouraged Others from different social classes of the host country to work towards becoming more socially mobile. Finally, the Christian faith was a great influence on the missionary's social identity negotiation as they transitioned between their home and host societies.

In conclusion, the dichotomy of 'High' and 'Low' in social status describes how the missionary's own hierarchical social values affect how they viewed themselves and how they related to the Others. This is evident from the data presented in the three themes discussed in this section: social class, gender discrimination and social mobility.

The philosophical concepts of High and Low introduced here include factors such as education, social status, profession, wealth, and gender. They also describe the value judgements people make in an established value system. However, the dichotomy of High and Low can lead to a distortion in relationships between people, as when people see themselves as superior or inferior to Others, they cannot create 'equal' relationships with them.

By reflecting on Bob's case study, I discovered that the missionaries must constantly engage in self-improvement and through the negotiation of identity, can remove feelings of superiority or inferiority and become a bridge and bring blessing to different levels of the host society.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings and analysis of the identity construction of the Chinese missionaries from the cultural and social perspectives. Culturally, I discovered that familism, Face-culture, and authoritarianism shaped the distinction between Close and Distant in relationships in the missionary's identity construction. From the social perspective, social class, gender discrimination and social mobility influenced the construction of the missionary's identity and produced a High and Low power distance in relationships with Others. In the following chapter, I present the findings and analysis of the identity construction of the missionaries from ethnic and religious perspectives.

<p style="text-align: center;">**Chapter Five**</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">**Findings and Analysis Part Two: Ethnicity and Religious Traditions**</p>

Introduction

This chapter continues to report the findings and analyses of the in-depth interviews with the Chinese missionaries. Following the role of cultural traditions and hierarchical social relationships in identity construction presented in the previous Chapter Four, I now present how ethnicity and religious background affects the missionaries' identity.

5.1.0 Ethnicity

Kaufman, A. (2010) writes that Chinese scholars have described 1840 to 1949 as a 'century of humiliation' because China was invaded by foreign powers for one hundred years. With the later expansion of China's economic, military, and international influence in the twenty-first century, this narrative framework of national shame was used by some scholars and political figures to construct a form of Chinese nationalism, using it to describe the history of China from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century when China was humiliated by the West and Japan. This has led to a nationalistic complexity when Chinese missionaries view their national identity.

5.1.1 Background

As missionaries cross cultures, their ethnic backgrounds may create tensions in their relationships with Others. Bourdieu, P. (2016) points out in his field theory that field is a concept space, a social space which influences the positioning and relationships of the social actors. In their respective fields, the missionaries create varying narratives depending on their ethnicity and their relationships with Others.

When Chinese missionaries are sent to serve in north-western China, they cannot avoid facing a restrictive political environment in which minority groups have been subjected to a policy of religious Sinicisation imposed by the Chinese government. For example, in the past 10 years in Xinjiang, historic mosques are not allowed to display Arabic writing and have been renovated to remove any foreign architectural designs. In some areas, men are no longer allowed to grow a beard and women are no longer allowed to wear head covering. Thousands of families have been split apart and men have been sent to re-education camps[1] to dilute their original cultural and beliefs. This obviously affects the attitude of the local people towards all Han Chinese, including missionaries. When such policies of sending people to re-education camps were enacted, Han missionaries found themselves standing between a marginalised minority group and the mainstream ruling culture.

Likewise, missionaries serving internationally must face differing political and cultural settings. China has been vigorously promoting the development of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) across Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Continental Europe (covering much of the 10/40 window).[2] In addition to lending financial support, this initiative has built infrastructure for many developing countries. Initially, the receiving countries were welcoming and receptive to the BRI. In such a receptive situation, Chinese missionaries had an easier time developing relationships with Others. However, over time, many local governments realised that they could not repay their debts to China. As China's role as creditor dealing with debtor countries (such as

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[1] From the Chinese government's perspective, the re-education camps are a form of 'education and vocational training' for the Muslim minority, but according to different sources, they are a means of 'thought transformation' for the Chinese Muslim minority with a political agenda. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-54195325 Access date: 2020-10-08

[2] Most of the people groups unreached by the gospel live within a rectangular area stretching across northern Africa and into southern Asia. Christian missions' strategist Luis Bush started calling this rectangular area or band 'the 10/40 window.' 10/40 window covers Africa and Asia from 10 degrees latitude north of the equator to 40 degrees latitude north of the equator. http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/1040.htm Access date: 2020-11-08

Sri Lanka, Malaysia) [3] caused relationships with them to become tense, Chinese missionaries were negatively impacted. Guy Burton (2018) in his article 'Public Opinion in the Middle East toward China' writes that it is critical to 'better understand the public attitudes towards China's growing footprint in the region, their opinions and judgments of the BRI, and how they see China in relation to other powerful actors in the Middle East.'[4] Relationships and perceptions between nations affect the way missionaries relate to Others in their mission field.

Because the missionaries are not the only expatriates living in the mission fields, their relationships with Others are shaped not only by political issues but also by the actions of other expatriates. As Chinese businessmen, construction workers and even sex workers have brought their businesses and service to these BRI countries, the attitudes of the local people towards Chinese in general have also been influenced. The lifestyle, food habits, type of work and behaviour of these Chinese expatriates have become stereotypes for the people of these BRI countries.

5.1.2 Stories about Han-centrism

All the 52 participants in my study were Han Chinese. Of these, 22 were serving ethnic minorities domestically in China. Han-centric ideas of superiority over other ethnic groups can result in discrimination against minorities. This was a common thread in the interviews with these Han missionaries about their interactions with Others.

Mia, who served in Northwest China's Muslim area for four years, shared:

I have never deliberately despised those from the ethnic minorities. I simply felt that I was proud to be a Han Chinese. I had a sense of superiority. After I arrived in the mission field and encountered other cultures, I started to realise that unconsciously I had looked down on them (the ethnic minority people). I had a sense of superiority just because I was a Han Chinese.

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[3] https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3093218/belt-and-road-initiative-debt-how-big-it-and-whats-next Access date: 2020-11-09

[4] https://www.mei.edu/publications/public-opinion-middle-east-toward-china Access date: 2020-11-09

Frank said:

> Our government has educated us to believe that the Han are like the Big Brother, and represents all of China. All other the other 55 people groups belong to China. It is wrong to seek independence. This is an idea we have been educated of since an early age. So, we do not have a desire to know their (the ethnic minority groups') history. We are ignorant of these people's situation before they were annexed into China. An average person will not bother to learn this history. We simply think, how can it be possible that someone wants to be independent? China is a unified country. It is like a betrayal to want to be independent. Our country has the right to take any measures to prevent dis-unification. The government is on our side.

Harry continues with:

> The Han is the biggest ethnic group in China. Therefore, we look down upon the minority groups. We tend to have a sense of superiority and regard ourselves as providers of charity. It is like, we are better off than you at any rate, and you are backward. Some missionaries went with such a mindset, and they unwittingly had a sense that they were the 'saviours' of the local people.

John, working in a Tibetan region, shared:

> I did not know much about their (minority people groups') background, way of thinking or how they did things before I joined the mission. Naturally, we tended to treat them with the values of the Han people. But they are quite different from us, in terms of mindset and behaviours. Sometimes when we hoped, out of good intention, that they should do things our way, but they do not, we began to feel these people are incorrigible, or they are at a lowly level.

Diane, who served in both Muslim and Tibetan areas, replied:

> Every people group is ethnocentric to some degree, but Han Chinese have gone to an extreme. To me, to be Chinese is to be Han. My ethnic identity and political identity are the same. But this is not to China's minority people groups. Being Han, we are used to being recognised by them, but we are not used to recognise them as distinct people groups.

5.1.2.1 Analysis: Han-centric

Almost all the Chinese missionaries serving in a cross-cultural setting believed that their Han culture is superior to and more 'civilised' than minority cultures. The difference between the Han and the minority groups is not a matter of population numbers, but rather about the Han Chinese culture being the core of the Middle Kingdom and overpowering minority cultures. As the Han missionaries served in minority areas, their superior attitude caused them to look down on the Others, preventing the creation of equal relationships (Sun, Xiangchen 孫向晨 2021, and Han, Dongyu 韓東育, 2019).

Chinese historian Ge, Zhaoguang 葛兆光 (2017, 136) explains the Chinese concept of 天下 'tian xia' (everything under Heaven) from four perspectives: geography, ethnicity, culture, and politics. Geographically, the world must have a centre and the four directions

of north, south, east, and west. The Chinese see themselves as central, in contrast to the Others at the periphery, and the country is known as the 'Middle Kingdom' under Heaven. At the centre sits the honoured ruler, with all subordinates at the periphery. When the missionaries place their ethnic identity at the centre and regard only themselves as civilised, they will be unable to treat the others as their equal, resulting in an estranged relationship with them. From historical China to emerging modern China, the national identity of the Chinese people has changed and nationalism has now become a major obstacle for Chinese missionaries. Even the CCP agreed that this is a problem: 'Han superiority is a manifestation of Han-centrism in China. It reflected the ideology of exploiting social class in ethnic relationships in China. It is a type of nationalism which discriminates against the vulnerable ethnic groups.'[5]

5.1.3 Stories about Chinese Ethnocentrism

The above quotes showed the missionaries' Han-Centrism when serving in minority areas within China. The following demonstrate Chinese ethnocentrism by missionaries outside of China.

Joshua said:

I felt I was welcomed well when I arrived in Country PK, because Country PK maintains a good relationship, politically, with China. Therefore, they treat Chinese people with respect. In their minds, they still think Chinese are good, and we are respected by them there.

Iona, working in Country JD, shared:

I think the people here like Chinese because China has helped a lot of other countries in the area, and China is a country which loves peace. Every time I walk in the street, people will speak to me, and ask me if I am Chinese. They also have a lot of trade with China.

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[5] From "Han-centrism and Local Nationalism", Communist Party News Net. 摘自《大漢族主義和地方民族主義》，中國共產黨新聞網.
http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/64107/65708/66066/66078/4468606.html Access date: 2019-10-10

Sally continued with: 'I feel China is becoming stronger and stronger. We feel more and more proud of being Chinese.'

Bonnie said:

I was not very much aware of such issues as ethnic and national identities before I left China. Afterwards, because of the development in China, I have been much more aware of my identities. When you travel to a country which is less developed than China, and when this country happens to respect China very much, you feel like you are being treated in a special way. This is how they treat us. You are treated as a priority, and you can enjoy being treated better than the local people.

Charles said:

I think this is a gift that God gave to China. Had it not been so, we will not have had any opportunity (for missions) at all. Our understanding of the Gospel and of God has only changed significantly in recent years. I did not think about such questions. It was only until I encountered many people, and they constantly commented: 'You are outstanding!'; 'You are precious to us!' etc. In fact, I do not feel superior, but this is a reminder that God has opened doors and He takes what we are doing now very seriously.

Justin shared:

A strong China makes us more confident. I think being Chinese we have a sense of ethnic superiority. But the good thing is that people can see we are doing good for their country. They recognise us as being diligent, industrious, and punctual. We are not so flexible as them in terms of punctuality. In Chinese culture, we regard planning as something especially important. We make plans and we follow our plans. For example, when we live here, we plan for tomorrow. The local people are not like us. They spend all their money today and do not worry about tomorrow. So, in this aspect, they can learn something from the Chinese and improve their own way of life.

Scott said:

I think God has been helping us for so many years. Our country has a definite culture and political ideology. We are a strong country, and we are a good country. In fact, when we first arrived here, and when we were asked, we would proudly tell them about the development of our country – our trains are fast, our infrastructure is great, our streets are clean, etc.

Warren added:

I strongly believe that it is God who arranged for the Chinese to share the gospel with the Arabs in the Middle East. I believe God must have reserved the Chinese to share the gospel with the Arabs, therefore, God will also prepare the Arabs to receive us. They treat the Chinese with a kind of unexplainable hospitality. All I can say is that God must have created this situation.

Peter said:

I think God must have His special purpose to make me a Chinese who grew up in China. When I am here, I can do a lot of things many Western missions cannot do, just because I am Chinese. I think this is a great advantage. Most people in this country respect the Chinese very much. They have even provided us with a lot of conveniences. I should say, my ethnic identity is really something good.

From the accounts of the above missionaries, I found two different levels of superiority. In Bonnie and Justin's cases, 'superior' status came from the international influence of China. Justin, Charles, and others saw their 'superiority' from a spiritual

aspect as God's divine plan. Both kinds of superiority shown above are similar to the views that Western missionaries had when they were sent out in the nineteenth century (Chuang, Tsukung 莊祖鯤, 2004).

When missionaries were placed in welcoming environments, their sense of ethnic superiority naturally emerged. However, Chinese missionaries are not always welcomed, because some countries have political tension with China and do not welcome her citizens. The following reflects one missionary's feelings in such a case. In our conversation, I asked Jason what his deepest impression was after he left his homeland.

Jason suddenly raised his voice and said emotionally:

Actually, I do have a strong sense of ethnic emotion (that may not be true for everyone). For example, I just mentioned in passing about going to Japan. But when you mentioned Japan again, you have crossed the red line of many Chinese people's emotions. They remember the harm Japan inflicted on China in the past. It cannot be easily forgotten or dealt with. You will definitely step on a landmine unless you deal with it with great caution.

Harry said: 'The other side of our ethnocentrism is fear. What do we fear? We are afraid of being taken advantage of because Han Chinese have also been taken advantage of by the minority peoples in the past'.

Both Tricia and Edward mentioned that if China and their host country were in a good relationship, the local people would treat Chinese well. If the local people did not like China, they would be made to feel uncomfortable.

Matthew shared:

I was not much aware of it when I first arrived in Country ID… Afterward, I started to learn from some Muslim friends, that the local people did not like two groups of people. The local Muslims did not like the Christians and the [local] Chinese. The Muslims did not like the Christians because they had different religion. The local Chinese have their own history, and they did not like the Muslims either. But I am both a Chinese and a Christian, so there is an internal tension or contradiction. For example, I had a teacher at university who used to talk about China. He sometimes talked about the good things in China, such as the economy, but some other times he talked about the bad things in China, such as the politics, and often, I could agree with his opinion. But if another teacher mentioned negative aspects, i.e., if China's economy were not so good, I would start questioning in my mind: 'Did Country ID develop more rapidly than China?' I would begin to think: 'Your economy is no better than ours. Your country is certainly lagging behind, and you need China's support and aid.'

5.1.3.1 Analysis: Chinese Ethnocentrism

In summary, the Han Chinese missionaries demonstrated a sense of ethnic superiority when they entered an overseas setting. They shared the following common traits:

o Historical perspective: They believed that China had historical superiority. They were taught by the educational system and the Chinese government to believe that China had always been a great nation, and that the Han Chinese are the best people in the world. However, in the past century or so, China suffered from foreign invasions and subsequent damage. Nationalist sentiment was often based on a concept of national superiority, but also reflected the hatred that comes from being bullied or invaded.

o Political propaganda: The government has taken measures to promote a sense of national and ethnic superiority. They used the media (Hall, S. 2013) to emphasise China's suffering in the past century to reinforce their citizens' sense of outrage. China's emergence on the international stage in the past two decades has made her citizens proud of their nation and of being Chinese. Even while overseas, Chinese missionaries still paid close attention to China's domestic political situation and her status in the world.

o Dual identity: The missionaries had to reconcile their belonging to a powerful country with their lower status as a missionary. The missionaries believed that being Chinese was a gift bestowed by God and were trying to connect the power of their nationality to evangelical missions. Many believed that China's mission movement is significantly connected with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'imperialism' is defined as: 'A policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonisation, use of military force, or other means.'[6] The strength of an empire is built on its national identity and strong

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[6] https://www.lexico.com/definition/imperialism Access date: 2021-05-27

political consciousness. The rise of the Chinese Empire is not like the British Empire, which used military power to conquer and colonise Others as its power and influence stretched all over the globe.[7] Even though China has been invaded by colonial powers, the BRI and its influence on the economies and cultures of the world seem to be a new type of imperialism. When China became stronger, the missionaries' superiority increased, and they fell into the trap of looking down on Others. According to Shen, Liu 沈六 (2000), a sense of ethnic superiority develops when the government or people of a certain country judges or evaluates other cultures or countries by the criteria of their own culture and country, and then rejects or despises them. This sense of superiority damages an individual's objectivity, causing inability to understand and appreciate the value systems of Others and preventing empathy. This kind of ethnocentrism was seen in the stories of 38 of the Chinese missionaries.

5.1.3.2 Beyond Ethnocentrism

However, not all missionaries shared the attitudes described above and some held opposite opinions to Jason (5.1.3). The following can be regarded as the other end of the spectrum.

Bob said:

I have been a Christian since an early age. I do not think I have a strong ethnic or national complex. I do not love my home country, I love Jesus. I am from a house church, and our church suffered a lot of persecution. I was also detained once. When I was 12 years old, after I was baptized, I was arrested while attending a summer retreat. I was interrogated and imprisoned. I was only 12 years old! They said: 'This kid is too young. We cannot put him into custody. That would cause damage to his psychological development'. If something happened, they would not take the responsibility. So, they kept me in detention, but I was allowed to play in the courtyard of the prison. So, I do not love this country because they persecuted me for my faith in Jesus Christ. Actually, I think they also need to hear the gospel of the Lord. It is not that I do not love the country. I do love the people; I do love my country. But I am not talking about patriotism. I am talking about how God loves the world.

How do the local people treat me as a Chinese? In this respect I have learnt a lot from the local people. For example, how do the people in Country PK become patriotic? They certainly love their country, but primarily they will say they are Muslim, and then afterward they say they are PK Muslim, and then they are PK Muslim from a certain ethnic group, and then they say they are from a certain clan, or a certain extended family. Their religion (religious faith) comes first, then their nation, then their ethnic group, and finally their family and individual. So, when they treat me as a

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[7] https://www.britishempire.co.uk Access date: 2021-05-27

Chinese, primarily they do not regard me as a certain type of Chinese. Rather, they look at my religion (faith) in the first place. This is their primary consideration.

Bob's contrary account is also echoed by George, who served in the Northwest of China and was later sent to the Middle East. He said:

> I served in XJ for 7 years. I love the U people sincerely. Although I am an ethnic Han, I love the U people. For this reason, I am much appreciated by those I serve here. My local name is Ali. I did not take a biblical name, but a common Muslim name. Many local people were surprised when they met me the first time. Ali? They would ask me if I were a Muslim, but I would say I was not a Muslim, but a Christian. This became a nice starting point for our interaction. These Muslim friends like my name, Ali. It is like Paul being a favourite name for Christians. Being Ali, I can become their intimate friend, and they are more willing to accept me.

Sally shared:

> China is becoming stronger and stronger. When we feel China is getting stronger, we Chinese also feel more proud of the fact. But for me, I have never looked down on the people in Country PK even though many of them are still living in poverty. Nor have I ever felt they are inferior. I absolutely never had such an idea.

Tom, his wife, and daughter are the only family among my interviewees serving in Japan. To many Chinese, the Japanese invasion during World War II and the damage arising from it are an unforgettable memory which have prevented many Chinese missionaries having a burden for Japan. But Tom said:

> Talking about mission to Japan, I think many people may believe that our aim is to get the Japanese to repent. But I do not think so. I think what needs to be changed are ourselves and our heart. For example, my pride, my self-righteousness, and sense of superiority. So, my issue now is not about Japanese. I love them. I learned their language. I often reflected on whether I have any hidden issues that need to be dealt with. So, I confess there is a bigger sin in my heart, and the problem of how I view Japanese is a smaller sin. Then how to get rid of the burden? To forgive, and to accept. There are no other ways. Forgiveness, acceptance, and reconciliation, when these are done, the burden in our heart will be no more. Then we will be able to pass on to reconciliation, forgiveness, and the gospel of peace.

Joshua said:

> I think we need to deliberately approach the host people several times, to build a relationship with them. We need to understand that this tension is a consequence caused by cross-national political conflicts of interest. But personal relationships between the Chinese and the people of Country JD should not be affected. We must realise that we are all created by God. We need to understand that we are different, but we also need to respect each other. Then we can build up a good relationship.

Julia shared:

> When the local people are prejudiced against us Chinese, my first reaction is that I will not be like them. I do not think I should argue with them. If I have local friend, and if our friendship is long lasting, I would gradually build up a relationship with them and help them to understand me. I would never debate with them because I want them to see me and listen to me, and I need to help them understand me. So, I do not argue with words.

Alex shared that when he is caught between the policies of the government and the minority Others in China, he chose to side with the minority people. He said:

> Because I am the peace maker. The Lord wants me to become a bridge, a mediator. I am grateful, because many difficult things have happened in the past few years, and there is a lot of tension. But overall, by God's grace, we have been able to bless the government and bless the local people.

Brian shared:

> In my opinion, the Chinese educational system puts a great emphasis on political conformity and nationalism. Such emphasis also has an influence on how we treat the ethnic minorities. Looking at history, we see the government suppressed the rebellions and independence efforts of the minorities, whereas the minorities have also invaded, harmed, slaughtered, and attacked us (Han Chinese). I think this is a historical issue, and it has many consequences which can still be felt today. As for myself, I regard myself as an ambassador of reconciliation. I do not mean the kind of reconciliation, which is just between two people – getting them put their hands together and shake hands. I think the key point is that both sides want to change, and only the gospel can bring such real change. Only Jesus can truly change them. Therefore, in a cross-cultural setting, we Christians are taking up an especially important identity and task.

Bob's and the accounts above are very different from the rest of the interviewees' regarding nationalism and ethnic identity. Bob does not have a strong sense of national and political identity. His background has influenced his lack of ethnocentrism. As he grew up in a pre-dominantly Christian environment and Christianity is marginalised in China's political system, he experienced religious persecution at an early age. He believes that loving God is more important than loving country. So, in the people group he is serving, he realised that the Others regard their faith, rather than their ethnic or national identity, as the most critical issue. This realisation confirms and reinforces his idea that religious identity comes before ethnic and national identities. Finally, Bob can acknowledge the value system of the people group he is serving, and he is willing to break through the confinement of his self-identity to approach the Others more effectively.

5.1.3.3 Analysis: Beyond Ethnocentrism

Of the 52 interviewees, a total of 38 mentioned tensions stemming from the issue of ethnicity. In this study, the interviewees' attitudes regarding their ethnicity formed a spectrum. The first group of 11 interviewees had a strong sense of their own ethnicity and little awareness of Others'. When sharing about their ethnicity during their interaction with Others, they had distinct attitudes depending on their setting. Where they felt

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welcomed, the missionaries were proud, regarding their national and ethnic identity as something superior and looked down on Others. Where they were not welcomed, the missionaries tended to isolate themselves, blaming Others as the cause of their reactions and believing that rejection by Others' was the reason that they could not accomplish their goals rather than their own shortcomings.

A second group of 11 interviewees had some self-awareness regarding their ethnicity and its influence on their interaction with Others, but could not adjust their mindset to embrace Others fully. Some were aware of and disliked their own ethnocentrism, but could not change as they fully accepted their government's description and stereotypical image of Others. They have seen how Others have suffered because of their ethnic identity, but found their position awkward as they were caught between the aggressors (the Han Chinese majority-controlled government) and the oppressed (the minority people).

The last group of 16 interviewees did not seem limited by their ethnicity. Whether they were welcomed or not, they were able to embrace Others by seeing their ethnicity from the Others' perspective and avoided stereotyping. This enabled them to invest time and effort to cultivate personal relationships with Others and act as a 'bridge' or peace makers in their relationships with them. The above findings echo the observations of Barth, F. (1969, 1981), who argues that ethnic boundaries can be crossed in the process of interaction with the other.

When missionaries entered their cross-cultural field, they were able to start their process of identity negotiation in the new context. As Ting-Toomey, S. (2015, 418-22) proposed:

> Individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivational needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency on both group-based and person-based identity levels. However, too much emotional security will lead to tight ethnocentrism, and, conversely, too much emotional insecurity (or vulnerability) will lead to fear of out-groups or strangers. The same underlying principle applies to identity inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency. Thus, an optimal range exists on the various identity negotiation dialectical spectrums.

5.1.4 Stories about Nationalism and Patriotism

Even though some scholars treat these as separate issues, in this section, the words 民族

主義 'minzu zhuyi' (nationalism) and 愛國主義 'aiguo zhuyi' (patriotism) are used

interchangeably, because the two concepts are intertwined in today's China,. The CCP

promotes the concept that one should love one's country more than even one's parents,

because without a country, one would not even have one's family.[8] The Chinese

missionaries have been taught to be loyal to their homeland, and their love for China is

especially obvious when they go abroad.

Jason is an amateur historian and before he went to Country PK, he had visited

many ethnic minorities in China. He is a skilful speaker and much of his internal world

and ideas are revealed in his interview. Jason said:

> I believe the Han Chinese is the best ethnic group. We are the leading people of the world. For a long time in history, we had been the leading people of the entire world, though we are not the top leader now. But we are proactively getting back to that point (of assuming the position of the world leader). So, I feel immensely proud being a Chinese. Of course, it does not mean I am haughty. The pride comes from my identity. I feel content about it. Being haughty refers to the feeling that my ethnic group is superior to other ethnic groups—we are better, you are worse.

Jason used the term 'patriotism' to describe his recognition of and affection for his

country. He said:

> I have been living overseas for four years and I can now appreciate more of the word 'patriotism'. It means wherever I go, whichever country I stay in, my heart is still in China. All my concerns are about China's status in the world and about what conflicts and difficulties she is encountering, etc. Wherever I travel to, I care about the Chinese. I am concerned of their current situation, and the situation of our country, what breakthroughs she has made, and what contributions she has made to the world, etc. How have they been doing in the progress to achieve the China Dream and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. You pay a constant attention to the development of your hometown. And you pay constant attention to the latest news about China. This, I think, is what patriotism means.

Most interviewees expressed similar opinions to Jason about their ethnic identity or

sense of nationalism, especially when aboard. When they spoke, they demonstrated a keen

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[8] Wu, Fulai 吳付來 (2020) 'The Chinese Communist Party is the strongest promoter and practitioner of patriotism' http://theory.people.com.cn/BIG5/n1/2020/0323/c40531-31643374.html Access date: 2020-10-11

sense of pride and honour to be Chinese and found it difficult to differentiate between ethnic pride and patriotism.

5.1.4.1 Analysis: Nationalism and Patriotism

Anderson, B. (2016) defined a nation as a group of 'Imagined Communities'. The Chinese nation is imagined as the 'Middle Kingdom', which elevates China to a dominant position and assigns all other nations a backward and uncivilised status. Doong, Jia Hwa 董家驊 (2019b, 25) argues that: 'Nationalism has become a group emotion, almost a religious one, requiring people to be unconditionally loyal to the group and reject dissidents.'

Nationalism in China is something the CCP wants to construct intentionally. The article entitled: 'Outline on the Establishment and Implementation of Citizen Morality for the New Era', was released by the CCP Central Committee and the National State Council in November 2019 and states that:

> Patriotism is the core spirit of the Chinese Nation and is the greatest spiritual force unifying all Chinese people. Patriotism is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of the Chinese people. It unifies and brings harmony to all ethnic groups living on Chinese soil. It encourages Chinese people, from generation to generation, to constantly strive for the development and prosperity of their homeland.[9]

The CCP is intentionally utilising various methods to promote patriotism among people from all walks of life to influence Chinese youth.

Ge, Zhaoguang 葛兆光 (2011) described the modern transformation of China not from an empire to nation-state, but rather from a concept of 'state' within an empire. Today's Chinese mindset has been affected by the shame of being invaded by colonial powers and the idea that China is always subjected to external threats. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, patriotism has been used to unite the different ethnic groups.

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[9] 'Outline on the Establishment and Implementation of Citizen Morality for the New Era',《新時代公民道德建設實施綱要》http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-10/27/content_5445556.htm Access date: 2020-10-12

The missionaries showed in their narratives that love towards their own people and love towards their country cannot be separated. Such nationalism has shaped the minds of Chinese Christians politically and ideologically and many Chinese missionaries embrace a type of spiritual nationalism in which being Chinese and being Christian are inseparable. The lyrics of one of the Canaan Hymns written by Lu, Xiaomin 呂小敏[10], represent this phenomenon:

Chinese People, Chinese Soul
Chinese heart, and Chinese voice, we are spurred on by this age of fire.
We cannot forget we are Chinese; the Chinese Church must carry the Truth.
The Chinese Church must spread the gospel, we are spurred on by the age of fire.
Do not forget we are Chinese, and the Chinese Church has become the House of the Lord. A responsibility we must not refuse, the Chinese Church must carry the Truth.
This is the big task on our shoulders, this is the big task on our shoulders.[11]

From the *Hymns Collection: 100 Selected Canaan Hymns*, No. 41

The connection between the Chinese nation and faith is clear, as is the huge sense of responsibility for the Chinese Church to share the gospel in this age. A second hymn, 'Missions from China', written by Lin, Hecheng 林合成, is even more popular and has generated much emotion and fervour in the Chinese church. It is often sung at mission conferences and the lyrics claim that Chinese Christians are given the task to spread the gospel to every corner of the world.

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[10] The Canaan Hymns is a collection of Christian hymns. Its author, Lu, Xiaomin 呂小敏, is a Christian woman from a rural village in Fangcheng County, Nanyang City, Henan Province, China, who has no musical training, but has written over a thousand poems over a period of more than twenty years, which have been disseminated throughout China. These poems have not only touched the hearts of Chinese Christians but have also expressed the faith journey of many.
[11] http://www.christianstudy.com/data/hymns/text/cross-canaan/0469.html Access date: 2020-10-13

Missions from China
There is a love, which lasts longer than the insect's buzzing in Summer
or a spring silkworm spinning silk threads.
There is a voice, urging me to march forward, with the Holy Spirit guiding me ahead.
Let us march to Jerusalem, for we are determined, rain or shine.
We will spread the name of the Lord, for we are triumphant in the Kingdom.
I am marching with a mission, to wake up the sleeping China.
I will not turn back, though I might be wounded.
I am marching with a vision; I see missions from China.
We will spread the gospel to every corner of the world.[12]

From the *Hymns Collection: New Songs of Hosanna,* No. 6

In his book, Cao, Nanlai 曹南來 (2017) describes the relationship between God's

'China Vision' and 'spiritual nationalism', claiming that underlying the Chinese

indigenous mission movement is a mixture of national honour and patriotism.

From the perspective of spiritual nationalism, I observed that in Muslim countries,

religious identity is the primary influence in their society. However, in China, ethnicity

is the dominant factor influencing. This will influence Chinese missionaries to develop

ethnocentric pride unconsciously, which in turn will lead to a low opinion of others. A

missionary who is unable to transcend their own ethnic identity will not be able to build

authentic and equal relationships with others in the mission field.

5.1.5 Summary of Ethnicity (Centre and Periphery)

In this section, the interviewees' narratives revealed that their ethnicity is shaped almost

unconsciously through education, mass media and the government's political instructions

since a young age.

The dichotomy of 'Centre' and 'Periphery' in ethnicity expresses the ethnocentrism

in national identity, always considering one's own nation to be the centre, and superior to

all Others at the periphery. Within such a binary, the ethnic Other becomes excluded and

marginalised. Therefore, I use the concepts of Centre and Periphery to integrate the three

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[12] http://www.christianstudy.com/data/hymns/text/hosanna_hymns006.html Access date: 2020-10-13

themes of Han-centrism, Chinese Ethnocentrism and Nationalism found in the narrative of the Chinese missionaries. When the missionaries see themselves as more civilised than the Others, they will have a sense of superiority and place themselves at the Centre while relegating Others to the periphery.

From my findings, there was no clear correlation between the missionaries' sense of ethnic identity and length of cross-cultural mission service. Instead, the missionaries' upbringing and identity negotiation in the cross-cultural setting were the deciding factors in the acceptance of Others and longevity in the field. Missionaries who have served for extended periods become more aware of their ethnocentrism, and whether they were well received or not, were better able to place the Others in the centre and treat them with appreciation and respect.

5.2.0 Religious Traditions

The Chinese missionaries have at least three identities. They are firstly ethnic Chinese, secondly Christians, and thirdly, serve as missionaries. These multiple identities caused additional challenges as they had to face diverse cultures while being bound by their home churches' religious traditions. In this section, I present the three themes of Suffering and the Theology of the Cross, effects of the Pentecostal worldview, and Conservativism.

5.2.1 Stories about Suffering and Theology of the Cross

In September 2018, my wife and I travelled to the Middle East and South Asia for three weeks to visit Chinese missionaries working in those locations. We stayed in their homes, spent time together and had a chance to observe their daily life closely. We listened to their stories of living in their host country. When we travelled into Nation PK, the outside temperature was over 35 degrees Celsius and our host family invited us to stay in the only air-conditioned room in the house as the heat was stifling. But to our surprise, our hosts

told us that this was the best season of the year. A few months before our trip, it was over

45 degrees Celsius. We began to understand 'suffering' by experiencing such extreme

heat.

Scott shared with us how he had endured the high temperatures without air-

conditioning in his first eight years of living here:

> God gave me a strong impression, that what I was experiencing here in Country PK was not something I had the opportunity to have if I were in China. During the night, I would often wake up because of the heat and had to take a shower to cool myself off. My wife usually slept on the floor. Here it is as hot in the night as it is during the day. My wife would have to keep some water cold in the fridge, pour it onto the floor, and then spread out a small mat on the cooled floor to sleep on. She would then cover herself with a towel that had also been soaked in cold water to help her fall asleep. This was the only way she could sleep at night. It was so hot that our child grew a lot of heat rash on his skin.
>
> Sometimes I felt… Sometimes if I were awakened by the heat during the night, I would lie in bed and pray. I could feel the joy in my heart. This joy was from within. I did not have to pretend that I had it, because I was alone. If my wife happened to wake up as well, I would share my feelings with her. I would tell her that what we were experiencing must be very precious because God is allowing this, and Devil is also observing us. If we can learn to endure it and not complain, this is going to be a valuable experience for us. In those days I learnt to be more grateful.
>
> Later we did have air conditioning, a motorbike, and a car. But whether we had such things or not we have learnt to maintain peace in our hearts. I think this was a lesson God was teaching us. It is just like what Paul said, 'I have learnt the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether living in plenty or in want.' God has been moulding us all these years. It was good. We want to thank God for it.

The willingness to remain grateful in suffering enabled Scott and his family to serve

for 8 years without air conditioning or a car. Tricia, Scott's wife, also shared how she felt

at that time:

> As long as I could endure it, I would continue living through it, one day after another. I would not want to explore why we had to be like this. I did not need to find an answer. No. I just live one day at a time.

Other missionaries had similar experiences. Some were willing to share their real

feelings. Peter left his hometown when he was only 20 years old and has been in the field

for 12 years. However, his mindset and behaviour still seem to be influenced by the

expectations of his home church. He shared:

> In my home church people, treat the missionary as a great man who is willing to sacrifice for the Lord. But they would not expect you to tell them: 'I want to go home', or 'I need an air conditioner', or 'I want to buy a car', or 'My wife wants to buy a nice dress', or 'I want to have a better phone'. They would tell you these are the worldly things, and you should not covet worldly possessions. I would not dare to verbalize these requests if I were in China. They expect me to suffer for the Lord. That is their expectation. You can talk about spiritual things, but you should not talk about worldly things. What I was taught in my home church was that you must suffer for the Lord. The more you suffer the more spiritual you will become.

Eva started attending her church youth group when she was 15 years old. She was trained and shaped by her church since she was young and has participated in many different ministries:

> I feel my spiritual training in my early age was not very purpose-driven. Nor was I able to gain a holistic concept of who God was. For the older brothers and sisters, fasting, praying, and having quiet time were the usual ways to foster the growth of their spiritual life. I simply imitated them. I was still incredibly young, 15 or 16 years old. We were having a kind of competition in fasting. My digestion was harmed. I was the youngest in the team. The older brothers and sisters fasted very frequently. They could fast for 3 days, 5 days, or 7 days at one time. I was still a teenager, and my body needed a lot of nutrition. But I felt if I did not fast for so long, those aunties or leaders of my church would be reminding me indirectly that I should. They would compare us with others who were fasting often.

> Living in this kind of culture, I felt I should pursue the godly things and I should overcome my flesh and suffer for God. I was often taught this in my home church—it is necessary to endure hardship and suffering is a spiritual weapon. I therefore felt my life should be like this. It was in such coercive circumstances that I grew up spiritually. But I did not know God at all. I do not think I understood God at all. I felt fasting was something that could be achieved through my own effort and self-restraint. I did not realise that I had to pray to God first for the strength, and then I could be empowered for fasting.

SA, a missionary trainer, commented from the perspective of an observer:

> If someone is determined to become a missionary, they are usually sincere and earnest in terms of faith. They are expected to give up their comfortable living conditions and relocate to a less comfortable and less developed location. Even if their mission field is in a big city, their new living standard is usually far lower than in their hometown.

The willingness to embrace suffering has helped Chinese missionaries survive in extremely hard places. However, if 'suffering' is overly emphasised, it can become a non-negotiable spiritual prerequisite and complications arise. Scott's wife Tricia, shared while sobbing:

> I often have negative feelings. I often feel so sorry and have a powerful sense of failure. I feel that after I became a missionary, I did not give my children as good an education or upbringing as they would have gotten at home. When we were in China, we could enjoy eating the food we liked and going to places we wanted to go. But living here, I am not able to give my children enough space to grow. So, I started to have negative feelings. I am no longer as passionate as when I was in China in terms of spiritual growth or prayer. I feel I am not sufficient in many aspects. But I am supposed to be a missionary.

Such feelings impacted not only the missionary's relationship with their family members, but also their interactions with the host Others. All 12 missionaries serving in Country PK confessed to having similar experiences. Stress often caused insomnia which made it difficult to maintain a normal lifestyle. Scott shared that for several years, because of restrictions put on them by their home church, he and his wife had to stay at home most

of the time and could not have much interaction with the community around them. This was because their home church leadership believed missionaries should have a simple lifestyle and initially would not permit them to purchase a car. Their location had limited public transport, so they could not go around their neighbourhood to deal with common tasks related to their life and ministry.

5.2.1.1 Analysis: Suffering and Theology of the Cross

The equating of suffering with holiness has created additional challenges to the Chinese missionaries' adjustment on their mission field. The missionaries endured hardships and deprivation, but this suffering did not help them to engage with the host Others. Some have lived in the host country for years without adapting to the local culture or developing close relationships with Others.

Historically, China's church has been persecuted; suffering, carrying the cross, and enduring hardship for the Lord have become a critical part of a spiritual lifestyle for many Chinese Christians. In a discussion on the Chinese church's attitude toward spirituality, Feng, Zhaocheng 馮兆成 (2016, 2) quotes a believer's opinion: 'The essential theology of spirituality in most of the rural areas is still heavily influenced by Watchman Nee's [倪柝聲] teachings in which the believers are encouraged to deny themselves. Their spiritual disciplines can be summarised into three words: poverty, hardship, and death.' A positive result of this theology is that the church grew rapidly, and numerous believers have dedicated themselves to missions regardless of the cost. The believers are determined to pursue a holy life and commit themselves to the ministry. However, this theology has also wounded the missionaries and their families. For example, many ministers in rural areas do not receive a salary and many must get a second job, which means that some pastors and missionaries spend too much time on their ministry and jobs at the expense of their own family, resulting in marriage or family crises. However, they must also pretend to be strong, and those who complain may be labelled people of little faith who love the world.

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Young Chinese missionaries are unconsciously shaped by stories of enduring hardships for the Lord. The entire history of church growth in China is set against the backdrop of hardship and persecution. The willingness to endure hardships has enabled missionaries to go out of their comfort zones and survive in difficult situations. But the Chinese church's overemphasis on suffering and hardship has also distanced missionaries from their target groups and limited their interactions with them.

Li, Daosheng 李道生 (1923-2017) was called 'the last member of the Northwest Spiritual Band.' He was one of the main leaders of the BTJ movement and often prayed that the Lord would use him as a witness. He once said, 'I only pray to the Lord to be His witness as long as I am alive.' The prayer he repeated the most while he was in jail and at labour camp for three decades was: 'Lord, you have brought me through abject poverty and hardship but not death. Let me experience you in my death'.[13]

The idea of 'suffering for the Lord' can be identified in many hymns circulating in China's rural churches. The following is an example from the Canaan Hymns:

Since I am following the Lord
Since I am following the Lord, I will certainly not turn back.
Since I have chosen to follow the Lord, I will never regret.
I will never complain, though the road is rough.
I have joy in my heart, though there are tears on my face.
It is not in the shades of green trees that I am serving the Lord.
It is not in the greenhouse that I am serving the Lord.
I shall walk into the jail, and I shall walk through the valley of tears.
I shall reach Elam after walking through Mara.[14]

From the *Hymns Collection: 300 Selected Canaan Hymns*, No. 111

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[13] http://am.amccsm.org/en/prayer/last-member-of-the-northwest-spiritual-band/ Access date: 2021-05-26
[14] http://www.cclw.net/resources/Cannan/ Access date: 2021-05-26

Fear not the Rough Road
Fear not the rough road, fear not the distance, for the time is near.
The world will see the tribulation, but we will have the Lord by our side.
After trials, we will bear much fruit,
And we will be like the evergreen plants which thrive in the winter.
We want to see the Lord's Face,
We are not afraid of death or separation.[15]

From the *Hymns Collection: 100 Selected Canaan Hymns*, No. 13

Conservative missionaries often over-emphasised Jesus as the role model for spiritual discipline. The acceptance of suffering is an important spiritual discipline and needs to be practised and modelled for the next generation. However, a theology that treats suffering too simplistically, or advocates suffering for the sake of suffering, is self-centred and does not enable one to empathise with Others who are suffering.

As the Chinese missionaries usually contextualised their theology to the Chinese culture, they seem to have the tendency to adopt the Confucian scholar, Mencius's view of suffering to interpret these difficult experiences. In his book *Menzi: Gaozixia* [孟子:告子下] (372 B.C. to 289 B.C.), Mencius wrote: 'When Heaven is about to confer great responsibilities on a man, it first suffers his mind to hardship and adversities, belabours his sinews and bones with toil, subjects him to poverty and hunger, impoverishes his body and soul, and obfuscates his every endeavour, so that by bestirring his mind and fortifying his nature, it may add to his capabilities what he previously did not have.'[16] The missionaries from agricultural areas emphasised hard work and self-discipline, often combining their experience in the field with their cultural traditions, and forming their own interpretation of suffering and the theology of the cross.

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[15] http://www.christianstudy.com/data/hymns/text/cross-canaan/0464.html Access date: 2021-05-26

[16] Translated by Jeng, De-Yin 鄭德音. https://www.jengacademic.com/post/關於孟子的一段譯文 Access date: 2021-11-12

However, making suffering for the Lord a condition of spirituality can create a lack of compassion and it can be impossible to appreciate God's grace, His suffering and His 'companionship for those going through suffering and persecution'. In his book, *Theology of Suffering* (1991) Tang, You-chi's 唐佑之 argument is in line with the suggestion made by Levinas, E. (1969) that if the relationship between the individual and the other is only the 'co-existing' relationship of 'Dasein' (being there), but not the 'co-existing' relationship of 'encounter' with others, this cannot be interpreted as a real relationship. Therefore, if the Chinese missionary undergoes suffering without connection to Others, then this is not a comprehensive understanding of suffering. The identity of the missionary must be linked to their relationship with Others and for the missionaries to truly identify with and encounter Others, they must be willing to suffer along with them. The Face of the Other, as proposed by Levinas, E. (1969), means that one sees the other suffering in a vulnerable way and can empathise and face the suffering together.

5.2.2 Stories about the Effects of the Pentecostal Worldview

This research does not seek to evaluate the Pentecostal movement and its biblical interpretation, as it is concerned with how the missiological practice of the Pentecostal worldview has influenced the relationship between the missionaries and Others.

Liu, Ping-tong 廖炳堂 (2007) pointed out that modern Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement put a great emphasis on direct conflicts between believers and evil spirits. The concept of spiritual warfare demands frequent healing and deliverance on a personal and regional level.

Pentecostals who were interviewed valued prayer and emphasised spiritual experiences and spiritual warfare against unseen evil forces through the ministry of deliverance and healing. They often prayed in tongues when they encountered challenges

or hardships. With such beliefs, they often overemphasised the spiritual realm and the power of the spiritual world to the detriment of their ministry.

5.2.2.1 Pentecostalism in Tibet

From my interviews with those from Pentecostal backgrounds working in Tibet, the participants tended to overemphasise spiritual warfare, and they also tended to overstate Satan's power and influence. The stories shared by participants below show a lack of knowledge about Tibetan beliefs. The overt spiritualism in Tibetan practices intimidated the missionaries and impeded relationships with the Tibetan people, who were de-personalised. The missionaries' fear caused them to focus on the spiritual realm and the work of Satan rather than the actual needs of the Tibetan people in their area.

Sherry became a missionary to Tibet because she had met a Tibetan student in university. She grew up in a Pentecostal church and when she entered the mission field, she felt like she was in a spiritual battleground. This is how she described her first experience in Tibet:

> The first time I went to Tibet as a missionary, I had a powerful sense of religious superiority. Like most of the other missionaries, my attitude was that what they believed was false, and what we believed was right and true. So, when I saw the temples, I often despised them. When we were doing a prayer march, we would proclaim in our mind: 'We are trampling on the fortresses of Satan.' We felt like we were fighting a battle.

Once Sherry and a few other young missionaries were brought to a temple by a senior missionary to pray there. They went to the front of the biggest prayer wheel in the temple. In Tibetan Buddhism, spinning this wheel will have the same meritorious effect as orally reciting the prayers. Sherry described her experience:

> Many grey-haired elderly people were pulling the prayer wheel with their full strength. As they were pulling it, they were also incanting the mantra. I was incredibly sad and afraid. I did not know very much of what was going on. I thought I was fighting a spiritual war. Following the senior missionary, I also touched the prayer wheel. While the Buddhists were incanting their mantra, I repeated my own 'mantra' by murmuring the word 'Immanuel'. I prayed in my heart: 'Lord, please make their prayers ineffective when they touch the wheel. Please remove the power of the unclean spirits.'

Sherry tried to use her own religious perspective to 'nullify' the prayers of the Tibetans spinning the prayer wheels.

Larry has been living in the Tibetan region for ten years. He mentioned that many Chinese missionaries in Tibet shared these feelings of uncertainty and fear. The following is his sharing of his first experience being in the Tibetan region:

I was aware of spiritual warfare even before I joined the mission team. I could feel that the devil wanted to attack me. Every new worker would have to face such attacks. The devil could attack you in the form of a snake. He could make you sleepless in the night. All our co-workers had such experiences. He could attack when we were on the way back home, or when our faith was strong, or when we were travelling, or when we were resting. The devil can transform into many shapes. He would harass us during the night. It could be sudden darkness pressing upon you, and you would not be able to get up under the pressure. This happened frequently. It happened to me as well, though it was not as serious. When I was being attacked, I was not even able to utter a voice. I had to use my full strength to cry out to Jesus: 'Lord Jesus, help me!' and the pressure would leave me and move unto another teammate, and he would then be forced to stay awake through the night.

From Sherry and Larry's accounts, even though there was spiritual warfare in Tibet, I observed that when encountering different religious beliefs, they interpreted the Others' beliefs based on their own faith background. This resulted in a great deal of fear, which prevented them from being naturally and authentically close to the people they were trying to serve.

Larry further described the challenges he and his team members had encountered when in contact with Tibetan cultural objects and ceremonies.

If one of our team members accidentally took home a piece of mantra in the Tibetan language which had been dedicated to the idols, whether it was on a piece of clay, or a rock, it would cause a lot of anxiety when they went home. I saw a lot of such examples. Many mission teams have different opinions over these issues. Some even refuse to accept a khata (a ceremonial white scarf), believing it is related to the idols and they could be contaminated if receiving one. But what if you are being welcomed by the local hosts and a khata is placed around your neck? If you refuse to accept it, how would you preserve your relationship with them in the future? The answer is simple. You will never establish a relationship with them!

The Pentecostal missionaries' fear of and unfamiliarity with the local religious rituals made it difficult for them to identify with the local Tibetans. They were not able to contextualise in their new field to determine prayerfully which actions were acceptable to a Christian because they were too focused on the spiritual warfare. Therefore, they found it hard to embrace the Tibetan people and their culture.

John served in a Tibetan region for 15 years and he commented on the ignorance and spiritual arrogance of some missionaries from a Pentecostal background as they started work in Tibet:

I fully understand the passion and the burden for the lost souls of these Pentecostal missionaries. It is good for them to have such a burden. However, their practice may have created the other people group's resentment against them, because what they have done has trespassed the bottom line of their tolerance. For example, prayer flags can be seen everywhere in the wilderness of the Tibetan regions. To the locals, they are sacred objects, which can bring them good fortune.

But when missionaries came, they would attach a cross on the flags. This is what the Pentecostal missionaries usually did—they would attach a cross on it, kneel in a circle, raise their hands, and pray loudly. If they did it in secret, it would be better. But if they are discovered, they would just run away, leaving the crossed there. This is a grave offense to the Tibetans. They will be offended, and become resentful. What will be the consequences, then? If someone became resentful, and if other Christians attempt to approach this person, they will find it exceedingly difficult. This person will have learnt that the Christians want to harm him, offend him, and they will cause some damages. They are not reasonable. So, as a result, all other Christians will be suspect from the very beginning of their ministry.

5.2.2.2 Analysis: The Effects of the Pentecostal Worldview

Wacker, G. (1984) points out that Pentecostals not only embrace a worldview that affirms the existence of a supernatural reality, but often see things from the perspective of spiritual warfare, emphasising that demons and angels are not only real, but active in this world. The worldview held by those with Pentecostal backgrounds may negatively impact their ministry and influence their attitude towards the people groups they served.

Levinas, E. (1969) stresses in his ethic of others that when one sees the other's vulnerability, one has a responsibility to respond to it and make it one's own. Levinas' 'face-to-face' relationship is an ethical one and must involve dialogue and interaction. When the Pentecostal missionaries overly regard spiritual warfare, they fail to dialogue with the Tibetans and lose sight of their feelings and needs.

In addition, the overemphasis on the spiritual realm, coupled with actual spiritual experiences on the mission field, caused the missionaries to live in fear, which then further distanced them from the Tibetan people. Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2018) argues that the other, especially the unknown other, is a threat which will lead to self-defence or hostility. Because the missionaries do not have knowledge of the local culture, they cannot have Levinas' type of face-to-face relationship with the Tibetans and encounters with Others result in feelings of fear and rejection. After observing and analysing the reflections of the interviewees regarding the influence of spiritual warfare, I found that most of these missionaries have experienced fear in their spiritual life. So, instead of first approaching Others with God's love, their behaviour towards Others is based on fear of Satan and evil spirits.

Pentecostals believe Satan and the demons can exert an enormous influence on a believer's spiritual life. Therefore, many Pentecostal missionaries tend to proclaim God's presence and pray as their first response to exorcising demons. It is also common for them to practise syncretism as they mix Christian sacred objects with Tibetan religious objects or rituals, such as placing the cross and Bible verses among the Tibetan's prayer flags and pouring communion wine into the river to symbolise blessing and prayer. Georges, J., in his book, *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame, and Fear Cultures* (2016), uses three cultural dimensions: guilt/innocence, shame/honour, and fear/power. Both Tibetan culture and those from Pentecostal backgrounds tend towards the fear/power dimension. Both cultures believe that people are living in an animistic world, that they are vulnerable to evil spirits, and that certain sacred rituals are necessary to overcome the demonic powers in the spiritual realm.

Even though the above scenarios may also be true for non-Pentecostal believers, the problem for Pentecostal missionaries is that power encounter is an overly important belief in their tradition. These missionaries fall into a dualistic theological concept, even unconsciously placing God and Satan on the same level (Liu, Ping-tong 廖炳堂, 2007), and over-emphasising the power of Satan.

5.2.3 Stories about the Effects of Conservatism

My experience working with conservative churches showed me that they follow a literal interpretation of the Bible and their response to any issue is to do what Bible says regardless of context (i.e., prohibition of eating blood, wearing a head covering). These conservative churches value their spiritual traditions and doctrines and are unwilling to change or adopt new views. Influenced by fundamentalist beliefs, the conservative churches emphasise the importance of rules and morals as a measure of one's faith and view beliefs different from their own with avoidance and antagonism. Yao, Xiyi 姚西伊

(2008) discusses how the historical development of Chinese Christianity in the twentieth century was shaped by fundamentalism as a reaction against liberalism, noting that missionaries influenced by such theology were fervent about evangelism but not interested in social concern.

5.2.3.1 Conservative Church Traditions

Unlike the Pentecostal missionaries, those from the conservative churches serving in Tibet follow biblical doctrines and avoid things the church would consider unclean (e.g. idols, amulets). As a result, the missionaries tended to distance themselves from Others, and found it hard to enter their lives.

Frank grew up in a church which treats the separation of clean and unclean seriously. His church has strict requirements for believers, who must live a consecrated life and not touch or be in contact with anything 'unclean'. These include watching TV, entering a temple, or eating foods sacrificed to idols. He said: 'With such a background of strong traditions, we found it extremely hard to serve as cross-cultural missionaries in the ethnic minority regions.' The following is Frank's description of the instructions he received from his home church when he was a young believer:

> Since a very young age, we have been taught by the church that we must not associate with Buddhist monks or nuns. If we saw them, we must walk away to avoid contact. If one of our neighbours was burning incense, worshipping their idols, or chanting to their dead family members, we, being children of the Christian family, must not even look at them. Imagine when you came across a monk or a nun, you must not meet with them face to face – I can feel our faith is extremely exclusive to all other faiths. When we are in Tibet, we see those lamas as representatives of Satan. Since the entire people group in this region are all lamas then they all deserve to be cast into hell. They are all representatives of Satan. An average person from our church would not even get close to these people.

Frank's account reveals that his church had an attitude which rejected 'pagans' or people of different religious backgrounds, something like the biblical Israelites' rejection of Gentiles and view of their faith as 'set apart'.

Frank continued:

> I believe our conservative faith must be contextualized in a new cultural setting. In my understanding, this must be a continuous process. Our traditions have become part of our spiritual life, and we are not at all willing to readjust or change. The tradition has been there for a long time, and it is hard for our church to accept new concepts and new and ways of doing things. In our church, disagreement on these issues has caused serious internal divisions.

When Frank arrived in a new context, he had to minister to followers of a religion considered taboo by the church that sent him, and this became a barrier to his relationships to the Others. Frank felt that unless a missionary could contextualise well in the mission field, a conservative background was a detriment to ministry. Such a challenge is also evident in the context in which Harry and Sean are serving.

Harry shared:

A traditional idea of my church is that once you believe in Jesus, you must first get rid of all your idols before you can be regarded as a true believer. Being cross-cultural missionaries, we realised it was not possible to complete this task overnight. Sometimes we say, jokingly, that we will also have to demolish the house we live in if we want to get rid of all idols in Tibet (laughing). How will you solve the problem? Well, I am in a predicament. Say, how about this very house? They used to store sutras in it. Will you have to demolish it? This was what our home church taught us to do.

Sean said:

Our home church teaches us that, when you are in the mission field, you must maintain a serious exterior. You must be godly in speaking and in behaviour. So, we are not allowed to enter a Buddhist temple. If we do, we will also be unclean. So, even we are here in the mission field, we must still be separated from the local faith. We must remain godly, and we must never enter a temple.

Harry's and Sean's experiences illustrate how the conservative church uses strict traditions to determine one's 'holiness', creating an inwardly focused church environment. However, when their missionaries are sent to different contexts, many teachings and principles become difficult to put into practice and become a detriment to reaching Others.

Diane shared her reflection on this matter:

In my opinion, the traditional church judges one's faith internally or the members demonstrate their faith by sticking to several shared beliefs within their closed group. In this way, they tend to unconsciously judge an outsider by their existing shared beliefs. These shared beliefs will deter their communication with the others.

Diane also shared her experience at an international conference on cross-cultural missions which I attended. Leaders from many international and Chinese mission agencies attended and the last session was to conclude with Holy Communion. I noticed that many Chinese missionaries and church leaders from conservative backgrounds left the meeting just before the communion started. Afterwards they shared that they refused

to partake of communion because the bread was not unleavened, as they believed that 'yeast' symbolises sin in the Bible. Shi, Hengtan 石衡潭 (2009) points out that in conservative churches in China, some pastors interpret the Bible unilaterally based on their own experience and understanding. They also believe that their church tradition is the sole holder of biblical truth and reject alternate interpretations of the Bible. They are exclusive and are opposed to inter-religious dialogue. This issue has caused internal divisions between churches over issues such as communion practices, head coverings for women, and use of various Bible translations. Unfortunately, this attitude may be 'exported' with Chinese missionaries sent from overly conservative churches and cause rejection of their mission Others and their religious practices.

5.2.3.2 Analysis: Conservatism

Wang, Ying 王莹 (2011) points out that Christians rely on 'separation' to consolidate their 'religious identity'. Through participation in traditional practices (i.e., Sunday morning services, communion, fellowship, and prayer meetings), Christians gradually form an identity of who they are and what they believe. Each group must also determine what rights and responsibilities a Christian should have. When a fellowship has strong internal ties, it is easy to exclude Others. Despite being placed in a different context, the missionary's existing religious identity profoundly influenced their mindset and behaviour in the host country. Their religious identity can cause tension in their relationships and cause them to reject Others who do not follow the same traditions.

My research and analysis revealed that the tighter the missionaries held to their religious identity, the more they relied on their own belief system to evaluate Others' behaviour. Unconsciously, a conservative habitus was formed (Bourdieu, P. 1996) which informed their moral standards, the separation of clean and unclean, and the sacred-secular dichotomy. Their extremely conservative traditions caused separation from Others with different values. If missionaries judged Others using their home value system,

they felt a sense of alienation from the local host people as they did not follow their home church traditions, which caused feelings of rejected on one or both sides.

This also makes the Others objects of scrutiny rather than people with physical and spiritual needs. The conservative missionaries' identity was constructed from their common traditional church practices, but when this identity exalts the following of church traditions too much, it can become inward looking, which in turn can prevent the missionaries from appreciating or accepting the attitudes and traditions of Others.

5.2.4 Overcoming Church Traditions

There were some exceptions among the interviewees, who had overcome their attitude of exclusiveness to Others' religious faith. They had intentionally chosen to respect Others' beliefs and had been able to develop relationships with them.

John shared:

These monks, nuns, or ordinary people, regardless of their religion and culture, truly believe that they are worshipping god. Their faith is real. The only problem is that they are worshipping the wrong god. Their sincerity and their willingness to invest time in their devotion are really something from which we can learn. The only problem is that they do not know the right God to worship. They do not know Who they should worship. So, one of our tasks is to help make this correction. In their culture, there are some elements which are not biblically correct, and they need to be changed. But some customs and cultural elements, in my opinion, must be preserved. I am not saying that we should change their culture. Rather, we need to change the root of their religious faith. When we are living in the Tibetan region, we also keep an altar in the house. If a Tibetan becomes a believer, he can also keep the altar in his house.

Sherry said:

During my missionary service, my vision and mindset were gradually changing. I used to see spiritual forces as the most important thing, but now I see people as the most important. When travelling, I began to see the temples as a welcoming place, because people living there are my kin. I think whether they are believers or not, they are still my kinsfolk. Since last year, I started to feel that our relationship should not be about ethnicity, or religion, but kin. They are indeed a people who see personal relationship as something especially important. When trying to build a relationship with them, I often treat them as my 'family members', and think about how I could become like their family member. Now I have friends who are lamas, and I enjoy visiting their living quarters inside the temple. I am happy because they welcome me. I think the best reward I have received in the mission field is that I have won the local people's trust. Their trust is the best reward I can have.

Darren has served in the Tibetan region for five years. He related how he has overcome the dichotomy of the sacred and the secular in terms of his interpersonal relationships:

I think I can accept many things if they are not against biblical doctrine or biblical teaching. In our training course we have also discussed some schools of theology which are extremely rigid. For example, if they travel into Tibet and stay in a Tibetan home, and if the Tibetan hosts give them a gift of a bowl with dragon patterns on it when they depart, the missionaries will refuse to accept the gift [because the Chinese believe that the dragon represents Satan]. But if I were the visitor, I will take the gift, because I know the hosts presented this gift to me with a sincere heart. I know they will not feel happy if I refuse to take it. Of course, I can dispose of the gift in whatever ways afterward because that is an issue between God and me. So, we would take the gift from our Tibetan friends and thank them. After we go back home, I would discuss with my wife, reflect on it by going through related biblical verses, and if my wife or I do not think we should keep this object, we would give it away. But if we both think it does not really matter, we will keep it.

Sean has also served in Tibet for five years. He has been able to analyse the distance between the religious tradition of his home church and the context of the mission field objectively. He discussed, from the perspective of the Others, how to share the gospel with the Tibetans. He said:

Some of the instructions of my home church may not be appropriate in Tibet. The best way to share the gospel is to allow the Tibetans to discover the truth by themselves and without causing any harm to them. I usually share the gospel by telling some stories. The Tibetans love stories. So, a better way is to help them realise what they should believe through telling them stories.

If you simply tell them what they should do, it will cause a lot of trouble. So, in our home church we often teach the spiritual truth in a direct way, but once you are in a different cultural setting, you need to allow them to realise by themselves that their own faith is insufficient to save. You should not simply tell them: 'What you believe is wrong'. Rather, they need to realise by themselves, after listening to your stories, that what they have been worshipping will not save them.

5.2.4.1 Analysis: Overcoming Conservativism

Among the 52 interviewees who participated in my research, 26 mentioned the tension between the missionary's own religious identity and the Others'. In my analysis, I found four interviewees who could not overcome their rigid religious traditions and were defensive when dealing with Others. Another 12 interviewees admitted struggling in dealing with the Others because of their religious identity, but had not found a way to overcome the feelings of exclusiveness sufficiently to want to initiate contact with the Others. A third group of five interviewees were in the process of moving from hesitation to breaking through their religious traditions and looked for strategies to be more accepting of Others. Lastly, another group of five interviewees were able to negotiate their identity in line with the INT of Ting-Toomey, S. (2015). They were able to overcome their own rigid religious identity and fully embrace their mission Others.

My analysis also revealed that the last group of five missionaries made breakthroughs when they were willing to initiate change and treat Others with respect as fellow human beings who were devoted to their own faith. These missionaries were willing to change their attitudes by shifting their focus from the external spiritual environment to Others' internal spiritual needs. They attempted to contact the others openly and contextually if it was not against their faith. Finally, they were willing to set aside their home church's rigid traditions, and adjusted when necessary.

Ricoeur, P. (2013) proposed the concept of narrative identity not based on an ideal society or an ideal personality, but on a relationship of equality and mutual respect between the self and the other. He argued that each self is an isolated story but can only become a complete narrative following interaction with others. Each one's story is interwoven with others' stories and even with larger stories, forming a historical story. Similarly, as the Chinese missionaries entered a new field, their religious background, beliefs, and lifestyles were not an ideal environment. Ricoeur's narrative identity theory, however, points to an important way out, when the missionaries' story is linked to Others' story forming a new narrative. Therefore, I believe that the relationship between missionaries and Others must be built on an ethical relationship of mutual respect and understanding, rather than religious doctrine or moral standard. On this basis, the narratives serve as intermediaries between people, even believers of different religions.

5.2.5 Summary Religious Identity (Inclusive and Exclusive)

I use the concepts of Inclusive and Exclusive to integrate the findings for the religious identity of the Chinese missionaries. The concepts reflect the religious identities of Chinese missionaries due to their interpretations of the theology of suffering and the cross, their Pentecostal worldview and conservative religious traditions.

Religious identity is constructed through religious rituals, theological doctrines, and experiences of faith. From this study, I found that the Chinese missionaries' religious identity created criteria for whether to accept or reject Others. For example, moral standards, types of religious activity, and belief systems all create in-group/out-group delineations (Tajfel, H. and Turner, J., 2004) which may create a conservative habitus (Bourdieu, P., 1996) and religious prejudices.

When the Chinese missionaries arrived in a foreign country and faced different religious backgrounds, they naturally clustered together with other Chinese with common beliefs. This is true, especially for Chinese missionaries who have not adjusted to the local culture and live in their own cultural 'bubble'. As Matthew repeatedly mentioned, when he is in a Muslim community, he needs to keep away 'deliberately' from the Chinese and Christian group where he lives, to gain trust and acceptance from the local Muslims.

From the interviews, it is clear that the missionaries' home church traditions influenced their religious identity as suggested by Preston, J. L., Ritter, R. S., and Hernandez, J. I. (2010). However, in a cross-cultural context, these beliefs and values also created complications in the relationships between the missionaries and Others. The thinking that 'suffering' equals spirituality, the over-emphasis on spiritual warfare, and a sense of spiritual superiority can all cause an Inclusive and Exclusive dichotomy with respect to other religions. The missionary's religious identity also influences their attitude toward Others, resulting in rejection and exclusiveness. Nevertheless, among the participants, I also found that some missionaries were able to overcome the exclusion of Others, and chose to embrace Others with had different beliefs.

Taylor, C. (2001) relates the source of human identity to the idea of goodness. He emphasises the need for people to return from self-centredness and self-imposed isolation to the moral good. This 'good' is a return to a belief in God that enables one to build deep

relationships with Others again after a time of self-imposed isolation. He points out that a moral identity affirmed in the public sphere is an intrinsic part of self-identity. Although the Chinese missionaries encountered different religious beliefs, they could still identify with Others because of the common human quest for goodness. Amid common religious aspirations, it would be possible to build deep relationships with mutual respect.

Another means to respond to the Exclusiveness of over-Conservatism was proposed by Levinas, E. (1969) whose theory of 'Ethics as the First Philosophy' is centred on the other. Levinas argues that each individual needs to step out of himself, face the other and take up the ethical responsibility to serve the other. He even argued that ethical responsibility for the other is not a proactive gesture but a result of seeing the 'face' of the other.

5.3.0 Summary of the Findings and Analyses

For my research, I drew on both sociological and philosophical theories of identity to discourse on the Chinese missionaries' stories and explore their narratives in depth through narrative inquiry. I presented thick descriptions of how their identities were constructed and the challenges they faced when engaging with Others in a cross-cultural context. Intersubjectivity provided me with an important ethical reference concerning the researcher's relationship with the participants. I listened well and showed respect to each participant both during the interviews and the analysis of the findings.

In Chapters Four and Five, I presented the findings of identity from four perspectives: cultural, social, ethnic, and religious. These were further subdivided into the themes of familism, Face culture, and power distance from the cultural perspective; social class, gender discrimination, and social mobility from the social perspective; Han-centrism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism from the ethnic perspective; and theology of

suffering/cross, Pentecostalism, and conservatism from the religious perspective. (See Figure 5.1)

The findings in Chapters Four and Five are summarised by their themes in the figure below:
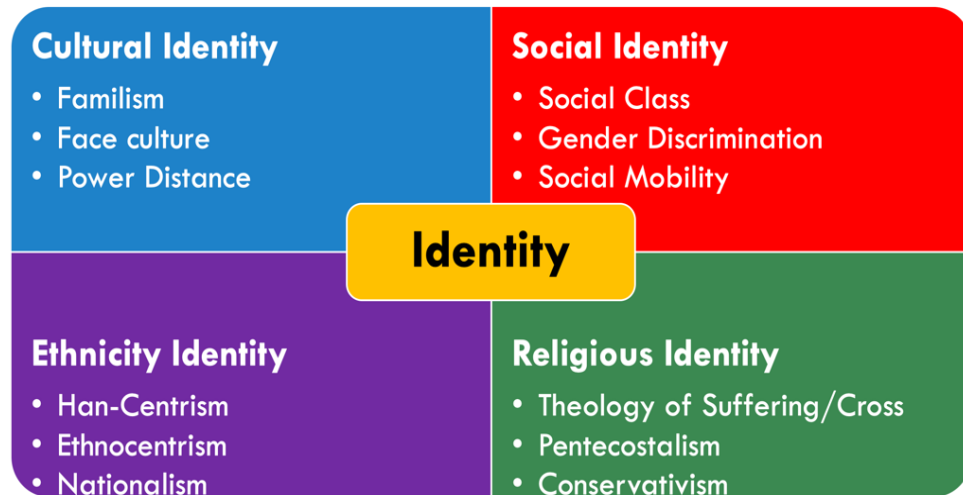
Figure 5.1 Themes in Missionary Identity Through Four Lenses

The analysis of the Chinese missionaries' narratives through identity theory and philosophical perspectives revealed that their identity is deeply influenced by Confucianism. This influence led to the development of the concepts of 'Close' and 'Distant' in cultural relationship patterns. The social structure has produced the concepts of 'High' and 'Low' social status for the self and the other. For political purposes, the PRC has developed ethnic concepts of 'Centre' and 'Periphery' which separate Chinese people from the Others. Finally, religious identity created the concepts of 'Inclusive' and 'Exclusive' in relation to the Others as shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 Concepts and Themes in Chinese Missionary Identity

Building on the findings and analyses in Chapters Four and Five, in Chapter Six, I present four Trinitarian traits to respond to the challenges Chinese missionaries faced in their identity negotiation.

<center>**Chapter Six**</center>

<center>**Theological Reflection**</center>

<center>**Four Trinitarian Traits in Response to the Chinese Missionary Identity**</center>

Introduction

Here, I summarise findings from my literature review on the relational view of the Trinity and identity into four Trinitarian traits to use for reflecting on and responding to identity construction among Chinese missionaries. This chapter is comprised of three sections. In 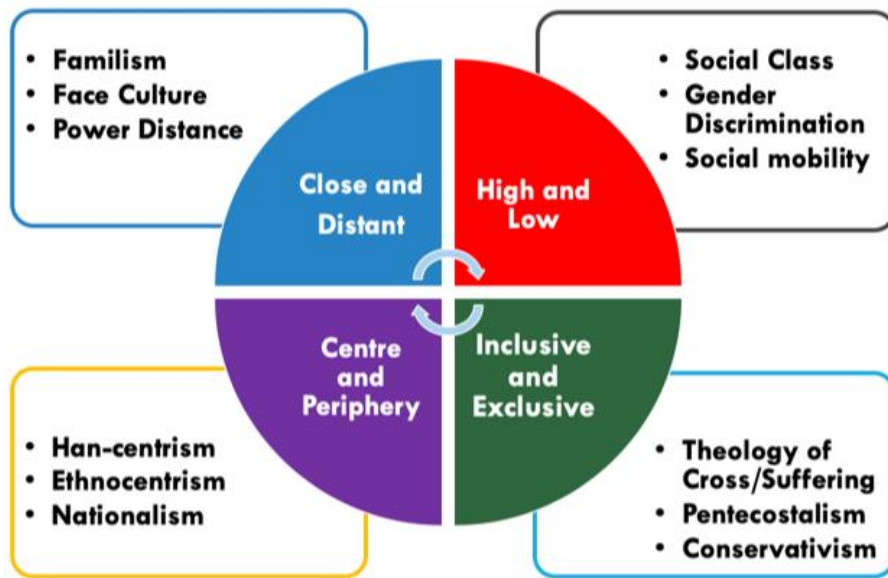the first section, I present four Trinitarian traits: God's Image in Relationship, Unity in Diversity, Outwardness to Embrace, and Mediation and Dynamic Nature. The second section presents theological reflections based on these four traits that address the challenges in the areas of cultural traditions, hierarchical social relationships, ethnicity, and religious traditions. The final section offers a new paradigm of 'Tridentity' based on these theological reflections.

6.1.0 Four Trinitarian Traits

Even though there are myriad ways to respond to the challenges the Chinese missionaries face, I used these Trinitarian attributes and traits for a theological reflection to address identity construction among them for several reasons. The first is that the Trinity encompasses the One (universality) and the Three (particularity). The characteristic of the One may help missionaries to see the commonality between oneself and Others, allowing them to find a basis for mutual identity. The characteristic of the Three, on the other hand, will help missionaries to accept the difference between Others and the Self. Secondly, God's creation of humanity in His image and the relationships within the Trinity can serve as a model for human relationships. Missionaries need to see Others through the eyes of the loving God, for each person is made in His image and is thus

precious and deserving of respect. Lastly, the Triune God welcomes His people to participate in the actualisation of His Kingdom. God continues to renew the lives of those who follow Him through His love and calls them to share this love with the world. Thus, the missionaries are empowered by the Trinity as they encounter their mission Others, and the missionaries' identity construction is transformed.

The attributes of the Trinity were reviewed in Chapter Two. Even though these attributes are unique, they are all inter-connected as shown in Figure 6.1.
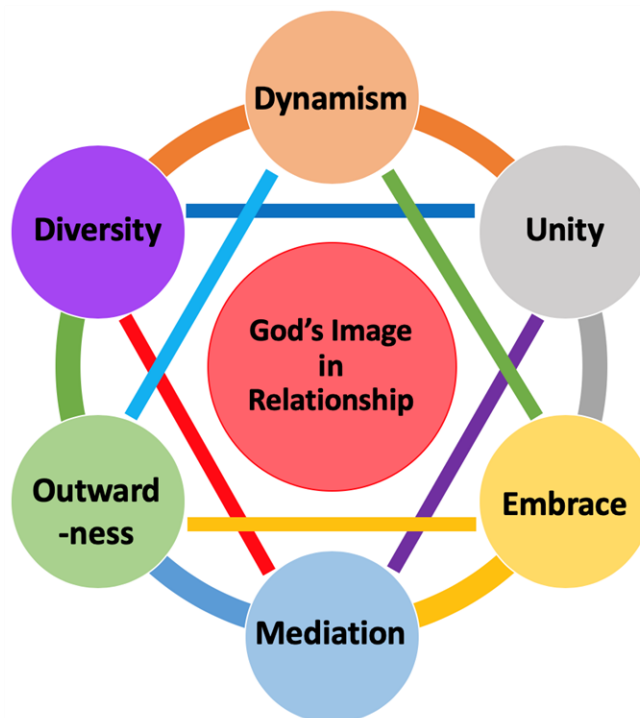
Figure 6.1 Interconnectedness of Trinitarian Attributes

I merged these attributes into four Trinitarian traits, which reflect two ends of a continuum and are interconnected through the relationship of the three Persons of the Godhead. As the Trinity is both One and Three, these traits provide a holistic and complementary view. Figure 6.2 below depicts these Four Trinitarian traits in relationship to one another.
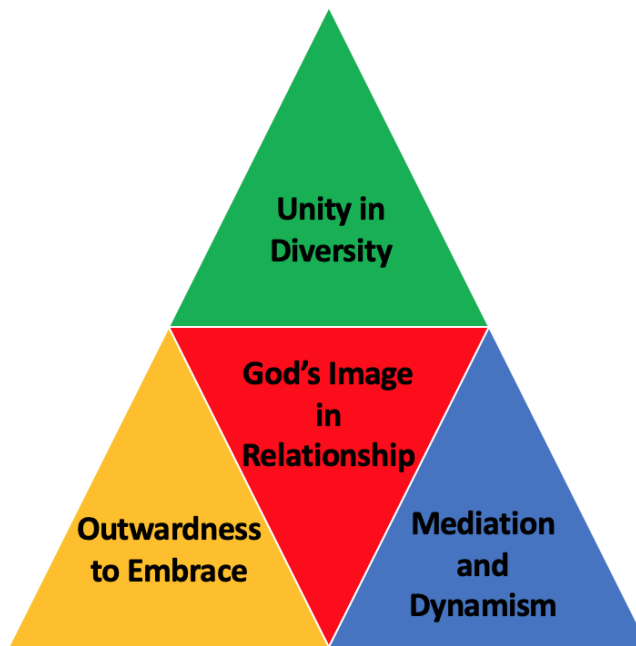
Figure 6.2 The Four Trinitarian Traits

6.1.1 God's Image in Relationship

From Chapter Two, while traditional theologians viewed God ontologically as One, the modern theological add to this traditional view the relational interdependence of the three Persons in the Trinity (*perichoresis*). For example, in John 14:10, Jesus says: 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me.' Barth, K. (1958) wrote that the image of God is characterised by a co-existence in love. Each part of the Godhead forms an inseparable and loving relationship within the Trinity. The relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit serve as a model for all human relationships as God has created humans in His image. Fiddes, P. (2013, 151) claims 'the "persons" in God as not simply formed by their relations, but as being no more and no less than the relations themselves. The hypostases are "distinct realties" as relations and the perichoresis is an interweaving of relations.'

6.1.2 Unity in Diversity

Unity in Diversity is an important trait reflecting the identity of the Trinity as both One and Three. The relationship within the Trinity is One in essence as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share a divine nature. The Oneness of the Trinity is neither narrow nor exclusive but broad and inclusive.

At the same time, the three Persons of the Trinity reflect multiplicity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each have their own character, will, and role. The Father is not the Son nor the Holy Spirit; the Son is not the Father nor the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor the Son. The three relationships are in unity, but this does not equal uniformity. Zhou, Weichi 周偉馳 (2000) wrote that the Triune God is not fragmented and self-centred; instead, the relationship of the three Persons in the Godhead is focused on the others in the Trinity. Each Person of the Godhead exists and has meaning in relation to the other two. Thus, there is unity in the essence of love, and diversity of each Person of the Trinity.

6.1.3 The Outwardness to Embrace

The outwardness of the Trinity stems from the Triune God's concern for Others. This outward embrace is embodied in the act of 'stepping out of the self' or when God empties Himself for the love of humanity. This characteristic is reflected in the sending nature of God; from creation, to redemption, to the Great Commission, God the Father sends God the Son; God the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit through the Church sends disciples out into the world. The Trinity experiences an internal embrace between the three Persons of the Godhead and an external embrace which cascades to include all humankind.

This outward nature of the Trinity to embrace Others calls believers to share the gospel so that Others can believe and come into the Kingdom of God. Generally, in human

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relationships, the closer the relationship, the more exclusive and inward-looking it becomes. However, the embracing nature of the Trinity is outward-looking for the sake of Others.

6.1.4 Mediation and Dynamic Nature

Gunton, C. (2009) used the two hands of God in Irenaeus' mediation theology to illustrate the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father and the Son are united through the Holy Spirit; the world is reconciled with the Father through the Holy Spirit; the Son and the Holy Spirit are sent through the Father. Believers are in the Holy Spirit, able to pray to the Father through the Son Jesus Christ. 'For from him and through him and for him are all things.' (Romans 11:36). This verse shows that Jesus is a mediator of all things. Moreover, in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, this role of mediator for reconciliation is passed onto Christians:

> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Christians are to follow Christ's example and become a mediator to reconcile unbelievers to God.

Traditional Trinitarian theology viewed God as immutable, without passion and feeling (Reymond, R., 1998). However, contemporary Trinitarian theologians (Moltmann, J., 1993, Gunton, C., 2003, and Yu, Tat-sum 余達心, 2015) present the Triune God as possessing a dynamic personality. He is an emotional and approachable God. The Eastern Church believed that God became human to enable humans to participate in God through *theosis* (Lossky, V., 1991). This indwelling of the Holy Spirit enables a believer to be constantly transformed by the grace and love of the Triune God. Lossky, V., (1991, 67) wrote that:

Trinitarian theology is thus a theology of union, a mystical theology which appeals to experience, and which presupposes a continuous and progressive series of changes in created nature, a more and more intimate communion of a person with the Holy Trinity.

The Trinity's becoming is not to change its nature but is a transformation process for humans to interact with humans effectively. This is done when God's Word (the Son) became flesh.

6.1.5 Conclusion/Summary of Trinitarian Traits

The Kingdom of God is in an 'already but not yet' state which expresses the concept of a dynamic move towards transcendence. The relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is expanded from Figure 6.1 to more fully depict the interaction within the Trinity. Figure 6.3 below depicts the interaction of these four Trinitarian traits.
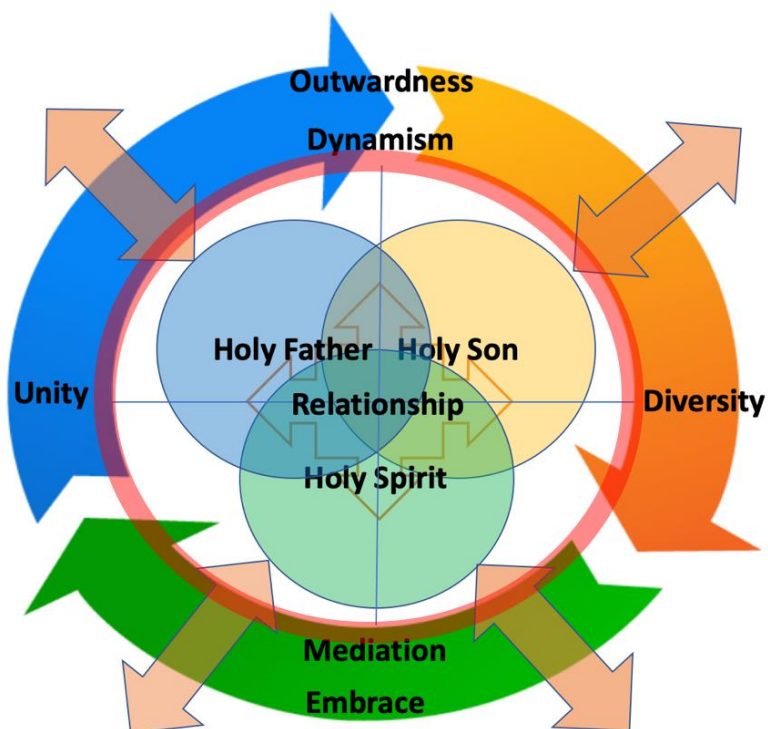

Figure 6.3 The Interaction of the Trinitarian Traits

6.2.0 Reflection and Response to Challenges

In Chapters Four and Five, I presented the challenges affecting the Chinese missionaries and summarised them into four concepts:

1)   Close and Distant of cultural traditions

2)   High and Low roles in social status

3)   Centre and Periphery ethnicity

4)   Inclusive and Exclusive of religious traditions

In this section, I present a theological reflection and response to each of these concepts from the findings.

6.2.1 Theological Reflection and Response to Cultural Traditions (Close and Distant)

The three themes from the findings on cultural traditions are familism, Face culture, and power distance. The concept of Close and Distant describes relationships with an in-group effect, which excludes Others. Moreover, the Confucian moral codes that led to a Face culture create superficial relationships and avoidance of conflict. The high-power distance in Chinese culture leads to hierarchical relationships that can alienate people. Family is one such core relationships in Chinese society.

The family in Chinese culture is based on blood ties, from the immediate family to other relatives. Those who are not family are classified as 'outsiders'. This classification causes distance in relationships with Others as Chinese will always put family first. The Trinitarian trait of Outwardness to Embrace can help the missionaries redefine the definition of family. The relationship between the Father and the Son in the Trinity is characterised by the inseparable relationship between the Father and the Son. However, this Father-Son relationship is not exclusive and is an embracing-Others type of relationship. God the Father sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ to the world to bring sinful humanity into God's family. This Trinitarian relationship transcends blood ties,

race, social status, and gender, and expands the definition of 'family'. The apostle Paul writes: 'For through him (Jesus) we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of his household' (Ephesians: 2: 18-19). When the missionary's concept of family is broadened, they will not be limited by their closed in-group tendencies to *baotuan* or cluster together. This could allow them to enter into the culture and life of Others and more easily embrace Others.

In Chinese culture, Face is critical to preserving relationships, and this Face-work is embodied in the cultural pattern of honour and shame. Face-work rules over social interactions, and could create superficial relationships. However, the Trinitarian trait of the Image of God in Relationship (the 'face' of the Trinity), could motivate the missionaries to respect Others and seek to create authentic relationships. This trait shows that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have an interdependent and loving relationship with one another. The main difference between the relationship within the Trinity and the relationships in Chinese culture, is that the Trinity is based on interdependence in love rather than on morality or a power system. In light of the awareness of being made in God's image, the missionary does not need to work to preserve Face, but can live an authentic life with transparency and honesty. The missionary can switch from being conscious about how Others view him or her to how God views him or her. This would allow Others to 'see' the missionary's real life and make it easier to create authentic relationships.

Chinese relationships are hierarchical and operate with high power distance. However, the Trinitarian trait of God's Image in Relationship presents the Godhead in equal relationships built on interdependence and love. The loving relational framework of the Trinity helps to counteract the influence of Confucianism on familism and hierarchical relationships. Chinese missionaries could follow the example of the Trinity

to implement equal relationships based on love and respect for the individual. The missionaries' identity needs be embedded with the attributes of the Triune God to help them escape the cultural constraints and comparison of Close and Distant. Only then, can they truly embrace their mission Others.

6.2.2 Theological Reflection and Response to Social Status (High and Low)

In the findings and analysis of social identity, I presented the concepts of High and Low in the social domain with the three themes of social class, gender, and social mobility. In Chinese culture, the father holds a higher social position than his son and the husband also holds a higher social position than his wife. However, in the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have different roles, but these roles do not represent an intrinsic hierarchy. Moltmann, J. (2007) writes that the Father exists because of the Son and the Son would not exist without the Father. The metaphor of the Father-Son enables humans to know God, not in a totalitarian relationship, but in a more equal, familial one. This equality in the Father-Son relationship could constitute a new paradigm to counteract authoritarian relationships in the Chinese patriarchal church and society.

The equality between the Divine Persons in the Triune God can also be seen in the Great Commission in which Jesus asks his followers to make disciples and baptise them 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' (Matthew 28:19). The order of Father-Son-Holy Spirit is quite notable. This order is different in the apostle Paul's benediction, in which one reads, 'May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all' (2 Corinthians 13:14). In 1 Peter, one finds yet another order of Father-Holy Spirit-Son, in which the apostle Peter says: 'To God's elect, strangers in the world…who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood' (1 Peter 1:1-2). Putting these three

passages together, one finds that though the Divine Persons of the Godhead play different roles, they are equal in status, mutually complementary in ministry, and respect each other. This is an important model for human and human relationship, especially in the context in which people are classified by high and low status in social class or gender.

Through the trait of Unity in Diversity, missionaries would be able to discover the qualities of each person in their different positions and roles while de-emphasising their social class. According to Lin, Honghsin 林鴻信 (2018), the oneness within the Trinity is not a narrow or exclusive oneness, but a broad and inclusive one. It is only in the midst of difference that the need for unity arises. This unity is not uniformity, nor is it a domineering oneness, but a oneness that preserves the qualities of each other, reflecting the fact that unity does not require the other to be the same as oneself. From my findings, some Chinese missionaries allow themselves to first define relationships with Others through their social class, leading to a sense of superiority or inferiority and limiting the target audiences that the missionaries choose to serve. Even though there is a difference in social status between the Chinese missionaries and Others, there is a need to see the commonality between themselves and Others. The Trinitarian trait of Unity in Diversity can help Chinese missionaries see Others beyond the lens of social class and gender. The distinctions between high and low status in terms of class and gender are eliminated if those who feel inferior accepting themselves and those who feel superior respect Others. Moreover, seeking common ground with Others is a basis for consensus and common identity, the foundation of which is the commonality of humanity. Then, by being willing to accept the differences of Others' culture with open minds, missionaries could experience closer relationships with their mission Others.

The Trinitarian trait of Outwardness to Embrace Others in love can be pivotal in changing the attitude of the missionaries towards their mission Others. Instead of seeing Others as strange or different from themselves, they can look for commonalities. The

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Triune God took the initiative to enter His created time-space through Incarnation, to dwell in the fallen world as a human being through Jesus Christ, in order to reinstate the broken relationships resulting from human sin. Salvation is the ultimate outflow of God's great love. Some female Chinese missionaries in this study emerged from the constraints of a strict societal context in which they were denigrated and developed relationships with other women in the host country, in the process forging a common identity with local women and breaking down barriers between them.

The Trinitarian trait of Mediation and Dynamism enables the missionary to become socially mobile. From the perspective of the Triune God's salvation, the Father sends out the Son and the Holy Spirit to become the mediators in reconciling humanity to the Father. Jesus says: 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit…I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' (John 3:5; 14:6). The incarnated Son became the bridge connecting the Father and humanity. The Son and the Spirit are mediators who reconcile humans to God, bringing them into the Kingdom of God and restoring their identity as His children. The God of missions invites His children to participate in His mission, so that they can be His mediators (ambassadors) in sharing the good news to Others and engaging in the redemptive work of the Triune God. As the apostle Paul writes: 'We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.' (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Mediation is the work of reconciliation through the initiative of the Triune God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to reconcile humanity to Himself. The role of the mediator is then passed on to humans to reach out to others. The apostle Paul writes: 'All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.'

(2 Corinthians 5: 18-19). The concept of mediation should be an element in the identity construction of redeemed humans, who can then function as a bridge of mediation and reconciliation to spread the gospel.

When a missionary learns and betters him or herself through interaction with Others, she or he can constantly improve and transform herself or himself, allowing movement between different social classes and creating opportunities to act as a mediator between them. For example, although Bob served in a context steeped in the norms of social class, he made an effort to enter the new society from a low social status. Through his efforts in learning the local language and engaging with the new ministry context, he constantly improved his communication skills, professional knowledge, and experience in local agriculture and animal husbandry. This enabled him to cross the barriers between the higher and lower strata of society successfully and allowed him to move freely between different social classes. Now that he is able to move in this way, his dynamic identity also allows him to become a mediator to bridges the gap between social classes and help reconcile divisions in the society.

In the light of these three Trinitarian traits, churches and Christians could examine themselves to see whether they are a church that embraces different sectors of society, or whether they are an exclusive one. The church could also take the initiative to move out of their comfort zone and embrace people from different social backgrounds. Finally, the church to be live out its role as a bridge and an intermediary in society to promote authentic and transformative social harmony.

6.2.3 Theological Reflection and Response to Ethnicity (Centre and Periphery)

In the findings and analysis of the ethnicity section, the three themes of Han-Centrism, Ethnocentrism, and Nationalism were described by the concept of Centre and Periphery.

The Trinitarian trait of the Outwardness to Embrace constitutes an act of willingness to step out of oneself towards Others. It is other-centred and not self-centred. This trait offers a response to the extremes of centre and periphery in the context of national identity, requiring the embrace not only of one's own group, but also of Others. Others at the periphery are thus brought to the centre as the embrace of Others is primary rather than issues of ethnicity. This is like Levinas, E.'s (1969) philosophy of ethics, where viewing the other as of primary importance is fundamental. However, this embracing nature does not mean the complete loss of self that would result from solely considering the other. As the missionaries practise self-limitation, Others are welcomed into the centre from the periphery and hopefully will have a chance to enter the Kingdom of God.

The biblical narrative describes how the Triune God calls people to step out of themselves and enter into the lives of others and become a blessing for them. In Genesis 12:1-3, God called Abraham to leave his country, his people and his father's household and go to the land God would show him, to be a blessing to the nations. God said: 'I will make you a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you…and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.' The same God also sent prophets to deliver His messages to people, for example, Jonah's preaching of a message of repentance to the city of Nineveh (Jonah 1:2). The Triune God also called out to the prophet Isaiah: 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us', and then Isaiah responded to God: 'Here am I. Send me' (Isaiah 6:8).

The research findings showed that when Han Chinese missionaries served in ethnic minority areas of their own country, they were overwhelmingly ethnocentric with a 'Han is better than minorities' type mentality. A second Trinitarian trait of Unity in Diversity could respond to this sense of ethnic superiority as it appreciates the diversity of each culture with its own uniqueness.

This trait of Unity in Diversity could motivate the missionaries to put aside the desire to cluster together and to look further for commonalities. For example, all languages and cultures are different, but we all share a need for mutual understanding through communication. Different communities have different ways of life, but all share a need to love and to be loved. This trait could remind the Chinese missionaries and their senders to put aside national pride, look for commonalities, and imitate the Triune God in accepting those different from them and entering humbly into the Others' world.

6.2.4 Theological Reflection and Response to Religion (Inclusive and Exclusive)

Religious identity is often shaped through church traditions, theological teachings, and spiritual experiences. However, one's religious identity can also be a hindrance to missionaries serving cross-culturally. A better understanding of the Triune God can create healthier Self-Other relationships as missionaries interact with their mission Others. The concepts of Inclusive and Exclusive describe the three themes of the cross and theology of suffering, Conservatism, and Pentecostalism from the findings.

The Trinitarian trait of God's Image in Relationship points to the fact that humans were created for relationship with the Triune God as described in Genesis chapters one to three. This relationship is destroyed because of human sin, but even sinful humans do not completely lose the desire for their Creator, as they are made in the image of God. Fernando, A. (2007) points out that most religions seek to meet the deepest 'longing' of the human heart—to reconnect with their Creator, the Lord of the universe. God actively seeks to restore the relationship between humanity and Himself because he is relational. The Triune God willingly steps out of Himself to embrace the sinful Others and act as a mediator to reconcile humanity and Himself. The missionary should understand the deepest longings of different religions for God and respect the fervour of Others' faith, in order to build relationships with them.

In countries like China, where the Church has been persecuted for a long time, suffering is often used to construct the Christian identity. The findings showed that Chinese missionaries sometimes felt they needed to suffer for suffering's sake, their suffering and endurance viewed as a personal, internal, and spiritual discipline. They tended not to suffer with others and for others. The Trinitarian trait of Outwardness to Embrace is embodied in the fact that the Father loved the world to the extent that He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, who entered a suffering world, suffered, and died on the cross while the Father suffered as He witnessed the death of His beloved Son. However, Jesus' suffering on the cross is not an internalised exercise of the self, nor merely a moral exemplary virtue. Jesus' dying on the cross demonstrates an act of willingness to suffer in order to identify with Others. The ultimate purpose of Jesus' suffering is our redemption. Jesus suffered with a mission, for the sake of redeeming Others through this act of sacrifice. This Trinitarian attribute of Outwardness to Embrace is a reminder to the Chinese missionaries to look beyond their own suffering as they interact with their mission Others.

Both Pentecostals and conservative churches exclude Others different from themselves. With their narrow worldview, they only look to see how they can convert and change Others' context to be like their own. The Trinitarian trait of Mediation and Dynamic Nature would encourage them to see how God acts as a mediator to bring the gospel which is understandable to Others. Jesus became the mediator between humans and God and missionaries should consider their role as a mediator for Others rather than just trying to convert them to their traditions. The Trinitarian trait of Mediation and Dynamic Nature could inspire the missionaries to contextualise and to reach out to Others from differing religious backgrounds.

6.2.5 Summary of the Challenges and Theological Reflection

The theological reflections and responses in this chapter show that the Trinitarian Traits could address identity construction of the Chinese missionary. There is a sharp contrast between the strained relationships in Chinese Face culture and the Trinitarian relationship. The trait of God's Image in Relationship shows that relationships in Chinese culture, which are unequal and hierarchical, need to be juxtaposed with the equality of the divine Persons within the Trinity.

The trait of Unity in Diversity of the Trinitarian relationship is demonstrated in the community of Christ. Though Christians come from different societies, nationalities, cultures, and religious backgrounds, through the redemptive power of the cross of Jesus Christ, they become one in the Holy Spirit, and enter the Kingdom of God the Father. The trait of Unity of the Trinity would help the missionaries to recognise that they were similar to Others before their salvation. By discovering commonality, the missionaries could build relationships with their mission Others. From the vantage point of relationships, they can begin to recognise that 'Others are different from the Self' and yet still respect each individual. The trait of Unity in Diversity gives a new depth and real appreciation of transcendent love.

The trait of Outwardness to Embrace of the Trinity counteracts the Chinese cultural theme of Close and Distant relationships according to one's relationship within the family. Furthermore, the trait of Outwardness to Embrace of the Trinity could also effectively redefine the idea of the 'family', because 'family' will no longer just be members who share blood relations, but expands to embrace those who might be from a different background or culture. Because of the overflow of love from within the Trinity, the missionaries can learn to love even those who are 'Distant'. The trait of Outwardness to Embrace gives a new depth to the understanding of how God loves the world.

The trait of Mediation and Dynamic Nature of the Trinity demonstrates that the Trinity provides a bridge for two parties that were formerly alienated. This non-self-centred distinctive could provide a solution for the Chinese missionaries who face confrontation and alienation due to cultural, social, ethnic, and religious differences. This dynamism is demonstrated in the interaction of the Trinity with Others. This ultimately means stepping out of oneself to experience Others, and being transformed in the process of interaction with them. When one is willing to take the opportunity to expand and stretch oneself through one's interaction with Others, one is transformed. More importantly, by imitating Jesus Christ as the mediator between human and God, missionaries can embrace their mission Others so these Others can also enter a life of change and transformation by the Triune God.

The Trinitarian traits can flexibly respond to the challenges encountered by Chinese missionaries in terms of their identity as they wrestle with the challenges posed by their cultural traditions (Close and Distant), social status (High and Low), ethnicity (Centre and Periphery), and religion (Inclusive and Exclusive). Bringing together the above reflection, Table 6.1 summarises the themes from the findings, the factors affecting the missionary's identity construction, and the reflections from the Trinitarian traits on the challenges faced by the missionaries.

	Cultural Identity	Social Identity	Ethnic Identity	Religious Identity
Research Themes from Findings	• Familism • Face Culture • Power Distance	• Social Status • Gender Discrimination • Social Mobility	• Han Centrism • Chinese-Ethnocentrism • Nationalism	• Theology of the Cross/suffering • Conservativism • Pentecostalism
Construction Factors	• Confucianism • Historic Heritage • Moral Relationships	• Cultural Traditions • Social Classification • Sphere of Daily Life	• School Education • Mass Media • Ideology	• Church Traditions • Theological Teachings • Spiritual Experiences
Relationship with Others	• Close and Distant	• High and Low	• Centre and Periphery	• Inclusive and Exclusive
Response through Trinitarian Traits	• God's image in Relationship • Outwardness to Embrace • Unity in Diversity	• Unity in Diversity • Outwardness to Embrace • Mediation and Dynamic Nature	• Outwardness to Embracing • Unity in Diversity	• God's image in Relationship • Outwardness to Embrace • Mediation and Dynamic Nature

Table 6.1 Summary of Chinese Missionary Identity and Trinitarian Traits

6.3.0 New Identity Paradigm

This study found that the process of the Chinese missionaries' identity construction was influenced most strongly by Confucian ideas and nationalism, resulting in a dichotomised relationship between the missionary and Others culturally (Close and Distant), socially (High and Low), ethnically (Centre and Periphery), religiously (Inclusive and Exclusive). The existing theories of INT, SIT do not fully address these issues. Therefore, I present a new identity paradigm Tridentity theory.

6.3.1 The Missing Link

I propose a new identity paradigm called 'Tridentity' to bridge the gap between existing theories, in the hope of helping the Chinese missionaries' identity construction as they reach out to their mission Others. The previous section outlined how the four Trinitarian traits address the challenges missionaries face as they encounter Others. These traits are naturally linked together and offer a promising paradigm for Chinese missionaries to

apply to their identity construction and their relationship with their mission Others. Through the dynamic Trinitarian relationships within the three Persons in the Godhead as illustrated in Figure 6.3, missionaries could draw inspiration from this Trinitarian relational model as they relate to Others.

The new paradigm of Tridentity goes one step further than the Identity Negotiation Theory and Hybrid Identity Theory proposed by Ting-Toomey, S. (2015) and Bhabha, H. (1994) as shown in Figure 6.4.
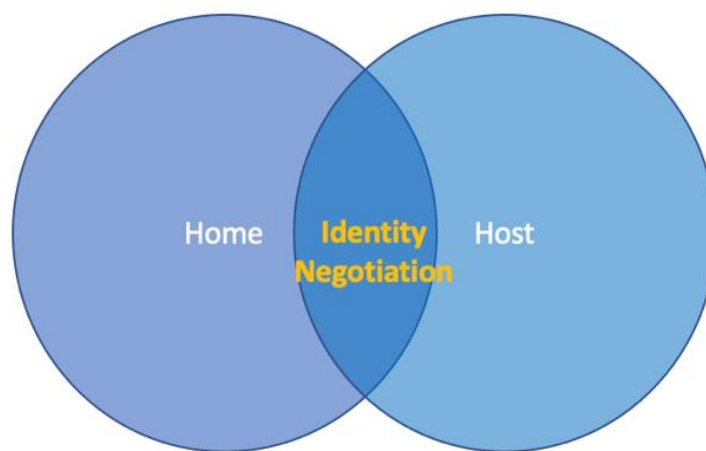
Figure 6.4 Identity Negotiation

My reflections uncovered that both Identity Negotiation and Hybrid Identity Theories describe how a social actor carries out identity negotiation with the culture of others. However, identity negotiation in line with Trinitarian traits is important as it could enable missionaries to overcome challenges by making appropriate adjustments in their new mission context.

My research found that the missionaries' relationships were in constant opposition with their mission Other. They failed to present the divine aspect of identity negotiation and transformation, which shows the limitations of the above two theories of identity negotiation. The missionaries lacked the crucial element of the Triune God in their interaction with Others. Thus, these theories did not explain how missionaries can overcome their challenges and minister among Others. Following the findings and

analysis in my research, I propose the Tridentity Theory to bridge this essential yet missing link to the existing identity negotiation theories.

6.3.2 Proposed Paradigm of Trinitarian Identity (Tridentity Theory)

The Tridentity Theory (Trinitarian Identity Theory) is a new paradigm which augments the foundation laid by Identity Negotiation and the Hybrid Identity Theories. Figure 6.5 illustrates the concept.
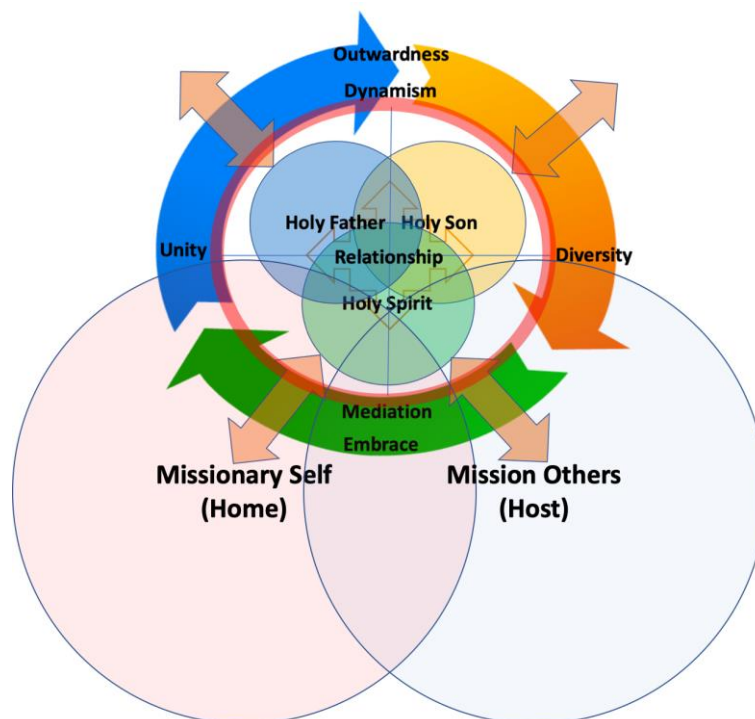
Figure 6.5 Tridentity Theory

The Tridentity Theory offers three new connections. First, it links the theoretical paradigms of social identity theory, such as those explored in Chapter Two, concerning identity construction and negotiation theories. Second, it links the three philosophers' concerns for the other (Others and the Absolute Other), Emmanuel Levinas' ethics of the philosophy of the other, Ricoeur's construction of narrative identity, and Taylor's moral framework of goodness. Lastly, it integrates Trinitarian theology to form a three-dimensional relationship between the Trinity, the missionary, and their mission Others.

With the Trinitarian traits as the basis, the relationships between God and humans, and between humans are revealed and integrated.

As illustrated in Figure 6.5, the Missionary Self and Mission Others interact and negotiate with the Trinitarian traits. Thus, the Tridentity Theory enables the missionary to become aware of their own self-identity and still reach out, empowered by the Trinitarian God to create relationships with their mission Others.

6.3.3 Discourse on Tridentity Theory

6.3.3.1 Tridentity as a Three-Dimensional Relationship

The 'Trinitarian Theory' of identity provides a perspective to look beyond the Self to Others, as it infuses the Trinity and its traits into a triangular three-dimensional relationship.

One of the common concerns of Levinas, Ricoeur, and Taylor is how to deal with the Self-Other relationship. A relationship between humans and the divine personality must be the foundation of the Self-Other relationship. Levinas, E. proposed the concept of the Absolute Other which refers to God (1969); and Ricoeur, P. suggested that through the concept of narrative identity (1984), each individual forms a greater story with the other, at the same time placing God in a relationship with Self-Other relationship, thus allowing humans into God's grand narrative. Finally, note Taylor, C.'s (2001) argument that if humans want to escape from the dilemma of individualism, then they must first return to the Goodness or 'religion' before they can maintain a reconciled relationship with the other.

The Tridentity Theory could effectively reflect the Trinitarian traits as the added Divine perspective to the missionary's identity construction and identity negotiation process. As missionaries enter the context of Others on the mission field, they are also entering an inseparable three-dimensional (human-God-human) relationship with the

Triune God. The missionary thus enters the context of Others, with the same interdependence in the community of love, just as Jesus entered the world, resulting in the reconciliation between humanity and the Triune God.

In a sense, this paradigm fulfils Buber, M.'s (1970) parallel two-way relationship of I and Thou (I and you), and the two-way relationship of 'I and eternal Thou' (I and God), but it also goes beyond the interpersonal relationship of I-Thou and invites the Trinity into the I-Thou relationship, creating a three-dimensional overlap. This is reinforced by the apostle Paul: 'Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:4-5). This is the three-dimensional relationship between God, the missionary and Others, which drives the transformation of missionaries' lives.

6.3.3.2 Equal and Diverse Tridentity

This paradigm is built on the traits of the Trinity as both One and Three. It provides an equal platform for oneself and Others. According to the Trinitarian traits of Unity in Diversity, missionaries ought to seek common qualities between themselves and Others, such as being human, suffering from sin together, and desiring love. These commonalities can connect two parties and allow the relationship to be constructed in mutual recognition and understanding. As Chiow, Hsueh-Hsin 周學信 (2020) highlighted, God's love inspires Christians to see their own weaknesses and commonality with Others. The only way to see that all have a common nature is to return to the original creation narrative which reminds us that we share a common Creator and mission from Him.

The diverse nature of the Trinity points to God's inherent richness in the identity of the Tridentity, and in His creation of man to be unique individuals. This is reflected in the diversity of cultural traditions, gender, social status, ethnicity, religious identity, talents, abilities, personality tendencies, and life experiences. Application of the Tridentity theory could help missionaries to be more contextualised in reaching out to Others and to

appreciate Others. The Tridentity Theory also highlights the uniqueness of the Trinity in the world's pluralistic religions (atheism, pantheism, and other monotheistic beliefs) as One and Three, and Three and One. The only means of salvation is discovered in the doctrine of the Trinity.

6.3.3.3 Tridentity via Three-Way Negotiation

The Tridentity Theory (see Figure 6.5) complements Identity Negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, S., 2015) in that it offers the possibility of tripartite negotiation. The main reason for this is that the Mediation and Dynamic Nature of the Trinity provides an important theoretical basis for negotiating the relationship between two parties through the mediation of a third. In the process of negotiation, it provides time and space for openness and freedom, allowing the possibility of transformation between Self and the Other. In general, identity negotiation is only a two-party interaction (home and host) and usually focuses on the change of individuals in the process of negotiating with the other in a given environment (context). However, the mediation nature of the Tridentity Theory replaces two-way with three-way interactions. By stepping out of the self towards Others, the Father sent the Son Jesus into human history on a mission to reconcile humans through His death and resurrection. The missionary is both reconciled to God and, through the Holy Spirit, called and sent to Others as a mediator.

Through the connection between Self and Other, the missionary also connects the Triune God with Others. The Holy Spirit would also be freed to work in the relationship between the missionary and Others, in the three-way relationship, to accomplish the work of reconciliation. The Trinity transforms the missionary's identity through Others, who can be changed by the missionary's own transformation. The three-way negotiation between God, the missionary and Others allows room for the Triune God to transform. The dynamic nature of the Trinity is reflected in the interaction between the Divine Persons within the Trinity, as well as in the interaction between the Trinity and humanity.

By interacting with Others, transformation and renewal of the missionary's life takes place, which in turn affects the transformation of the lives of Others and their experience and knowledge of the Trinity. In addition, through the missionary, the Triune God also intervenes in the lives and relationships of the mission Others, resulting in a relationship between the mission Others and the Triune God. This Trinitarian paradigm creates a connection between space, time, and eternity; and a connection between the *missio Dei*, the Missionary Self, and the Mission Others.

6.3.3.4 Tridentity as a Sense of Belonging

Tridentity theory provides a way for missionaries in a foreign land to avoid losing themselves completely as they blend in with the host country's culture, offering instead a way of finding one's own belonging and identity in the Triune God. The process of a missionary stepping out of self is a lonely journey away from home and there is even the fear of losing one's identity. However, the Trinitarian traits of Outwardness to Embrace become an important factor in reaching out to Others. If this embracing relationship is detached from the embrace of the Trinity and only remains between the missionary and Others whom he serves, it will produce the 'loss of self'. Therefore, with Tridentity, the missionaries' identity and relationships could be closely linked to the relationship between the three Persons of the Godhead. The missionaries do not work alone, but are united in their personal relationship with the Triune God, as well as with the Christian community (including the home church, the local church, and the local overseas missionary community). Such an internal embrace of belonging grants the missionary the strength to reach out and embrace Others.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the challenges posed to the Chinese missionary identity and presented reflections on the four Trinitarian traits. It also proposed a new Tridentity

Theory to help Chinese missionaries to embed the Trinitarian paradigm as part of their own identity construction. For example, by applying the trait of God's Image in Relationships, missionaries can raise their self-awareness of their own tendency to cluster together and yet, also reach out in relationship to Others. They also might be able to find possibilities to overcome hierarchical relationships with more equal ones. Understanding and applying the Trinitarian trait of Unity in Diversity may help missionaries to accept Others, even when they have differing values. The trait of Outwardness to Embrace may help the missionaries to expand from a two-dimensional context of just Self and Others to a three-dimensional context of Self, Others, and the Trinity. This trait will also help them to look beyond ethnocentricity, and be other rather than self-centred. The trait of Mediation and Dynamic Nature may empower the missionaries to reach out and minister to Others to fulfil God's mission and the actualisation of His Kingdom. As they participate in God's mission, the missionaries themselves are changed to become more like Christ.

Even though the Tridentity Theory was developed with a Chinese context in mind, it can apply to other cultures as all people are created in God's image. The involvement of the Trinity in a missionary's life could enable him or her to relate better to Others on the mission field and to serve as a bridge between the Triune God and Others.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Chapter Seven</h1>

<h2 style="text-align:center">Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations</h2>

Introduction

This study used narrative inquiry to analyse the Chinese missionaries' relationship between Self and Others by reference to sociological and philosophical discourse. A new paradigm utilising reflection on four Trinitarian traits was proposed to transform future missionaries' identity to help them better face challenges created by tensions in their relationships with Others and thus transform their cross-cultural ministry. Here, implications for individual missionaries, sending churches, and sending agencies arising from this new paradigm are then presented. Finally, recommendations are made for future studies.

7.1.0 Summary of this Research

The Chinese church's indigenous mission movement has emerged in the past 20 years. However, academic research on this subject is still in its infancy. Some research papers have focused on the training of Chinese missionaries, their member care, field strategy, and attrition rates, but there has been no research on Chinese missionaries' identity construction or their relationship with Others. In addition, although a few scholars have analysed Trinitarian theology in missions, there is sparse research on missionary identity viewed from this angle. My research provides a new perspective on how the theological reflection with Trinitarian traits can respond to the challenges of Chinese missionary identity as they cross cultures.

7.1.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis was derived from identity theories developed by scholars in sociology and philosophy as presented in the literature review in Chapter Two. I explored theories of identity construction from both Chinese and Western thinkers. Even though an individual's field, habitus and capitals all impact their identity construction, identity negotiation theories show that interactions with one's environment and relationships may cause changes to our identities.

I explored recent literature on Trinitarian theology and distilled Trinitarian attributes from it. The discussion of Trinitarian theology incorporated the theories from the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions. This cross-disciplinary research utilised sociology, philosophy, and theology to examine the identity construction of the Chinese missionary, and I deliberately combined the views of Western and Chinese scholars to provide a more culturally diverse analysis and reflection.

7.1.2 Research Methods

In Chapter Three (Methodology), I discussed how I used qualitative research methods of narrative inquiry in my field research. I did in-depth interviews with 52 Chinese missionaries working in cross-cultural contexts, both domestically and outside of China. I recorded the missionaries' stories and transcribed them, allowing the text of the participants' stories to present its original voice. Through their narratives, I classified the challenges they faced as they interacted with Others. Using comparative analysis, I found patterns based on culture, hierarchical social relationships, ethnicity, and religion.

The interviews with the primary sources provided keys to the missionaries' identity construction. I then used four Trinitarian traits to address the challenges they faced as they crossed cultures. Armed with these initial findings, I asked seven of those

missionaries to form a focus group and obtained their feedback. Lastly, I included the focus group's feedback in the conclusion of the presentation of the four Trinitarian traits.

7.1.3 Research Findings and Analysis

The findings in Chapters Four and Five showed that cultural traditions impacted the missionaries' identities. The concepts of Close and Distant can be used to describe the familism, Face, and power distance in their relationships. Their social identity was affected by social status, gender, and social mobility, and shaped by the hierarchy (High and Low) in their relationships. The missionaries' ethnic identity comprised their Han ethnicity, ethnocentrism and nationalism influencing the relationship between the Centre (China) and the Periphery (Others). Finally, the concepts of Inclusive and Exclusive were seen through the missionaries' theology of suffering and the cross, and as a result of the fundamentally different religious cores of Pentecostalism and conservatism.

Every missionary in this study experienced transformation in identity because of their involvement in cross-cultural missions. Some grew in self-awareness and were able to identify with Others. Others moved from a position of excluding Others to accepting them. Despite all the cultural challenges, most of the participants agreed that if they had not engaged with Others, this identity transformation would not have taken place.

7.1.4 Reflection on Four Trinitarian Traits

In Chapter Six, I summarised my reflections and presented the four key Trinitarian traits that were distilled from the attributes reviewed in Chapter Two. These were:

o   Image of God in relationship

o   Unity in Diversity

o   Outwardness to Embrace

o   Mediation and Dynamic Nature

These traits are closely inter-related and cannot be separated. I then created a new Tridentity Theory to utilise these traits as responses to the challenges created by the tensions in the Chinese missionaries' identity as they interacted with Others. This new Tridentity Theory could create opportunities for renewal and transformation for future missionaries.

7.2.0 Implications

7.2.1 Implications for Research Methods

This is a multi-disciplinary study, and my theoretical framework allowed me to study complex situations. Through the qualitative research process, I assumed the multiple roles of outsider, insider, researcher, and participant. In addition, I maintained an objective perspective to analyse the participants' behaviour patterns while also trying to understand the subjective experience of their inner world. Finally, I proposed that this insider/outsider hybrid research position in the exploration of the missionary's inner world would produce a more complete narrative.

7.2.2 Implications for Discipleship and Training

In my 20 years of experience in training Chinese Christians, I have found that they usually see Jesus as their role model but do not have a complete understanding of all three Persons in the Trinity. In addition, because of the persecution and their inward-looking perspective, the churches tended to be disconnected from society. Wang, Ying 王莹 (2011) points out that the discipleship of believers in China is mostly done through classes and training. My research found that the Chinese missionary identity expressed in terms of their faith and practices caused exclusion of people not like them. If the sending church could disciple the missionaries to be more aware of their own identity, these missionaries would be more sensitive to Others and adjust more readily to new contexts. Missionaries

need to be taught how to reflect theologically to integrate their faith better with their behaviours, allowing them to connect better with their church, Others, and society.

The findings from the focus group revealed that many missionaries also did not receive systematic theological training before they were sent to the field; those that did not study the close relationship between the three Persons in the Trinity. Trinitarian theology should be presented as foundational rather than just a doctrine of God. The focus group's feedback suggests that they need transformation in areas such as relationships with Others, theology of suffering, and cultural traditions. Theological education in the church needs to incorporate the notion of the Triune God as expressed by His love through creation and the plan of salvation. As the missionaries explore Trinitarian theology and reflect upon these Trinitarian traits, they would be able to bring conceptual insights and practical transformation to their missionary community.

7.2.3 Implications for Joining Multi-Cultural Teams

As seen from Diane and Matthew's cases, missionaries were most effective when integrating into new contexts if they already had experience of working in multi-cultural teams. The Han Chinese church is culturally homogenous, and churches are often defined by their constituency, e.g., a church for migrant workers, the middle-class, or intellectuals. Therefore, the Chinese missionaries did not have exposure to those in other ethnic cultures and sub-cultures. In addition, because of the tradition of strict hierarchical relationships, church leaders often do not hear voices from younger age groups, different genders, ethnicities, or social classes. If the Chinese sending church could deliberately develop a more diverse and multi-cultural community, this would provide an optimal environment for the development of future cross-cultural missionaries. In addition, interactions in a multi-cultural, yet 'safe' community would allow adjustments in self-

awareness and identity construction to be made early on. This in turn would help promote mutual acceptance and appreciation of Others.

7.2.4 Implications for Pre-Field Training of Missionaries

The Chinese sending agencies provided the missionaries with one to two years of pre-field, cross-cultural training before entering the mission field. However, their main training was focused on Bible knowledge, evangelism, church-planting skills and language, culture, and worldview acquisition. These missionaries still lacked self-awareness of their own identities and a true understanding of the Triune God. They had a vague idea of culture shock but assumed that all the challenges they faced were entirely due to the differences between their own ethnic cultures and Others. Their lack of awareness of how their identity was shaped by their own culture, politics, society, and beliefs adversely influenced their relationship with Others. If the Chinese sending agencies were to apply this new paradigm of Trinitarian traits, this would help the missionaries understand the relationships within the Godhead based on love and trust. Then they would be able to do likewise as they reached out to Others with God's love.

7.3.0 Recommendations for Future Studies

This study of the Chinese missionaries' identity was based on sociological and philosophical approaches. Theological reflections on identity from the perspective of Trinitarian theology were also put forward. Further research recommendations in both breadth and depth are listed below.

7.3.1 Broader Research Topics

7.3.1.1 Extensive Research on Other's Identity Construction

The main subject of this study was the identity of the Chinese missionaries, and how their identity caused challenges as they interacted with Others. The challenges in any relationship come not just from one side, but from both. One limitation of this study was that it was not possible to consider the identity of Others. The missionaries' narratives were all constructed from their cross-cultural experience and context, i.e., the local people, local social and religious groups, local church believers, and other international missionary groups. Therefore, a more in-depth study could be done on the identity construction of each of the Others (target groups), which would yield a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between the missionaries and the people they served.

7.3.1.2 Future Research on Other Ethnic Chinese Missionaries

As Chinese missionaries serve in their fields, they will invariably meet other ethnic Chinese missionaries from outside of the PRC, such as those from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and North America. Future studies could also include research on the differences between the mainland Chinese missionaries and these other Chinese missionaries. Although they are all Chinese, they have different worldviews and backgrounds. This further research could look at the differences in their identities from historical, ideology, and national perspectives. These groups could then have greater awareness of their own identities as they seek to fulfil the Great Commission.

7.3.1.3 Identity Indicator Inventory

I recommend future research to develop an identity indicator inventory which can assess a missionary candidate's identity in the same way as the personality inventories available today (e.g., MBTI or DISC) assess a candidate's personality. Through such a quantitative

assessment, one could discover factors impacting one's identity and learn how this might impact the development of healthy relationships with Others.

The assessment for the basis of one's identity would be more complex than those for personality. More data would need to be collected to include the foundational dimensions of culture, social relationships, ethnicity, and religion. Finding the building blocks of an individual's identity would be the first step in understanding the difficulties met as he or she crosses cultures. This could provide missionary agencies and multinational companies with understanding of an individual's personality and identity.

7.3.2 Further In-Depth Research

7.3.2.1 In-Depth Study of the Theology of the Trinitarian Relationship

Relationships are an important part of Chinese culture, as seen from Confucian teaching. However, these Confucian relationships are structured and conceptualised without reference to a divine personality. In theological research and development, if 'relationship theology' can be developed through social Trinitarian theology, it would build a new type of relationship which would be more comprehensive and closer to the Chinese relationship culture, but at the same time hold to biblical values.

7.3.2.2 In-Depth Study of the Theology of the Cross

The history of the mainland Chinese churches over the past 60 years has been one of suffering and endurance of numerous struggles amid persecution. Despite this persecution, trusting in Jesus Christ and being willing to suffer for the Lord, the Chinese church has flourished, and the Chinese missionary movement has been launched. However, sending missionaries from China is still an 'illegal' act in the eyes of their government and missionaries are subject to various levels of restriction and control. Therefore, it is not surprising that the theology of the cross is an important core belief of the whole missionary movement. However, for China's church and missionary

movement, research is needed to construct a more holistic theology to deal with suffering, pointing to Christ's resurrection. Previously, the theology of the cross focused on the suffering of Christ, with the cross seen as the symbol of sacrifice but not of hope.

Just as African and Latin American theologians have produced liberation theology and post-colonial theology as they wrestled with poverty, tribalism, and colonisation, China's churches need to be enriched with more theological reflections built upon a cross-centred faith whose end is resurrection and hope. This would provide a more comprehensive theology of the Cross for the universal church and the suffering world. In China, amidst the persecution of the church, future work by Chinese theologians could produce a contextualised and comprehensive theology of the Cross in missions.

7.3.3 In-Depth Research on the Multiple Perspectives of Identity

This study used the four lenses of culture, social, ethnicity, and religion to study the Chinese missionaries' identity. However, there exist additional lenses potentially helpful for future studies, such as history, education, postmodern thought, the inter-generations such as Millennials and Generation Z, gender, geopolitics and various other religions such as Islam or Hinduism. All of these could be crucial factors in identity construction. A person's identity is dynamically changing due to the impacts of globalisation and the continuous development of the world.

Concluding Remarks

Although researchers are beginning to pay attention to the development of China's missionary movement, the focus has been on strengthening the training of missionaries, sending structures and the member care of missionaries and their families while they are in the field. My research involved conducting in-depth interviews with 52 Chinese missionaries. The results brought to light their identity construction and challenges they

encountered when they crossed cultures. Through the theological reflection in the Trinitarian perspective, I then proposed a new paradigm, called Tridentity, as part of a dynamic construction that could lead to transformation in cross-cultural ministry for the future Chinese missionaries.

Bob's narrative in Chapter Four showed a case of social mobility in which he made great strides in reaching out to Others by principles which I have tried to interpret through the idea of Tridentity. He was able to improve his social standing by transforming himself and was welcomed in his target community. Thus, he was able to create a platform to share the gospel. I present this research in the hope that more Chinese missionaries would be able to undergo an identity construction like Bob's case of social mobility and apply the traits of Tridentity as a new model for building relationships with their mission Others. If Chinese churches and mission agencies were to use the results of my research, they would help to empower and equip future Chinese missionaries as they participate in global missions.

APPENDICES

Appendix One

Interview Questions

Background Information collected:
- Name
- Gender
- Birthplace
- Educational Level
- Marital Status
- Number of Children
- Date of Conversion
- Church Background
- Denomination
- Host Country (or People Group)
- Sending Agency
- Length of Service

Interview Questions
1. Please share your greatest joy or accomplishment while serving cross-culturally.
   - What was your greatest struggle and challenge? Why?
   - As a missionary from China serving in a cross-cultural context, what were your strengths and weaknesses?
   - What do you think were the reasons behind both these strengths and weaknesses?

2. How has China's rising influence in the world impacted you personally, and to your mission work?
   - How do those whom you serve see China's rise in the world?
   - How do you position yourself between these attitudes?

3. As you served cross-culturally, how do you view ethnic groups that are different from the Chinese?
   - How did it make you feel (i.e., inferior or superior)?
   - Are you conscious of how culture have an impact upon you?

4. How did crossing cultures impact your Chinese cultural values (i.e., harmony, unity, collective thinking, Face and Guanxi (relationship)?
   - Were these positive or negative? Why?

5. As China has an honour/shame type culture, how did this impact your relationships with others in the mission field?

6. Please share the core theological values that make up your Christian faith. How did these values affect your relationship with others in the cross-cultural context?

7. Please share your view on the relationship between the doctrine of the Triune God and self- identity. How does the understanding of that doctrine affect the relationship between missionary and the others?

Appendix Two

Statement of Ethics

Candidates for registration should complete and sign this form and send it with their Research Proposal when they submit their Proposal to the Research Ethics Committee (REC).

When the REC has signed off this statement, it should be added to the candidate's Registration Portfolio for the OCMS Assessment Board.

Researcher's Name: David Lin

Main Supervisor: Dr Paul Woods

Second Supervisor: Dr Clement Chia

Research topic: The Missionary Self and Mission Others: The Self-Identity of Missionaries from China in Trinitarian Perspective.

Description of Research: This research will investigate: How is Han Chinese missionaries' self-identity constructed and how might elements of Trinitarian theology be part of a dynamic construction that could lead to openness to change and effectiveness in cross-cultural ministry?

Research Population: The research population will include:

This research group will mainly focus on Han Chinese missionaries sent out from Mainland China and serving in the cross-culture context. I intend to target 30-50 missionaries among approximant total population of missionaries of 500.

Research Methods/Approach: This research will be situated in the general field of identity studies. This research will apply mixed methods which include text based research, Field work and qualitative research through in-depth interview and theological reflection.

Is your research purely text-based, e.g., biblical studies, theological studies?

No, my research will also include field work that require qualitative interviewing.

Please read all the relevant sections of the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics which can be located via the ESRC website (please choose the latest version): http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/framework-for-research-ethics/index.aspx. In particular, pay attention to the section '**Research potentially requiring a full ethics review'**.

Research Guidelines

The following guidelines, though an extraction, are seen as overall principles that directly apply to this research shall be followed. These have been extracted from the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics and considered applicable to this research.

- The specific identity of any participant in this research will be protected, unless informed consent has been granted by a participant.
- Research will NOT involve people from a vulnerable group as defined by the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics
- Research will NOT involve anyone lacking capacity as defined by the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics
- Research will NOT involve potentially sensitive topics as defined by the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics
- Approval will be requested from the Main Supervisor of this research and from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies on research to which responses maybe needed through the internet
- Approval will be requested from the Main Supervisor of this research and from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies on any matters that maybe considered sensitive or in which the identity of informants is required or in any matters in which clarification is needed

Statement of Agreement

The researcher shall abide by <u>The Six Key Principles</u> as extracted from 'Our principles

and expectations for ethical research' in the ESRC document:

1. Research participants should take part voluntarily, free from any coercion or undue influence, and their rights, dignity and (when possible) autonomy should be respected and appropriately protected.

2. Research should be worthwhile and provide value that outweighs any risk or harm. Researchers should aim to maximise the benefit of the research and minimise potential risk of harm to participants and researchers. All potential risk and harm should be mitigated by robust precautions.

3. Research staff and participants should be given appropriate information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks and benefits, if any, are involved.

4. Individual research participant and group preferences regarding anonymity should be respected and participant requirements concerning the confidential nature of information and personal data should be respected.

5. Research should be designed, reviewed, and undertaken to ensure recognised standards of integrity are met, and quality and transparency are assured.

6. The independence of research should be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality should be explicit.

To implement these principles:

- The responsibility for conduct of the research in line with relevant principles rests with the principal investigator and the research / employing organisation.
- The responsibility for ensuring that research is subject to appropriate ethics review, approval and monitoring lies with the research organisation seeking or holding an award with the ESRC and which employs the researchers performing it, or some of the researchers when it is acting as the co-ordinator for collaborative research involving more than one organisation.
- Research organisations should have clear, transparent, appropriate, and effective procedures in place for ethics review, approval, and governance whenever it is necessary.
- Risks should be minimised.
- Research should be designed in a way that the dignity and autonomy of research participants are protected and always respected.
- Ethics review should always be proportionate to the potential risk, whether this involves primary or secondary data.
- Whilst the secondary use of some datasets may be relatively uncontroversial, and require only light touch ethics review, novel use of existing data and especially data linkage, as well as some uses of administrative, internet-mediated data and controlled data will raise issues of ethics.

- Research involving primary data collection will always raise issues of ethics that must be addressed.
- As the research involves more than minimal risk (as defined by the document entitled 'Research Ethics at OCMS'), the student will submit to REC proposed research instrument, such as questionnaires or interview questions, for approval before data collection. [1]

Declaration

This researcher shall follow the ethical framework as established by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the United Kingdom. This ESRC Framework for Research Ethics referenced in this statement can be located via the ESRC website (please choose the latest version): http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/framework-for-research-ethics/index.aspx. I have read all the relevant sections of the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics.

Student's Signature: *David Lin*

Date: 1st of May 2017

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[1] Please attach your questionnaires, or sample of these, if these are available now.

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Appendix Three

Interview Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. My name is David Lin, and I am doing a research project on Chinese missionary identity. I would like to hear your story and learn about your cross-cultural mission field experience, especially how your 'identity' affected your relationship with others. This will help me learn from your experience and enable me to discover how to help Chinese missionaries in the future.

This interview should last no longer than one and a half hours. I will be recording the whole interview process so that I do not miss any part of your story. As we record, please speak loudly to ensure a clear recording. I will also be taking some written notes during the interview.

Everything you share will be kept confidential. Your sharing will only be used for this research, and I will ensure your anonymity by assigning you a pseudonym. Feel free to let me know if you have any questions or wish to end the interview at any time during the process.

Your signature below indicates your willingness to participate in this interview.

Interviewee signature: Date:

Interviewer signature: Date:

Appendix Four

<p align="center">Transcription Assistants' Consent Form</p>

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the transcription work in this project. This project's aim is to explore stories on cross-cultural missions, especially focused on how one's 'identity' affects one's relationship with others. Our goal is to learn from this experience and make improvements in missionary training in the future.

As the transcription assistant, your job is to transcribe the interview given by the researcher and return the text file to the researcher in a timely manner. During the process of transcription work, should you have any problems, please contact the researcher to resolve the issue together.

Instructions for Transcription Assistants

1. For each transcription file, please set the file names by: /Recording file name + your initials + the date you completed the recording.

2. You do not need to transcribe any background noises, or dialogue in the background that is irrelevant to the research.

3. Replace the full name of the field of missionary service mentioned in the recording with its initials, i.e., Thailand to TH. For other countries mentioned in the recording, write out the entire name.

4. In the recording, assign aliases to the interviewees (i.e., Person 1, as pronouns in Chinese do not have explicitly state the gender). For names mentioned of people who were not present at the interview, assign another alias to ensure confidentiality (i.e., Person 2).

5. Before you upload the file, please create a zip file with password. Then use Signal to notify the researcher the password for the zip file.

6. Instructions for stenography may be updated due to actual needs. Should this happen, the researcher will send the updated version to the stenographer in a timely manner.

While working on this project (as of today) the transcription assistant must keep the contents confidential without sharing them with anyone in any format. Upon completion of the project, the transcription assistant must delete all the recordings (including but not limited to the original recordings). The transcription assistant must also delete all files on their IT equipment pertaining to this project (including but not limited to the transcription files on their computer and emails concerning this project).

Before you start working on this project, please read this consent form and the instructions below and let the researcher know if you have any questions.

Your signature below indicates your willingness to be the stenographer for this project.

Signature of Transcription Assistant   Date

Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix Five

Samples of Interview Scripts in Chinese and English

Jason:「我認為我們中國漢族是最優秀的民族，我們在世界立於世界民族之領，我們是整個世界上在曾經歷史很長一段時間我們是領導者，現在我們雖然不是領導者，我們也在積極地回到我們歷史的原點（繼續成為世界的領導者）。所以，身為一名中國人，我感覺到很自豪，當然，這個自豪跟驕傲是不一樣的，自豪是我以這個身份，我覺得我感到滿足，而驕傲是我覺得我的這個民族就高於別的民族，你們別的民族就下我一等，我就比你們高。」

Jason said: 'I believe Han Chinese is the best ethnic group. We are the leading people in the world. For a long time in history, we had been the leading people of the entire world, though we are not the top leader now. But we are proactively getting back to that point (of assuming the position of the world leader). So, I feel very proud of being Chinese. Of course, I didn't mean I'm haughty. The pride comes from my identity. I feel content about it. Being haughty refers to the feeling that my ethnic group is superior to other ethnic groups – we are better, you are worse.'

Sherry：「我第一次去藏區服事的時候，我是抱著強烈的信仰優越感，我覺得跟大多數的宣教士一樣，一開始都抱持著『你們信的是假的，我們所信仰的才是真的』的態度。所以，當我看到一些寺廟，我是帶著一個藐視心態，特別是當我們做行軍禱告時，我們會在內心中宣告，『我腳掌所踏之地，就是踩踏撒但的營壘城堡』，就像是一副去打架和打仗的狀態。」

Sherry: 'The first time I went to Tibet as a missionary, I had a strong sense of religious superiority. Like most of the other missionaries, my attitude was that "what you believe is false, and what we believe is the only thing right." So, when I saw the temples, I often despised them. When we were doing a "prayer march", we would proclaim in our minds, "we are trampling on the fortress of Satan." We felt like we were fighting a battle.'

John：「我認為和尚也好、尼姑也好，或者是普通的民族，他的民族的宗教文化都是他們認為是在拜神，我認為他是真實的，真實的宗教信仰在裡頭，只不過是他的對象錯了。他的那種敬虔、他的那種真實、他的那種付時間、那種敬拜還真的有時候值得我們學習的地方，只不過他的對象不清楚，他不知道是哪一個對象。

所以，我們的一個使命就是讓這個對象要改變一下、規正一下。包括他的文化，有些低微的文化，不符合聖經的文化需要改變，有些風俗文化，我認為一定是要保留的。我們不是說改變他的文化，是在改變他的根、那個信仰。所以，我們在藏族中間的時候，也會用壇龕，他信主了以後，家裡還掛壇龕。」

John: 'In my opinion, these people, whether they are monks, nuns, or ordinary people, and regardless of their religion and culture, truly believe that they are worshipping God. Their faith is real. The only problem is that they are worshipping the wrong god. Their sincerity and their willingness to invest time in their devotion are really something we can learn from. The only problem is that they do not know the right God to worship. They do not know whom they should worship. So, one of our tasks is to make this thing right, to make a correction. In their culture, there are some elements which are not biblically correct, and they need to be changed. But some customs and cultural elements, in my opinion, must be preserved. I am not saying that we should change their culture. Rather, we need to change the root of their religious faith. When we are living in the Tibetan region, we also keep an altar in the house. If a Tibetan becomes a believer, he can also keep the altar in his house.'

Tricia：「我現在常會有很多的自責、自卑負面的情緒在心裡面，覺得說對不起（愧疚）。覺得說做了宣教士了，沒有更好地教育孩子，沒有給孩子好的優越的條件。在中國可以想吃什麼，就吃什麼，想上哪兒玩，就上哪兒玩。而現在沒有給他們好的自由的空間，成長的環境。許多負面的東西會出來。對自己也會要求很多，沒有經常地像老家那種聚會那種火熱，禱告、各方面都是覺得自己有很多不足的地方，就會有一些負面的東西，因為頂著宣教士的這個帽子嘛。」

Tricia: 'I often have negative feelings. I often feel so sorry and have a strong sense of failure. I feel that after I became a missionary, I did not give my children the good education or good living condition they needed. When we were in China, we could enjoy eating the food we liked and going to places we wanted to go. But living here, I am not able to give my children enough space to grow. So, I started to have negative feelings. I am no longer as passionate as when I was in China in terms of spiritual growth or prayer. I feel I am not sufficient in many aspects. But I'm supposed to be a missionary.'

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