



Where's the General Tso's Chicken? A Caucasian American Visits the Chinese Christian Family Church of Fontana, California-USA

*¹Simon J Woodstock

*¹Philosophy Instructor, Critical Thinking Instructor, Calvary Chapel Bible College, California, United States.

Abstract

As a Caucasian American visiting a Mandarin speaking Chinese Christian Fellowship in the United States, this research could not avoid taking an outsider's perspective in searching to answer the following questions: Were there any cross-cultural spiritual commonalities to be located between the white American and Chinese-American Christian cultures? And, could a Caucasian learn any key spiritual lessons from visiting a Mandarin speaking fellowship? Since I do not speak Mandarin, this study had to rely heavily on other senses to make researched assessments. To some extent, this may have been beneficial, as my focus was then on the fellowship's non-linguistic movements in hopes of gaining an understanding. That said, the greatest culture shock happened during the food-fellowship session after the service, as the authentic Chinese cuisine was much different than the common Americanized "Chinese food" readily available in the USA. Nevertheless, the straightforward methods employed toward answering the previously mentioned research questions consist of my own personal observations synthesized with information from the fields of Chinese ecclesiology, ethnomusicology, and culturally comparative foodstuffs.

Keywords: Chinese religion, Christianity, cross cultural issues, ecclesiology, ethnography, global cuisines, musicology, pastoral ministry, outsider perspectives

Introduction

The Chinese Christian Family Church (CCFC) is a non-denominational Mandarin speaking fellowship that meets on Sunday afternoons (3:30-5PM) at a Community Baptist Church facility in Fontana, California (USA) ^[1]. This writing intends an overview of my recent experience there as a welcomed visitor, focusing mainly on the congregation's robust distinctive of biblical and theological teaching, service proceedings, family unity and orientation, hymn-musicology, apolitical philosophy, and their cultural style of food-fellowshipping together. Moreover, the globally transcendent nature of these and related church characteristics will be traversed as well.

Community and General Information

Upon arrival at their service, I was greeted and situated by the pastor's wife, while a female usher handed out bi-lingual (Mandarin/English) hymnals as more people entered and were seated. My estimation is that the rented sanctuary could hold about 285 people, although there were just around 40 people (36 adults and 6 children) in attendance on my visitation day ^[2]. Even though it is a small congregation, they are a very vibrant group, having a tangible spiritual pulse. The worship music (all hymns) was engaging and upbeat, conducted by a singing-group of five ethnically Chinese persons (co-ed, ages 30-55) with a female lead vocalist accompanied by a skilled

pianist (a young lady in her late 20s) ^[3]. I had been strategically seated in a pew near another English-only speaker ^[4], and the ushers recruited a young (and very polite) bi-lingual female to sit behind us and informally translate the service.

Pastor Hong-Fu Liu (one of two listed pastors) was the one presiding and delivering the sermon. He was very friendly, making the effort to greet me while also intentionally interacting with many of the congregants and leaders before things officially started. He is in his late 60s, and his attire was semi-formal (a collared shirt and tie, sweater-vest, slacks, and dress shoes) with the styles of others present ranging from informal/business-casual to semi-formal. The church is located in a middle to upper-middle class part of town, and I believe those in attendance represented that range of economic status (with a few perhaps wealthy). Pastor Liu is well educated, holding an M.Div. from Asbury Seminary and a D.Min. from a Chinese-American grad-school called Logos Evangelical Seminary. His education was humbly evidenced (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15; Phil. 2:3) throughout his sermon and slide presentation.

In the assessment of ethnomusicologist Ben Dumbauld, "The demographics within most Chinese-American churches include mainland Chinese speakers of Mandarin and Cantonese, Taiwanese, and American-Born Chinese of various generations, in addition to members from throughout

East Asia and the United States who, for various reasons and motivations, attend the church.”^[5] From my outsider perspective, I estimate that the Chinese Christian Family Church falls somewhere (albeit perhaps partially) within these demographic parameters, as the Chinese immigrants would most likely be from the Overseas Born Chinese (OBC) community, and the younger parishioners (unless also immigrants) are probably from the American Born Chinese (ABC) community^[6]. The core language of the parish was Mandarin (with many also bi-lingual in English), and an older Indonesian woman (named Linda) shared with me that there was at least one Cantonese individual there^[7].

All the people in attendance seemed very friendly, although many were reserved in mannerism (this may have had to do with the language barrier and/or the culture). But, there were plenty of individuals who were intentional in reaching out and making a connection. And, the people who did so were pretty fluent in English, and several of them politely asked me various questions about why I was there, where I was from, and the like^[8]. They seemed to really want to get to know me, which was both welcoming and encouraging^[9].

Chinese-American Hymnody

As expressed by Joe Carter, “A hymn is a religious song or poem of praise to God sung during Christian worship, typically by the whole congregation.”^[10] In that traditional praise and worship stride, CCFC uses what is known as Chinese-American hymnody—an ethnic, melodic style of religious tunes “that can be described as being musically related to the hymns of the Protestant tradition”^[11] With Mandarin services typically being more formal and traditional (usually consisting of older parishioners and more recent first generation migrants), ethnic hymnody is often employed in strengthening the communal ties within that given culture^[12]. Also, Pastor Liu had expressed to me with gladness (after the entirety of services concluded) that his church had not incorporated Christian Contemporary Music into the worship, and seemed rather joyous to have stayed with the hymns; basically exemplifying what Dumbauld identifies as “a growing desire to re-discover cultural or ethnic roots via Chinese hymnody.”^[13]

In that stride, the opening worship was all hymns sung in Mandarin (about five or six songs total) with structured standing and sitting intervals in the pews. Although the style was rather reserved, there was one song where some of the men were expressive with their hands raised while making semi-charismatic gestures^[14]. The congregants knew the songs well and sounded fantastic, singing with high levels of volume (at key times) as they followed the choir. At a couple of points the leader clapped in an attempt to get others to do so as well. She had some level of success, but not too much, as there were about ten or twelve people who clapped for a short period of time^[15]. At the end of the service, the parishioners opened the physical hymnal for the first time (the earlier worship used projected slides) while an invocator and a different pianist (a girl from the youth group) led the congregation in singing the hymn *Teach Me Thy Way*.

The Structure of Service

Rev. Liu’s^[16] message was titled *Love Each Other and Avoid Divisions*. And, the church bulletin basically outlined the order of service. First, a prelude by the pianist, then a call to worship by a presider; songs of praise (where all rise), an invocation, and then a Scripture reading by the congregation of the teaching passage of the day (1 Corinthians 1:10-17).

Next, the expository sermon was delivered, followed by a responsive hymn, then a welcome with some announcements, a few new member introductions, a benediction, then a recessional and meditational period with music. There was also a closing ‘all rise’ doxological-style recital of two stanzas of *Our Father, Who Art in Heaven*.

The pastor’s preaching was soft spoken, but effectively engaging (at one point he made a joke that got a good laugh from the parish). He used a lot of clip-art in his slides, although you could tell that he spent a lot of time on their preparation. His teaching was exegetical, with many three-point outlines, twelve-point structures, and the like. As an outsider, it seemed to be more of a teaching-class than a preaching session. For a time, Pastor Liu spoke about quarreling clicks and schisms in the church, contrastingly emphasizing the goal of inclusiveness in church fellowship. Also stressing that while truth is exclusive and cohesive, believers must not be exclusionary toward others. One slide featured the following outlined distinctive: Fellowship, Mission, Worship, Prayer, Service, and Sunday School. These are all things that CCFC greatly esteems as a church^[17]. He stressed the principles of cohesion and enduring unity in fellowship. Communal connectivity in Christ was also emphasized^[18].

Early on, I noticed him segue from teaching on divisions in the New Testament churches (the exegetical context of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17) over to a topical message about avoiding domestic divisions in marriages for the rest of the sermon^[19]. At this point, the message basically took the form of an overview on marital counseling strategies. This fellowship is very family oriented, and my guess is that this was the motive for the topical shift^[20]. In that context, one of the three-point teaching slides emphasized communication, handling conflict, and the importance of core Christian values. Moreover, whether or not it was intended, the message may have had some Confucian undertones, perhaps connoting the Three Bonds and Five Relationships cultural principles that, according to Irene Sun, “explicate the roles of every individual in associations between the ruler and the ruled, husband and wife, parent and child, teacher and student, and older and younger siblings.”^[21]

Contextual and Cultural Considerations

Church proceedings started promptly at 3:30PM and the closing prayer was given at 4:33PM, which made for a pretty succinct one-hour service. There were several people who arrived early, while many others showed up right on time, although I didn’t notice anyone coming in excessively late. Although many Majority World cultures are not time-clock oriented,^[22] Chinese people are often punctual, and will generally arrive at a designated time, especially for something as important to them as church^[23]. With this prioritized communal principle in view, Fenggang Yang explains that the structure of Chinese-ethnic fellowships help new immigrants find social belonging, the weekly meetings provide opportunities for frequent and intimate interactions with compatriots, and that the teachings “help to create a loving and harmonious community where new immigrants can find spiritual peace and psychological ease.”^[24] The Christian principle of “not forsaking the assembling” together of the congregation (cf. Heb. 10:25) comes to mind here, as faithfully exemplified by CCFC in praxis.^[25]

Where's the General Tso's Chicken?

Another distinctive feature of this church is the communal meal after the service over in the adjacent fellowship hall. While having food after service is not unique to any one ethnic church, the particular style of Chinese food that was served caught my attention. There were no familiar (Americanized) items such as "Orange Chicken" or "Beijing Beef" at the pot-luck buffet table (as I am accustomed to ordering at my local Panda Express) ^[26]. Rather, there was some barbecued chicken that looked a bit like duck, a pan of steamed buns (dumplings), some curried chicken, a cooker-pot full of rice (a transcultural standard), and several dishes that had soy/tofu squares or triangles in them (in lieu of meat). According to David Wu and Sidney Cheung, "Chinese cuisine is often perceived as representative of Chinese culture, or an authentic cultural marker." ^[27] But, the authenticity of Chinese cuisine, whether at home or overseas, is not an objective criterion. Rather, it is socially constructed and any specific food-stuff items offered (such as those featured at CCFC) are linked to the expectations of a particular group ^[28]. As Jennifer Polland further explains, "authentic Chinese food almost looks nothing like American Chinese food," ^[29] adding that "Most Chinese people have never even heard of a General Tsao, and are completely befuddled by the overly sauced fried chicken dish that Americans known as General Tsao's chicken." ^[30] What is more, "Chinese people would not understand the appeal of crab rangoon," (deep fried wontons filled with fake crab meat and cream cheese) ^[31]. So, if a person desires an authentic dumpling, Poland recommends that they "order Xiao Long Bao instead." ^[32] With that in mind, I had noticed a pan of such steamed dumplings on my first run through the CCFC food-line, but when I went back to try one, they were gone (likely indicating their cultural popularity) ^[33]. Nevertheless, since I was already back at the buffet, I went ahead and got a second plate of food. This prompted one of my discussion partners to point out (somewhat razzing-ly) that I had already consumed a full plate, perhaps surfacing a socio-cultural difference regarding mealtime intake control standards ^[34].

Evening-Time Sunday School: Wrestling with God

After having some friendly talk over the fellowship dinner with some of the bi-lingual congregants, a man named Eric Chen ^[35] set up a laptop (connected to a wall-mounted screen), put on a headset microphone device, and then gave a one-and-a-half-hour talk (entirely in Mandarin) covering three chapters of Genesis (chaps. 32-34). He essentially taught about Jacob's wrestling with the Angel of the Lord, Jacob then afterward having his name changed to Israel. Linda (the previously mentioned lady from Indonesia) politely translated some of the teaching for me and provided brief summarizations at various junctures. Pastor Liu sat near me as well, also quietly sharing some translated summaries from time to time (both translators were greatly appreciated). At one point in the presentation, a few people stood and gave personal testimonies of some experiences they had in life having wrestled with God. Much like in the church service, the parishioners and leaders in the fellowship hall were very attentive to what was being shared ^[36]. Culturally, it was reaffirmed that they clearly value biblical/theological education, also adding in some personal application.

An Apolitically Counter-Political Church

China has faced much socio-religious and political unrest over its history, and it is no secret that the churches there have thus

experienced (and are still encountering) great political persecution. According to *Operation World*, since the forming of the Chinese Communist Party (cir. 1921), more Christians have been detained in China than in any other country, and the strictly suppressive administrative control of religious groups characterize the church's past and present circumstances under the communist regime ^[37]. While the government-controlled Three-Self churches still have a bit of latitude, it is the underground house churches of China that experience terrible threats and heinous acts of violence. And, "many regard the persecution of house churches as an issue of political control rather than of religious freedom." ^[38] Where American and Chinese governmental relations are concerned, Robert G. Sutter identifies "Strong and often deeply rooted enduring differences" ^[39] between the two nations. Therefore, whether the two global powers will support international peace and development or become increasingly antagonistic as their corporate interests continue to compete "remains the subject of ongoing debate among specialists and policymakers in both countries." ^[40] It is within this context that CCFC is intentionally apolitical in its public scope and gospel focused in outreach ^[41]. According to a statement from their bulletin, "the church is the house of God and is a place for Christians to worship, fellowship, and serve. Church should be separated from any political and commercial activities in order to be dedicated as herself to our Holy God" (cf. Mark 11:15-18) ^[42]. This also counters China's socio-cultural familial dynamics in the steepest sense.

That is, although it was technically lifted in 2016, China's one child allowed per household policy had (and continues to have) a tragically adverse effect on Chinese family structures via selective population reduction and abortion-mindedness. So much so that an extremely evil example arose in Shenyang (a major industrial center in Liaoning province) where it was formerly reported that a local hospital "was determining the sex of unborn children and offering abortions if they proved to be girls." ^[43] Under the "lead blanket" of the CCP, since only one child was allowed, birthed males (who can carry on the family name) are still generally preferred to that of female progeny. While Chinese households do need to have a son to continue the family line, biblical logic prevails that the son also has to marry a wife in order to provide grandchildren (cf. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:23-24) ^[44]. Hence, birthed daughters are just as necessary as sons for the future! By simply promoting biblical family values (cf. Eph. 5:30-33), CCFC is *apolitically counter-political* toward supporting the future of ethnically Chinese people.

Moreover, socio-economically speaking, Yang avers, regarding US nationalism, that some Chinese converts "express the conviction that there is a causal connection between Christianity, on the one hand, and modern market economies and political democracy, on the other." ^[45] So, the temptation of clasping both hands into a "political faith" shrouded by Republicanism might appeal to various Asian-Americans. Therefore, a *truly authentic* Chinese-American expression of biblical faith is essential to move the church forward into future generations. And, as local and global political changes continue to surface rapidly, the attending prayer-point is that robust theology, worship, and community would "enhance the God-given uniqueness of Chinese culture, while at the same time avoiding an unhealthy nationalism or ethnocentrism." ^[46] In this stride, the evangelical-ethnic churches here in the United States (such as CCFC and faithful others) enable the Chinese to "selectively preserve traditional moral values that are perceived as compatible with Christian

beliefs, thus helping to reconstruct their distinctive Chinese identity.”^[47]

The Dragon and The Lamb

With these political aspects in mind, in China, the dragon has a long storied history in ancient mythology as being a holy animal and is also the spiritual symbol of the Chinese nation. According to ancient legend, “dragons could fly above the clouds and control the forces of nature, creating favorable weather for the crops.” As such, the dragon “which is treated as god who can do anything he wants to do” therefore occupies a very lofty status in the heart of the Chinese people^[48]. According to Irene Sun, “Chinese traditionally call themselves ‘messengers of the dragon’ or ‘children of the dragon,’ with the dragon representing the emperor.” Currently, the dragon can be viewed as a metaphorical reference to the Communist Party’s leadership. Thus, on another counter-political note, Sun continues to explain that after converting to the Christian faith, the Chinese are then positionally renamed “sons and daughters of God.”^[49] Thus, no longer considering themselves to be the (CCP) dragon’s political dispatch. This is a true sight of spiritual liberation out from beneath the dragon’s existential controls (cf. John 8:31-32).

Furthermore, speaking now towards comparative leadership perspectives, Jamin Goggin and Kyle Strobel contrast *The Way of the Dragon* and *The Way of the Lamb*. As to the former approach to leadership, “The way of the dragon is fixated on the spectacular” as an overseer caught up in that way is unfortunately “obsessed with recognition and validation, intoxicated by fame and power.”^[50] As to the *Lamb-style* biblical approach, “The way of the Lamb is committed to worship, pursues God in the ordinary, and is faithful in hiddenness.”^[51] In summary, “The dragon devours and dominates, while the Lamb humbly and sacrificially serves.”^[52] Rather than use his ministry as a platform for popularity, fortune, influence, and using the church as an arena for self-establishing performance, Pastor Liu wholeheartedly gives his life for the sake of the congregation, and humbly embraces the Chinese Christian Family Church parishioners as people to know and love, not as tools to use for other ends^[53]. This is a great assessment to be able to make, as in the end, it is the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, that triumphs for all eternity over the lead dragon (Satan) and his minions in the Last Days (cf. Rev. 12:7-12; 20:7-15).

Personal Learning

What a great learning experience I had visiting the Chinese Christian Fellowship Church! While I was a bit uneasy (for various reasons) for the first twenty minutes of attendance, I was eventually able to settle in, and even felt somewhat like part of the fellowship by the end of the visit. In addition to their great hospitality, what stood out as another culturally transcendent principle is that the hymns (even though they were Western-Mandarin, not Canaan style) had a deeply rich theological impact upon their souls, much like many other churches globally that esteem the hymns as an ecclesial/traditional foundation for praise and worship. As a personal testimony here, I had also recently visited a Brethren Church in Redondo Beach, California that had a mostly Korean-American parishioner base, but was pastored by a Romanian immigrant. They too had a great (and multicultural!) reverence for the hymns of old. And, to some extent, my own church exemplifies this as we use the hymnals

once a month in our worship rotation, and collectively recite the *Doxology* (aka *The Old 100th*) at the end of each service. Toward conclusion, I have to confess a corrected misconception that I had when a parishioner named ‘Steven’ answered a cell phone call mid-service, loudly talked while exiting the sanctuary, also still being heard on the phone out in the foyer; I had then wrongly judged him as being inconsiderate (thinking he was rudely just taking a personal call). That said, when talking with him later, he shared with me that the call was an urgent one from Angola, Africa – where he oversees a missionary effort, and that he helped troubleshoot a problem they were having with their water-well over the phone. I was admittedly rather convicted for improperly judging his intentions. Moreover, he and his wife have been committed global missionaries, and are parishioners indicative of the heart and soul of the CCFC fellowship, having a collective commitment to theological and biblical instruction, personal application of the Scriptures, outreach and evangelism, expressive hymnody, family support and structure, friendliness and hospitality, and (especially in ‘Steve’ and his wife’s case) support for global missions. I am ever so thankful for these reminders by way of CCFC’s example, as these robust biblical perspectives are always in need of a fresh application in my own life and ministry.

References

1. Listed also as the Fangcheng Chinese Believers House Church and are affiliated with Fangchenc fellowships in Alhambra, CA (est. 1969) and Inland Valley, CA. Perhaps they rebranded to CCFC in order to emphasize their culture’s own Christian family values. Also, I was unable to find any affiliation with the clandestine Fangcheng church in China (www.apologeticsindex.org/f04.html) although a connection there may exist.
2. The church bulletin handout recorded 33 adults and 9 children in attendance the previous week. So, the average is probably approx. 40 parishioners per Sunday.
3. All the ages given throughout this writing are non-scientific estimates and could be +/- five or more years in some cases.
4. His name is William, and he shared with me that he is married to a Chinese (Mandarin speaking) woman who attends CCFC, so he comes along to accompany her. Although, he did share that he has been doing so for six years and that he also helps the church out with various tasks.
5. Cf. Ben Dumbauld, “Worship Music and Cultural Politics in the Chinese-American Church,” *Ethnomusicology Review*, Volume 17 (2012) <https://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/17/piece/590> (Non-paginated Online Version).
6. According to Dumbauld, in the United States, Chinese Christian churches began to appear in the 1950s as institutions that developed from small fellowship groups and eventually the fellowship groups grew into churches. I believe that if CCFC had 400 parishioners (instead of 40), that they would meet most, if not all, of Dumbauld’s demographics (i.e., also having Taiwanese, more Cantonese, and some East Asian congregants, etc.)
7. Linda was very intentional in chatting with me at the after-fellowship meal, she is Indonesian and speaks

- English well, sharing with me that her Mandarin is not at an advanced level.
8. A friendly usher (I believe it was Sunday School instructor, Eric Chen) brought a microphone over to me during the new member introductions after the sermon (although he knew I was only visiting) and had me share about the *who, what, and why* of my presence there.
 9. This speaks to my heart regarding the transcendent effectiveness of hospitality. A biblical principle (Lev. 19:34; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2) that connects people both intra-ethnically and cross-culturally around the globe.
 10. Joe Carter, *The Gospel Coalition* (US Edition), "9 Things You Should Know about Christian Hymns," (Published September 22, 2018), <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/9-things-know-christian-hymns> (accessed March 21, 2023).
 11. Ben Dumbauld, "Worship Music and Cultural Politics in the Chinese-American Church."
 12. Ibid.
 13. Cf. Dumbauld.
 14. The physical worship gestures (hands raised with glee) were similar to those in the house churches from the course video on Canaan Hymnody. Although, I am not sure if there is any cultural connection there (as the hymns at CCFC were Western, not Canaan style).
 15. This attempt/effort that leads to non-enthusiastic clapping transcends even to my very own church, where one of our caucasian female worship leaders regularly tries to instigate congregational clapping, only to have the clapping die out a few minutes later. The cultural transcendence of this is limited, though, as one of our Elders reminded me that African American churches (typically) don't have that 'non-clapping' problem.
 16. In my estimation, with the term 'Reverend' falling out of trend for ministers in the United States (i.e., somewhat being replaced with the title 'Pastor' over the years), the use of Rev. for both of CCFC's lead-ministers indicates a remaining cultural and congregational 'revering' of elders and leaders in the Chinese-American churches.
 17. I should mention that anything assessed to be highly esteemed by CCFC, and things noted as applicably transcendent to other fellowships (including my own), mainly stems from my visit experiences. Also, while there, some of my preconceptions and initial perceptions were deeply challenged, and some others were generally confirmed. I was thereby able to glean the learned insights detailed throughout this paper.
 18. D.A. Carson pointedly adds, "That the problem of factionalism was so deeply rooted in the Corinthian church is probably supported by the fact that Paul felt the need to enlarge upon the nature and centrality of love (1 Cor. 13) as the Christian way, the 'most excellent way' (1 Cor. 12:31)." D.A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons From 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 77-8.
 19. Cross references were also made to 1 John 4:7 and 3:14-5 – thus stressing God's grace and mercy, and His love expressed on the cross.
 20. After all, the 'F' in CCFC stands for 'Family.'
 21. Irene Ai-Ling Sun, "Songs of Canaan: Hymnody of the House-Church Christians in China," *Studia Liturgica*, 37 (2007) 98-116 (cf. p. 105). Moreover, according to Fenggang Yang, "The attraction of evangelical Christianity to Chinese immigrants also comes from its perceived compatibility with Confucian moral values." (cf. Yang, 252)
 22. Cf. Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting In Around the World* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2002), 117-124. Moreover, Africa comes to mind here, as in an interview I conducted some time ago with some missionaries to Mali, they explained to me that it is not uncommon (and that it is totally culturally acceptable) for parishioners to arrive hours 'late' for church services (which therefore have to be an all-day event).
 23. Chara Scroope and Nina Evason, *Cultural Atlas*, "Chinese Culture – Etiquette," (2017) <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/chinese-culture/chinese-culture-etiquette> (accessed March 21, 2023). Although, for casual appointments or gatherings with friends or family, Chinese people tend to attach less importance to punctuality.
 24. Fenggang Yang, "Chinese Conversion to Evangelical Christianity: The Importance of Social and Cultural Contexts," *Sociology of Religion*, 1998, 59:3, 237-257 (245).
 25. This is another culturally transcendent, biblical principle in that globally, wherever churches are able, it is not uncommon to see brothers and sisters in the faith fellowshiping in unity for the cause of Christ.
 26. Panda Express is a very popular (Americanized) Chinese fast food eatery in the US. Their philosophy of "Where Chinese Flavors and American Tastes Meet," can be accessed here: www.pandaexpress.com/our-food-philosophy.
 27. David Y. H. Wu and Sidney C. H. Cheung, "The Globalization of Chinese Food and Cuisine: Markers and Breakers of Cultural Barriers," (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), *Anthropology of Asia Series*, p. 7.
 28. Ibid.
 29. Jennifer Polland, *Business Insider*, "8 Real Chinese Dishes You Should Order Instead Of The American Knockoffs," (Aug 12, 2014) www.businessinsider.com/authentic-chinese-food-vs-american-chinese-food-2014-7 (accessed March 21, 2023).
 30. Ibid.
 31. Ibid.
 32. Ibid.
 33. Where music serves effectively as a transcendent heart connection between cultures, food gatherings are the 'stomach connection' equivalent, in my estimation. That is, connective fellowship over a meal is existent in both Western and Majority World cultures around the globe. Close to home, my denomination, Calvary Chapel, is sometimes humorously referred to as 'Calorie Chapel,' due to its strong emphasis on food fellowships.
 34. In the PBA *World Christianity* course, Dr. Allen Yeh informed us of the common Asian practice of eating only enough food at mealtime in order to feel mostly full, knowing that the digestive process will complete itself in ten minutes time, and thus the stomach 'catches up' with the senses, and the person then later feels fully satisfied.
 35. Although I do not know all of the details, Eric Chen seems to have a multifaceted service-leadership role at CCFC. He was the person interviewing the new members in the sanctuary, and then also taught the Sunday School course after the main service. My guess would be that he

- is a Deacon or Elder in the fellowship. And, he also holds a seminary M.Div.
36. I did notice a younger Chinese-American lady ‘tuning out’ a bit towards the latter part of the Sunday School session. She was reading an English Gospel of John booklet, brushing up on her English spiritual readings and/or simply multitasking on the down low to respectfully pass the time. Nevertheless, being in her early 20s, this might be indicative of the shorter attention spans of the younger American generations, regardless of ethnicity.
 37. Jason Mandryk, ed., *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2010), 215.
 38. *Ibid.*, 215.
 39. Robert G. Sutter, *U.S. Chinese Relations: Perilous Past, Pragmatic Present* (Boulder/New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), 5.
 40. *Ibid.*, 1.
 41. Also from the CCFC Bulletin, “Please constantly pray for action of spreading the gospel to Chinese in San Bernardino County.” This caused me to reflect on Irene Sun’s metaphorical cultural reference to gospel proclamation being likened to the salvation message being flown out by geese to the Chinese community.
 42. The bulletin was bi-lingual (Mandarin/English) and plenty understandable, nevertheless, some slight proof-editing was implemented here for the sake of clarity.
 43. Mandryk, ed., *Operation World*, 209-10.
 44. *Ibid.*
 45. Fenggang Yang, “Chinese Conversion to Evangelical Christianity,” 251.
 46. Cf. Mandryk, ed., 222. This information is gleaned from the *Operation World* missiological report for China, but I believe it can have a two-fold application regarding nationalism. In China, it would not be good to synthesize the Lamb with the dragon (i.e., to remain a staunch CCP loyalist as a Christian), and in America, it would not be good for Asians to esteem the elephant (i.e., the Republican Party’s logo) over the Lamb. In short, either forms of nationalism ultimately have negative outcomes for churches, in China and/or in America.
 47. Fenggang Yang, 254.
 48. Cf. Jianwen Liu, “A Comparative Study of English and Chinese Animal Proverbs-From the Perspective of Metaphors,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 2013; 3(10):1844-1849. (cf. pgs. 1846-7).
 49. Irene Ai-Ling Sun, “Songs of Canaan,” 113.
 50. Jamin Goggin and Kyle Strobel, *The Way of the Dragon or the Way of the Lamb: Searching for Jesus’ Path of Power in a Church that has Abandoned It* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2017), 139.
 51. *Ibid.*
 52. *Ibid.*
 53. *Ibid.*, 139-40.
 54. Carson DA. *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons From 1 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
 55. Carter Joe. *The Gospel Coalition* (US Edition). “9 Things You Should Know About Christian Hymns.” Published September 22, 2018. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/9-things-know-christian-hymns/>.
 56. Dumbauld, Ben. “Worship Music and Cultural Politics in the Chinese-American Church.” *Ethnomusicology Review*, 2012, 17. <https://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/17/piece/590>.
 57. Elmer, Duane. *Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting In Around the World*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2002.
 58. Goggin, Jamin, and Kyle Strobel. *The Way of the Dragon or the Way of the Lamb: Searching for Jesus’ Path of*
 59. *Power in a Church that has Abandoned It*. Nashville: Nelson Books, 2017.
 60. Liu, Jianwen. “A Comparative Study of English and Chinese Animal Proverbs—From the Perspective of Metaphors,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 2013; 3(10):1844-1849. doi:10.4304/tpls.3.10.1844-1849.
 62. Mandryk, Jason (ed.). *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2010. [2011 edition]
 63. Polland, Jennifer. *Business Insider*. “8 Real Chinese Dishes You Should Order Instead Of The American Knockoffs.” (Aug 12, 2014) www.businessinsider.com/authentic-chinese-food-vs-american-chinese-food-2014-7.
 64. Scroope, Chara, and Nina Evason. *Cultural Atlas*. “Chinese Culture-Etiquette.” (2017) <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/chinese-culture/chinese-culture-etiquette>.
 65. Sun, Irene Ai-Ling. “Songs of Canaan: Hymnody of the House-Church Christians in China.” *Studia Liturgica*. 2007; 37:98-116.
 66. Sutter, Robert G. *U.S. Chinese Relations: Perilous Past, Pragmatic Present*. Boulder/New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010.
 67. Wu, David YH, and Sidney CH Cheung. “The Globalization of Chinese Food and Cuisine: Markers and Breakers of Cultural Barriers.” Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002. *Anthropology of Asia Series*, p. 7. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/23048>.
 68. Yang, Fenggang. “Chinese Conversion to Evangelical Christianity: The Importance of Social and Cultural Contexts.” *Sociology of Religion*, 1998; 59(3):237-257.