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### Guest editors' introduction

Issues and challenges for Chinese Christians as seen online

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## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR CHINESE CHRISTIANS AS SEEN ONLINE

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Christianity and the Internet are two of the most controversial issues found in Western discourse on China. The most common angle to these discussions tends to emphasize coercive actions from the state and a simultaneous subversive response from below. Stories of persecution of “underground” church groups are balanced by statistics showing the numerical growth of “house church” participants.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, reports on the blocking of websites such as Youtube or Facebook and the censoring of sensitive terms<sup>2</sup> find their counterpart in stories of Chinese Internet users “jumping” the Great Firewall.<sup>3</sup> Putting these two topics together—online Christianity in China—one may be tempted to think the result would be a “double dose” of repression and resistance. The reality is much more nuanced as many individuals and groups that publish or read Christian information online do not feel limited and are not interested in taking political stances against any real or perceived lack of religious freedom, or against the Chinese state.<sup>4</sup> This edition of *Chinese Law and Government* hopes to go beyond the tired paradigm of control and resistance by presenting a small sample of the kind of online content created by Chinese Christians, revealing to some extent what topics and issues are important to church members. The idea in this issue is to present a different kind of first-hand or source material that may provide the reader with a snapshot of various online content created by and available to Chinese Christians. By highlighting some of these topics, we can see what is particular about Christianity in China and what makes it Chinese. We have chosen to narrow our focus to Protestantism in China. The hierarchical nature and international connections make China’s Catholic cyber world an equally interesting topic.<sup>5</sup> However, it is considered a separate religion in China, distinct from Protestantism, and there is little interaction between the two groups.

### **Virtual Space and Changing Categories**

There are two significant aspects to the Internet in China that deserve to be highlighted. The first is that there are more Internet users in China than anywhere else in the world,<sup>6</sup> the vast majority of them reading and creating Chinese language material; the second is that China overtook the US in 2012 in terms of the number of smartphone

users. Smartphones make up over three quarters of the mobile phone market in the country. This tells us that a significant number of Internet users have instant access to online materials on the move and that news, as a result, has the potential to travel fast.

With so many active Internet users, it is not surprising then, that like other topics, the amount of Chinese information online regarding Christianity is staggering. David Palmer suggests that as a result of the limitations on religious activities in the offline world, more activity on online spaces is encouraged. As he summarizes, “The Internet has opened a new virtual space for the development of religion.”<sup>7</sup> This is obviously true in the case of Chinese Christianity, whose adherents are increasingly younger, more educated, and more urban.<sup>8</sup>

Sermons, personal reflections from bloggers, theological exegesis from fringe groups, training materials and various Chinese versions of the Bible are all transforming individual beliefs and practice. Beliefs are adjusted as Christians are exposed to new theological ideas or doctrine not taught or preached in their own congregation and practice is changed and reinvented as people share their lived religion in everyday life. Netizens circulate, for example, ideas on how to conduct Christian funerals, strategies for evangelism, or approaches to child discipline or parenting from their own Christian perspectives.

It is also significant that the Internet allows for the speedy transmission of news. This can be advantageous to both individual believers and whole congregations. The transmission of reports regarding the demolition of church buildings and removal of church crosses in Zhejiang beginning in 2014 traveled fast on a wide range of online platforms.<sup>9</sup> Some of the details in such reports may not have been accurate—that is a matter for further discussion—but individuals responded to this almost instant relaying of news in varying ways. What this example can show is that the Internet facilitates the building of a sense of community and allows people to readily identify with particular events. This is also an important aspect in the construction of Christian identities.

One reason why the Internet is such an interesting window into Christianity in China is because through the “virtual space” it occupies, it transcends the stale binary of “house church” and Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM)-affiliated church.<sup>10</sup> Today, more and more scholars are beginning to minimize such a dichotomy, seeing it as an inaccurate reflection of a reality that often includes tacitly approved unregistered churches.<sup>11</sup> The expansion of online space has also generated an increase in communication between various Christian groups. So, for example, it is not uncommon to have TSPM-affiliated churches using online discipleship-training materials produced

by unregistered congregations. Materials for use in “Sunday Schools” are freely available online and shared between different congregation types. Furthermore, those most likely to utilize the vast Christian resources on the Internet are also least likely to have been scarred by the excessive policies of past regimes. Many younger Christians do not feel the historical burden of having lived through the repressive policies of the Cultural Revolution (or earlier) or even the transition periods of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the TSPM/house church dichotomy is not necessarily as entrenched among this demographic. Likewise, the opaque origins of much material in the online world, where things are shared and shared again, means tracing information back to its roots on either side of the registration divide is often impossible and usually not a concern.

While the Internet may encourage greater interplay between various groups, it also provides a forum which can reinforce the entrenchment of old categories. Certainly, with the church demolitions and cross removals in Zhejiang beginning in 2014 mentioned above, some Christians focused on the perceived threat to the church in China across a range of types and affiliations while some responded to the news by pointing the finger at how some churches were run. For example, some online discussions suggested that a portion of these churches, especially the “Wenzhou churches,” were too concerned with church buildings or money and that this wave of church and cross destruction is a “wake-up call.”<sup>12</sup>

Even though most Christians in China are not anti-state, it would seem that state categories can be challenged by online spaces in a more passive manner. Most independent Protestant groups are still required to join with the TSPM before gaining legal recognition.<sup>13</sup> There are a range of requirements which religious groups should fulfill in order to enable them to register as a legal entity. One of these requirements is a “fixed location,” but Christian online communities bypass such regulatory restrictions. In addition, the registration requirement for a “fixed leader” changes the dynamics of authority, at least to some degree. Individual believers and Christian communities interacting or evangelizing online are largely outside the scope of the registration constraints. While it may be too early to know if the “leaderless” quality of much online interaction will result in a noticeably greater degree of egalitarianism in theology or practice, many churches encourage members to join online communities that are weakly, if at all, regulated. Local QQ groups for married couples or chat rooms for Christian singles are quite common. Likewise, prayer request bulletin boards (BBS) allow Christians to share their thoughts and beliefs with others who they may only know through their online connections.

Another way the Christian online world in China circumvents traditional restrictions is

in the area of religious publishing. Most urban churches have a “bookroom” that sells Bibles and other Christian literature, but independent Christian bookstores are also found throughout many cities in today’s China. The amount of devotional and inspirational books, most translated from evangelical authors in the West, is growing exponentially. However, a rigid system of approval is still in place and for any book to be legally sold within China, it must have a book number that is only given after the content has been vetted by relevant authorities. While still falling under the purview of state censors,<sup>14</sup> Christian online content is not burdened with formal publishing guidelines, resulting in much greater latitude in terms of content and volume.<sup>15</sup> While we would not go as far as some scholars in claiming that the Internet in China has consolidated people’s right to say what they want to say,<sup>16</sup> there is certainly a vast range of writings which are freely available and are not subject to normal publishing restrictions. This may be most clearly demonstrated by looking at the availability of the Chinese Bible in China. China is the largest producer of the Bible in the world,<sup>17</sup> but because it does not have a book number, copies of the Bible are only legally available for sale in church bookrooms, even though the Bible may also be found through other channels, such as online used book sellers, second-hand bookshops, independent Christian bookshops or even from black market book stalls (especially in larger cities).<sup>18</sup> However, Chinese Internet users can freely access numerous versions of the Bible as well as various Bible commentaries and other study aids and it would appear that many younger people prefer this format. It should also be noted that state promotion of Chinese language on the Internet has potentially been advantageous to Christians and there has certainly been a significant increase in original Chinese-language Christian-produced materials (as opposed to materials translated into Chinese) online in recent years.<sup>19</sup>

A final concern that must be addressed in this Introduction before moving onto a brief discussion of the articles translated in this issue is the September 2016 release of a new draft of religious regulations by the State Council for public discussion. The current regulations governing religion date to 2005, but have been criticized for nebulous terminology and in general for being inadequate. The new draft builds on the 2005 regulations, but adds a fair amount of new content. (The 2005 version has 48 articles whereas the new draft has 74.) Some of the major additions include articles regarding religious schools, religious extremism (especially in relation to national security), and most relevant for our discussion here, online religious content. For example, Article 47 of the draft states (our translation): “Involvement in providing religious news on the Internet must be upon the review and consent of Religious Affairs departments at the provincial level or above and be in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations on Internet information services management.” Specific

mention of religious information on the Internet is absent in the 2005 version of the regulations. Although at the time of the writing of this Introduction, these new regulations are simply in draft form, it is assumed that in the near future this draft, possibly with minor alterations, will be promulgated. However, as with the 2005 regulations, equally significant to the actual content of the regulations is how, or to what extent these will be implemented. Despite the new regulations seemingly limiting some of the religious content online, the editors of this issue feel strongly that Christian content in the Chinese cyber world will continue to grow and play an increasingly significant role in the lives of individual believers and congregations.

### **This Issue and Additional Readings**

This issue includes twelve articles from the Chinese Internet dealing with different aspects of Protestant Christianity.<sup>20</sup> The selection of these articles, all of which can be accessed within China, does not claim to be comprehensive—the vastness of the materials makes any attempt at this untenable—but they do hope to give the English reader a glimpse into the breadth of information both being produced by and made available to Chinese Netizens, as well as an idea of topics of concern to individual Chinese Christians, single congregations or entire denominations. Our focus, then, is that of lived religion and popular Christianity as opposed to elite or high institutional religious ideas. We are also not simply interested in presenting what Christians believe, but also how they practice their faith.

We chose not to include scholarly articles on the topic, although many are also readily available in China and more and more Chinese scholars and graduate students are researching Christianity in China, especially from the discipline of history. Such writings tend to stay within academia and do not represent or have much influence within Chinese Christian circles.<sup>21</sup> There are some exceptions, such as Professor Zhao Xiao, a well-known economist and an outspoken Christian with many followers within China.<sup>22</sup> In addition, it should also be noted that while the articles in this issue are all produced within China (except for article four, published in Taiwan and with traditional Chinese characters), writings from many Overseas (or Hong Kong) Chinese are also accessible within China. For example, Yuan Zhiming, a dissident from the 1989 Tiananmen Incident and now a pastor in the US, is followed by many Christians within China.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, videos of sermons by the conservative Reformed pastor, Stephen Tong (Tang Chongrong), headquartered in Indonesia, are readily available to Chinese Netizens, though the pastor himself is not allowed to preach in China.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Chinese translations of non-Chinese sources, such as John Piper's *Desiring God* website are also

prevalent within China's online world.<sup>25</sup>

Due to the format of this journal—translations of more lengthy pieces—most of the following articles come from blog posts or Christian news sites. However, online Christianity in China is not limited to this medium. Discussion boards, church homepages, Christian online magazines, and chat groups using QQ or WeChat (*weixin*, a Twitter-like platform very common in China) are just as extensive as various blogs and all play an important role in the lives of many Chinese Christians. At the same time, while we only focus on text-based sources in this issue, there is a whole range of other online Christian material, including images, videos and music, which is shared and downloaded with particular veracity by both individuals and congregations.

Each of the translations is preceded by a short summary provided by the editors to introduce the article, as well as the website where the original version can be accessed. Though the selection here covers a range of issues related to Protestant belief and practice in mainland China, we have loosely grouped them into the following categories: The first three articles deal with the theology and practice of what can be characterized as Pentecostal/charismatic groups. Articles four and five discuss specific questions about Protestant practices during traditional Chinese family rituals and festivals and how these are connected to evangelizing. Articles six and seven cover some of the arguments put forward as to why “house churches” should not join the TSPM. Article six, in particular, is a reflection on the new draft regulations from the perspective of an unregistered church evangelist. The following three articles, numbered eight through ten, look at issues related to different types of emerging congregations in China. The final two articles show ways the church interacts with society at large, either for evangelistic or philanthropic purposes. It deserves to be mentioned again that this small selection of articles is not fully representative of Christianity in China. However, through the translation of these articles, we hope to highlight two things: firstly, the complex, rich and dynamic nature of Christianity in China as seen through the lens of the Internet, and secondly, the need for more research on religion and the Internet in China and, specifically, Christianity online.

In addition to the works cited in this short introduction, for readers interested in gaining further insights into online Christianity in China, a few sources may be helpful. First, a short essay by Joann Pittman at *ChinaSource*, a Christian organization that collaborates with churches in China, offers a useful summary of major Chinese Christian websites,<sup>26</sup> so we will not repeat the contents here. However, there is one site that has appeared in recent months not mentioned by Pittman. *China Christian Daily* is an English site under the auspices of the Beijing Gospel Times Information Company, Ltd. devoted to news about churches in China as well as social and cultural

news of interest to Chinese Christians.<sup>27</sup> *Chinese Church Voices*, also managed by *ChinaSource*, provides occasional translations of articles from some major Chinese Christian websites.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, the Amity Foundation, a Christian-initiated NGO offers English reports, many translated from Chinese, on various registered church activities or news.<sup>29</sup> Finally, the Pushi Institute, a Chinese think tank that aims to link the government, academic circles, and the church, also has occasional English translations of scholarly articles related to Chinese Christianity.<sup>30</sup> Below, we have compiled a short reading list, arranged according to the loose categories mentioned above, for readers who may want greater scholarly analysis of Chinese Christianity and the specific issues touched upon in the following translations. We have limited the number of bibliographic entries to English sources published in the last decade.

### **Suggestions for further readings**

#### Charismatic Chinese Christianity

Kao Chen-Yang. "The Cultural Revolution and the Emergence of Pentecostal-style Protestantism in China." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24.2 (2009): 171-188.

Inouye, Melissa Wei-Tsing. "Miraculous Modernity: Charismatic Traditions and Trajectories within Chinese Protestant Christianity." In *Modern Chinese Religion, vol. II*, edited by Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey, 884-919. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Tsai Yen-zen. "Glossolalia and Church Identity: The Role of Sound in the Making of a Chinese Pentecostal-Charismatic Church." *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 2 (2015): 87-108.

#### Chinese Culture and Christianity

Coljin, Bram. "Protestant Funerals in Contemporary China." *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 3 (2016): 23-50.

Dunn, Emily. "The Big Red Dragon and Indigenizations of Christianity in China." *East Asian History* 36 (2008): 73-85.

Huang Jianbo. "Symbolic Representation of Rural Christianity and the Inventiveness of Faith Traditions." *Cultural Diversity in China* 1 (2015): 101-114.

Selles, Kurt. "Protestant Worship with Chinese Characteristics: Reflections on a Chinese Worship Service." *Exchange* 41 (2012): 1-18.

White, Chris. "Protestant Funeral Processions in Southeast China: From Gangnam Style to Overt Evangelization." *Asia Pacific Perspectives* Spring/Summer (2015): 5-27.



#### TSPM and "House Church" Divide

Kang Jie. *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Koesel, Karrie. "The Rise of a Chinese House Church: The Organizational Weapon." *China Quarterly* 215 (2013): 572-589.

McLeister, Mark. "A Three-Self Protestant Church, the Local State, and Policy Implementation in a Coastal Chinese City." In *Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-cultural Perspectives*, edited by Francis Khek Gee Lim, 234-246. London: Routledge, 2012.

Yang Fenggang. "The Red, Black and Gray Markets of Religion in China." *The Sociological Quarterly* 43 (2006): 93-122.

#### Emerging Congregations

Cao Nanlai. *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Fulton, Brent. *China's Urban Christians: A Light that cannot be Hidden*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications: 2015.

Huang Jianbo. "Being Christians in Urbanizing China: The Epistemological Tensions of the Rural Churches in the City." *Current Anthropology* 55.S10 (2014): S238-S247.

Vala, Carsten. "Protestant Christianity and Civil Society in Authoritarian China: The Impact of Official Churches and Unregistered 'Urban Churches' on Civil Society Development in the 2000s." *China Perspectives* 3 (2012): 43-52.

Ying Fuk-tsang, Yuan Hao, and Lau Siulun. "Striving to Build Civic Communities: Four Types of Protestant Churches in Beijing." *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 1 (2014): 78-103.

#### Christian Engagement with Society

Wielander, Gerda. *Christian Values in Communist China*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Hirono, Miwa. *Civilizing Missions: International Religious Agencies in China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Lian Xi. "'Cultural Christians' and the Search for Civil Society in Contemporary China." *The Chinese Historical Review* 20.1(2013): 70-87.

## Notes:

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- <sup>1</sup> Karrie J. Koesel, "The Rise of a Chinese House Church: The Organizational Weapon," *The China Quarterly* 215 (2013): 572-589. Koesel offers a summary of recent analysis of numbers and growth of house church members but readers should note that this is a highly-problematic area and that attempts to estimate numbers of Christians across all churches reveal widely-disparate figures.
- <sup>2</sup> See Jonathan Zittrain and Benjamin Edelman, "Empirical Analysis of Internet Filtering in China," *Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard Law School*, 2003, <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/filtering/china/> for an academic report on restricted content. Though this study is a bit dated, it gives an idea of what content is restricted within China.
- <sup>3</sup> See the following for examples of methods used to sidestep Internet restrictions: Charles Arthur, "China and the Internet: Tricks to beat the online censor," *The Guardian*, March 25, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/25/china-Internet-how-to-beat-censorship?intcmp=239>, Jason Q. Ng, "How Chinese Internet Censorship Works, Sometimes," *The World Post*, March 17, 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/17/china-Internet-censorship\\_n\\_4981389.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/17/china-Internet-censorship_n_4981389.html), Richard C. Morais, "Cracks in the Wall," *Forbes*, February 27, 2006, <http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2006/0227/090.html>, and Paul Wiseman, "Cracking the 'Great Firewall' of China's Web censorship," *USA Today*, (undated), <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=4707107>.
- <sup>4</sup> There is, of course, evidence which suggests some "Christian" groups are politically-motivated to some extent and actively resist the Chinese state in cyberspace. See: Emily C. Dunn, "Netizens of Heaven: Contesting Orthodoxies on the Chinese Protestant Web," *Asian Studies Review* 31 no. 4 (2007): 447-458; Emily C. Dunn, "'Cult,' Church, and the CCP: Introducing Eastern Lightning," *Modern China* 20 no. 5 (2008): 1-24; Patricia M. Thornton, "The New Cybersects: Resistance and Repression in the Reform Era," in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 247-270.
- <sup>5</sup> Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013). In this recent book on Catholicism in rural Shanxi, Harrison notes the international connections that have played varying roles throughout the history of the Catholic Church in this locale and how such interactions are now facilitated through the Internet and technology. Also see: Jeremy Clarke, SJ, "Communing on the Internet: Chinese Catholics and their Various Uses of the Web," *Asian Studies Review* 31 no. 4 (2007): 459-470.
- <sup>6</sup> Paul Bischoff, "China's mobile Internet users now outnumber its PC Internet users," *TECHINASIA*, July 22, 2014, <https://www.techinasia.com/chinas-mobile-Internet-users-outnumber-pc-Internet-users/>. According to Bischoff, this number reached 632 million in 2014.
- <sup>7</sup> David A. Palmer, "Cyberspace and the Emerging Chinese Religious Landscape – Preliminary Observations," in *Cyber China: Reshaping National Identities in the Age of Information* (London: Palgrave, 2004) 41.
- <sup>8</sup> Carsten Vala, "Protestant Christianity and Civil Society in Authoritarian China," *China Perspectives* 3 (2012): 43-52.
- <sup>9</sup> Examples of early posting on the church demolitions and removal of crosses can be found on China's Microblogging platform Weibo: (<http://s.weibo.com/weibo/%25E6%25B5%2599%25E6%25B1%259F%2520%25E5%25BC%25BA%25E6%2588%2586&b=1&page=24>). It is also important to note that many posts on Weibo were

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accompanied by images of demolished churches or crosses being taken down. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many Christians shared (and continue to share) news of church demolitions and cross removals via SMS and QQ. Since all posts related to the Zhejiang demolitions have been deleted from Weixin (Wechat, China's equivalent to Twitter) it is impossible to now quantify the amount of posts, but it is clear that news of the destruction of church property was widely shared via various electronic mediums throughout Chinese Christian circles all over the country.

<sup>10</sup> TSPM churches are officially recognized (and thus legal) church bodies that have registered their congregation with authorities.

<sup>11</sup> Mark McLeister, "A Three-Self Protestant Church, the Local State and Religious Policy Implementation in a Coastal Chinese City," in *Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 234-246 and Vala, "Protestant Christianity." For discussion on how best to define congregation types see Edmond Tang, "The Changing Landscape of Chinese Christianity," *Concilium* 2 (2008): 13-23; Don Snow, "Understanding the Christian Community in China," *China News Update*, 2 (2002).

<sup>12</sup> One such example is Pastor Wang Yi of the Early Rain Reformed Church in Chengdu who wrote a blog post on April 4, 2014 in which he criticized the emphasis on church buildings in "Wenzhou Christianity." The original post has since been deleted but some details of the contents can be found in other online pieces; for example, China Aid, "Dui Wang Yi Mushi Weibo Yanlun de liangdian fansi, [Two Thoughts on Pastor Wang Yi's Weibo Post]" *China Aid*, April 4, 2014, [http://www.chinaaid.net/2014/04/blog-post\\_8896.html](http://www.chinaaid.net/2014/04/blog-post_8896.html).

<sup>13</sup> Lauren B. Homer, "Registration of Chinese Protestant House Churches Under China's 2005 Regulation on Religious Affairs: Resolving the Implementation Impasse," *Journal of Church and State* 52 no. 1 (2010): 50-73.

<sup>14</sup> Based on Foucault's conceptualization of power, Palmer, "Cyberspace," (37) refers to this as a "virtual panopticon," by which he means it is "closely monitored by the state while at the same time [is] a space allowing unprecedented freedom of expression and access to information." For a similar analysis of Foucault's panopticon idea see also James Boyle, "Foucault in Cyberspace: Surveillance, Sovereignty and Hard-Wired Censors," 1997, <http://www.law.duke.edu/boylesite/foucault.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Palmer argues in "Cyberspace" (39) that the availability of such sources "dematerializes religious texts," potentially making their interpretation less uniform or orthodox. However, Emily Dunn suggests that Christian communities use the Internet to make beliefs more standardized by allowing criticism of heterodoxy. According to Dunn, "Netizens of Heaven" (447), "the Internet is a medium for winning hearts and minds."

<sup>16</sup> Yang Guobin, "The Internet and civil society in China: a preliminary assessment," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12 no. 36 (2003): 455.

<sup>17</sup> Angela Lu, "Your Bible, now made in China," *World*, April 4, 2013, [http://www.worldmag.com/2013/04/your\\_bible\\_now\\_made\\_in\\_china](http://www.worldmag.com/2013/04/your_bible_now_made_in_china).

<sup>18</sup> In 2010, for example the authors found illegally-printed copies of the Bible (in Chinese) amongst the latest English-language novels from the UK and the US, sold on the street (black market). When asked how many Bibles he sold, the vendor said that it was his "best-seller."

<sup>19</sup> For example, discipleship training outlines and syllabi are available widely on the Internet. For an example of discipleship training materials see: <http://www.holymountaincn.com/bbs/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=3379>.

<sup>20</sup> For translations of specific Bible verses within these articles, the New International Version is used.

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<sup>21</sup> For an example of a scholarly analysis of a couple well-established church magazines, see Gerda Wielander, "Protestant and Online: The Case of *Aiyan*," *The China Quarterly* 197 (2009): 165-182 and Gerda Wielander, "Bridging the Gap? An Investigation of Beijing Intellectual House Church Activities and Their Implications for China's Democratization," *Journal of Contemporary China* 18 no. 62 (2009): 849-864.

<sup>22</sup> Zhao Xiao currently has over 9 million "fans" on Weibo, a popular micro blog, <http://weibo.com/zhaoxiaolovegod>. Western media reports on Zhao Xiao can be found at: "Extended Interview: Zhao Xiao," *Frontline*, (undated), [http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/china\\_705/interview/xiao.html](http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/china_705/interview/xiao.html) and "Sons of Heaven: Christianity in China," *The Economist*, October 2, 2008, <http://www.economist.com/node/12342509>.

<sup>23</sup> Yuan currently has over 220,000 followers on Weibo, see <http://weibo.com/u/1641480270>. Yuan has recently been involved in a scandal in which Chai Ling, another well-known Chinese dissident from the Tiananmen Square incident accused the pastor of raping her in the early 1990s. There have been many active discussions among Chinese Christians online regarding these accusations on blogs and discussion boards; for example, see [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_de25a3e60102v9hx.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_de25a3e60102v9hx.html).

<sup>24</sup> For example, Youku, a video site similar to Youtube, has dozens of videos of Tong's sermons at churches in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. See: [http://www.youku.com/playlist\\_show/id\\_18918404.html](http://www.youku.com/playlist_show/id_18918404.html).

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.desiringgod.org/all-resources/by-language/chinese-simplified>. For more on this, see Angela Lu, "Web of Grace," *World*, January 14, 2012, [http://www.worldmag.com/2012/01/web\\_of\\_grace](http://www.worldmag.com/2012/01/web_of_grace).

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/articles/chinas-online-christian-community>.

<sup>27</sup> <http://chinachristiandaily.com/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.chinasource.org/blog/categories/chinese-church-voices>.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/>.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.pacilution.com/english/index.asp>.

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