

Impact of China's Economic Development On Christian Communities In Zhejiang Province

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Since the Tang, Yuan and Ming dynasties until the 1940's the spread of Christianity in China, generally speaking, met resistance from two aspects of Chinese society. The first was mainstream Chinese traditional culture rooted in Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, and the second was China's closed, natural economy, and patriarchal social system. From 1949 to 1980, differences in ideology and social systems increased. In the final analysis, however, resistance to the spread of Christianity comes principally from the two aspects of culture and the social system.

In 1992, China officially announced to the world that it would implement a market economy system and to build a "socialist market economy system" with Chinese characteristics. This has been the most meaningful, earth-shaking change in Chinese history with significance far greater than any previous changes. While the focus of the Chinese experts in the west has been on how China will be different from the former Soviet Union and East Europe, our focus has been on what changes will it bring in Chinese economy, politics, culture, education and religion? In addition to culture and the social system, Christianity in China is also facing the increasing challenges of modernization and secularization.

In 1995, we undertook a project for the United Board for Higher Christian Education in Asia called "The Trends of Different Religions under the Conditions of the Market Economy." Then in 1997 and 1999, we undertook a survey of the Changes of Christianity in cities and villages in recent years. The shortcomings of these research projects were their lack of quantitative analysis and survey accuracy. From 2000 to 2001, we collaborated with Dr. Jean-Paul Wiest on the Maryknoll project. We chose three types of Catholic churches in Zhejiang province and we gave them the same questionnaires. There are 26 questions and 184 choices (answers) for the questions. From 2002 to 2003, in collaboration with friends from abroad, we made a survey of three Protestant churches in Long-gang Township and Ping-yang County of Wen Zhou by using the same questionnaires with little change. Ten representative Catholic and Protestant churches were surveyed. Our sample population was between 20 and 30 percent (i.e. 20 to 30 percent of the whole church population). For several reasons – low intellectual level of the believers, everyone busy with his or her own business, some hesitation or concern about the survey -- the response rate was between 92 and 95 percent, of which about 90 percent were valid.

These results were not ideal from a social statistics point of view. However, we must understand that it was not a survey of college or university students. In 1993, for example, we took part in a large-scale survey of different views of modernization of college students in Germany, Italy, Brazil and China. There were 72 questions and the response rate was one hundred percent. It is really very difficult to prepare a questionnaire about Christianity in current China. Not only do we need to find survey objects with representative values, but there also must be mutual trust and a cooperative relationship between the local church and responsible government officials. Halfway through, we had to give up our survey in several churches because the local government and church were concerned that the published results might prove disadvantageous and bring them trouble. Because of these concerns, we make the serious disclaimer that these results are based on objective, scholarly research, without trying to promote a specific argument or point of view. We offer to scholars some questions, based on these results, for further research and discussion. As to how results will be used by third parties, it is up to them.

The research reports that we have published include:

1. Chen, Cun-fu, *The Trends of Different Religions under the Conditions of Market Economy*, in *Religion and Culture* 2, Beijing: Dong Fang Publishing House, 1997.
2. Chen, Cun-fu, *The Changing History of Ma Peng Catholic Village in 270 years*, in *Religion and Culture* 4, Beijing: Dong Fang Publishing House, 1997.
3. *Secularization, Counter-Secularization, and Desecularization: A Commentary on Peter Berger's Ideas of the Religious Revival and Political Ethics*, Ibid.
4. Chen, Cun-fu, "City Identity and Christianity Research," in Luo Bing-xiang et al., eds., *Christianity Thoughts and 21st Century*, Beijing, Chinese Social Science Publishing House, 2001, 367-394.
5. "The Emergence of a New Type of Christians in China Today," a paper presented to Review of Religious Research.

Since my topic for this conference is *The Impact of China's Economic Development on Christian Communities in Zhejiang Province*, the main focus of my presentation is on the changes in some city and village Catholic communities brought by the market economy in that province. I also have done some analysis of the Protestant Church in the same area and have prepared a Chinese paper with some background information on Zhejiang, Wen Zhou, Ping-yang and Ma-peng Catholic villages in order to support studies of some friends abroad.

1. Changes in believers' occupations

Change in a believer's occupation is the foundation of a believer's economic status and social identity. The biggest change in the secular life for Chinese Catholics, and especially for Protestants, is the change in occupation. In the past, most believers were peasants mainly engaged in food production, eking out a yearly living. Believers in the cities, including county-level cities, province-level cities and big cities, were only city dwellers without occupations. Most of them were family women or street inhabitants. Women depended on their husbands or their children. Now, like in the coastal area of Zhejiang province, old cities are expanding quickly. The original county-level cities or district-level cities (e.g., Wen Zhou, Ningbo) are being changed into new cities and a number of new cities and new harbors stand out. For example, Long-gang Township in Cang-nan County of Wen Zhou is known as "the first peasant city in the whole country." Before, two-thirds of the believers there were peasants. Now they are bosses of privately owned businesses, chairmen of boards, or managers and owners of shares in pooled capital companies. The survey shows that not less than forty-percent of the Catholics and Protestants living in towns or county-level cities are owners of individual, privately owned businesses. Not less than twenty percent of the people living in the joint areas between cities and villages and villages also are these kinds of owners. Former peasant believers who were engaged in agriculture now depend on the markets. They try to produce things like vegetables, chickens, ducks, pigs, fish, etc to respond the needs of the market. Some peasant believers like some non-believers tend to become owners of farms and they contract work sites and hire inland peasants to plant for them. This is not rare in the Ningbo area.

In the background information, I specifically introduced several Catholic villages, principally Ma-peng village, in the west of Zhejiang province. It was an area of rice and grains. From 1987 to 1992, following the local non-Catholic villages, some Catholic villages like Ma-peng, Qiao-tou-shang, Hua-wen-qiang, Zhi-wu-li, etc., all switched to plant orange and tangerine trees. In 2000 there were 332 families, 1100 people in Ma-peng Village in more than twenty occupations, and there have been more changes in the past three years. Because of the continuous expansion of Quzhou City, the area of Ma-peng village has become part of its suburbs with a highway passing through the neighboring area. Economic development requires considerable labor. Because the mechanization level of agriculture in China is comparatively low, and labor is cheap, all the towns and building projects need peasant labor. In the slack-farming season, most of the young people go out to do some manual work to earn money and more and more young people will not go back to their home villages.

Incomes of the Catholic families have greatly increased as the direct result of the changes in the professions. Like the local non-believers, they left their thatched shacks and built two- or-more-story homes with all kinds of electrical equipment. In 1999, less than 32 of the 332 families had telephones. In 2003 most have telephones. All this has led to changes in secular and consumptions styles and to a series of changes in their religious lives. At the same time the appearance of the Church also has changed.

2. Increase of Church property

Accompanying the change in the Chinese market economy system, the second change for Christianity has been the great increase in Church property. Numerous new churches have sprung up in the area.

In the 1950's, the economy of the Chinese Church mainly depended on donations from foreign missionary societies. After the outbreak of the Korean War, the Church no longer could to depend on foreign support. Until 1986, Church was still very poor. From a 1988 revenue and expenditure account of a Xiamen Church we can see that the economy of the coastal cities was better than the inland cities, but they could barely manage to make ends meet. There were strict restrictions on foreign donations in 1980s. They could only be made to the "Amity Foundation" in Nanjing, which allotted money in response to different requests and this money basically was used to renovate churches or for public welfare projects. The period since 1991 has been one of continuous increase for Protestantism, Chinese Buddhism, and popular "temple economy."

In 1992, after the Chinese government announced the implementation of the "socialist market economy" system, people have participated in the great national upsurge in business. Immediately, people had more and more money. Since there are several hundred million Chinese Buddhist devotees, the "temple economy" developed quickly from 1993 to 2003. People spend money to buy protection, peace, promotion and fortune, etc from Buddha and this is a mirror of the relationship between god and human beings in the Chinese civil religions. If "god" blesses a worshipper with the birth of a boy baby, entrance to a university, good partner, a smooth promotion, family harmony, or a prosperous business, (which would even include successful smuggling, tax evasion or theft), the worshiper will come back to show thanks and to redeem the vow to the god.

The Catholic and Protestant Churches, however, are different. Their source of income is donations of their followers. Consequently because of the differences between cities and rural areas from 1990s, between the rich and the poor, coastal and inland areas, and among different income communities are increasingly sharper, properties of different churches also are different. The churches in some inland provinces and mountain villages are still fairly poor, which is very different from the rich Wen Zhou area. In 1990s, four hundred new churches of different sizes were built in Wen Zhou and these were built by the generous donations of believers, especially by believers who owned individual businesses. We listed a number of churches in the 2002 article, which included four big Catholic churches in Ping-yang County (Qiancu Church, Xiaojiang Church, Kunyang Church and Aojiang Church). All the churches were built from 1996 to 1999 at a cost of more than 2,000,000 RMB (or US\$250,000) each. (A university professor's monthly salary is less than 2,000 RMB, or US\$250. After five years, salaries increase.) Currently Xiaojiang Catholic Church is the tallest and the most splendid church in Wen Zhou. Yong-ping Church, on our survey list, was finished in 1999. A Protestant church, which is also in Yong-ping, was expanded and a new church, called Heaven Gate Church, was built in the neighboring village of Yang-men. Bigger than all the former churches in Wen Zhou, it is seven stories high, occupies 0.8 acre and can hold more than 5,000 people. The cost of the church is kept secret.

Based on this survey, we need to pay attention to two questions:

(1) Unlike the West, China does not allow churches to be involved in the buying and selling of stocks or to invest to enterprises. They are only allowed to use the money for church buildings or some benevolent causes. Therefore, one rich church in Wen Zhou has begun to create companies or invest church money

secretly in the name of an individual believer. We have reliable evidence for this, but have kept our promise not to reveal details.

(2) The Church has more money now. Some church communities in Ping-yang give extravagant banquets on the occasion of the dedication of a new church or a big feast day. At the end of 1980s some believers complained and wrote to the "Three-Self" Church magazine *Tianfeng*: "It is not proper to have an extravagant banquet after the new church completed." (No 6 in 1989). In the 1990s, the situation became worse. Sometimes there would be 80 tables or as many as 120 tables for celebrations.

3. Emergence of a New Type of Christians in China Today

The third change in Christianity in China in the market economy is an emergence of a mainly new "boss-believer" type group in addition to the former peasant believer group and city street inhabitant believer group.

We gradually drew this result from our surveys of Christianity in some new cities and towns in Zhejiang province since 1995. In December 2000, we delivered our paper called *City Inhabitant Identity Christians* in the **Christianity Thoughts and 21st Century Conference**, held at Hong Kong's Qinxin University. In the beginning of 2003, based on our research on Catholics in Zhejiang province, we published "Emergence of a New Type of Christians" in *China Today*. (There is an English translation which I will not repeat here.) This new survey on Protestants in Ping-yang has further verified our point of view. We believe that Chinese Protestants and Catholics are mainly from two sociological groups, i.e., peasant believers and old city residents (there is a similar phenomenon from big cities to county-level cities). From the end of 1980s, two types of new believer groups gradually appeared. The first group is formed by individual owners in the private economy, managers of companies, and chairmen of boards of trustees. These types of believers are popularly called "boss Christians." They are similar to the city residents of the emerging cities in Europe during 14th to 15th centuries. Therefore, we call them "city inhabitant identity Christians." The second group is "cream of intellectuals" Christians who are mainly from Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, and other big cities. They are not like the former "town-dweller of the lower middle class" housewife type believers who depended on their husbands and children, were not well educated and mainly did house work. Currently the number of these "cream of intellectuals" Christians is still quite small. They are primarily in universities and secondarily in hospitals, research institutes or joint-adventure enterprises. Currently, the "boss Christians" are the most visible and they have several qualities: they are young and well educated; have a wide field of vision, are capable of managing things, and they are rich. Consequently, they are the pillars of the Church economy. Although most of them are lay people, they control the Church administrative committees. With young priests and preachers, they form two new emerging influences in the current Wen Zhou local Church. Accompanying the development of China's economy and the expansion of Christianity, the three new emerging influences (young generation clergy, "boss Christians", "cream of intellectuals") will be more conspicuous.

4. Impact of Secularization, Modernization on Believers' Religious Lives

The fourth change of Christianity under the condition of the market economy system is the increasing mobility of believers and the decrease in the numbers of businessmen going to Church. Questions 6, 7, 11-16, and 20-24 of the questionnaire focus on the impact of secularization and modernization on believers' religious lives and spiritual lives.

From 1949 to 1984, the location of believers' (including Catholics and Protestants) religious activities basically did not change because the former villages and cities did not change too much and the number of the churches increased instead of decreasing. In 1985, and especially after 1992, accompanying the increasing floating population in cities and towns, old cities were torn down, transformed and expanded. Consequently, the administrative system in former natural villages was destroyed as new cities were built.

Thus, some believers go to new churches for Sunday worship; some go to former churches; some occasionally go to local churches and sometimes go to churches other than their local churches because they are doing business away from home.

Question 6 "Where are you from?" was asked for in order to learn about believer mobility. Statistics are below.

Answers of three Catholic churches in Ping-yang to the question 6 **"Where are you from?"**

Table 1

This village or city	This county neighboring villages or towns	This province or other county or city	From other province and working here temporarily	From other province doing business here	Does not select an answer	Total
123	200	9	1	0	2	335

Answers of three Catholic churches in Ping-yang to the question16 **"What will you do if you cannot go to your original church for Sunday worship due to doing business somewhere other than your hometown?"**

Table 2

It can be exempted (cancelled)	Self bible-reading or prayer	No missing it if doing business in local area	If doing business other than hometown go to the local church	Does not select an answer	Total
13	204	56	38	24	335

Answers of Protestant believers in Ping-yang are basically the same as the answers of the Catholic believers in Ping-yang. Here is the result of the answers of **Protestant believers in Ping-yang to the question "Where are you from?"**

Table 3

	This village or city	This county neighboring villages or towns	This province or other county or city	From other province and working here temporarily	From other province doing business here	Does not select an answer	Total
Yong-ping church	59	71	10	9	4	20	173
Shang-bu Church	150	23	0	2	1		176
Yong-yuan Church	147	47	0	1	0		196
Chi-ma Church	57	129	1	0	0	2	189

Note: the reason why 20 believers in Yong-ping church did not answer this question is that the believers did not know how to answer this question. After they built a new church in Yong-ping they separated themselves from Shang-bu Church. In fact, they still belong to Aojiang Township. Therefore, the 20 believers who did not choose should belong in the first column, i.e., this village or this city.

Answers of four Protestant churches in Ping-yang to the question 16 **“What will you do if you cannot go to your original church for Sunday worship due to doing business somewhere other than your hometown?”**

Table 4

	It can be exempted (cancelled)	Self Bible-reading or prayer	No missing it if doing business in local area	If doing business other than hometown go to the local church	Does not select an answer	Total
Yong-ping church	5	101	54	2	11	173
Shang-bu Church	1	46	42	86	0	176
Yong-yuan Church	0	148	12	36	0	196
Chi-ma church	2	99	30	1	57	189

Note: The questionnaire in Yong-ping Church and Chi-ma Church in table 4 was finished in February of 2003. The people who handled the questionnaires did not explain them clearly. Some believers misunderstood the question: “what you would do if you were in this situation?” They thought that if they did not go anywhere other than their hometown to do business, they should not select an answer to the question.

From the above four tables, we can see that the situation of the floating population is similar in the Ping-yang Catholic and Protestant churches. 60.8 percent of believers think they are allowed not to go to church for reasons of being busy in doing business. It is permissible to stay at home to say some prayers or do Bible readings. 13 Catholics (more than Protestants) even think that religious activities can be exempted. Based on this point, we can see that Catholic believers’ and Protestant believers’ responses to the Chinese modern market economy and tendency toward secularization are the same, and this is different from what Max Weber suggested in his book *Capitalism Spirit and Religious Ethics* about the differences between Catholics and Protestants in 16th and 17th century.

From the above four tables, we can also see that among Catholics or Protestants only a few think that they are allowed not to go to church due to being occupied in business. However, many think that it is permissible to do some Bible readings or say prayers in working places and they do not need to go to church. The percentage of this group among Protestants is 394: 734= 53.67%, while for Catholics is 204: 335= 60.89%. It is an interesting phenomenon that the percentage for Catholics is even higher than for Protestant. Shun-jiang is an under-developed new city harbor built in the 1980s. 22.2 percent of the Catholics there think Sunday worship can be exempted. While 24.4 percent think they do not need to go to church and it is okay to do some Bible readings or say prayers at home or in their work places. Wen-ling City is also a new city that was once an old agriculture city with city inhabitants. 64.8 percent of the Catholics there think that it is not necessary to go to church on Sunday but can just stay at home and do some Bible readings. The population in the Catholic village of Ma-peng is 1,100 in 332 families. There are 251 copies of validate questionnaire papers. Results:

Table 5

It can be exempted	Self reading or prayer	No missing it if doing business in local area	Go to local church where he or she is doing business
Female 30, Male 24	Female 75, Male 91	Female 2, Male 7	Female 15, Male 23

According to the statistics, the percentage of those who think that the Sunday worship can be exempted is $54:248=21.7\%$, and the percentage of those who choose to stay at home to do Bible reading is $166:248=66.93\%$. The percentage of those who insist on going to the local church for Sunday worship is only 3.62 percent - only 9 individuals.

Ma-peng village has a well-known Catholic history of 270 years. There have been 6 priests from the Family Fu and 5 priests from the Family Wang. Originally all villagers planted crops. By the end of the 1980s, after the switch to planting orange trees, there were about 20 different occupations. Those who go to church on Sundays are old people and children; very few young people go to church. Generally it is same in Wen-zhou, Wen-ling and Shu-jiang, etc. They have their own saying: "It is okay to have God in your heart; shops cannot be closed, work cannot be stopped; you must earn money if you have chances."

The market economy has added a new dimension to secularization. The reality now is that money making on Sundays is much more important than Sunday worship. It also shows that the religious concepts of believers are changing. However, both Catholics and Protestants deny that their religious passion is now indifferent. They consider their belief still to be very firm and pure. We have done some surveys regarding this question, but it is hard to obtain accurate answers through a questionnaire. We intend to use other methods to do some general investigations and individual interviews.

5. Quality of believers has been improved and there is a change in social concepts in adjusting to secular society.

This is the fifth change due to the adjustment to market economy system. It is happening now in both Catholic and Protestant Churches.

In the past, there were three "mores:" more women, more old people, and more illiterate people. There is no big change now in both Catholic and Protestant. From question 1, we can see that the rate between female and male believers is quite close. However, because there are more peasant Catholics and there are more believers in villages, especially in some inland provinces, generally speaking there are more female believers than male believers.

From the point of view of the age of those joining the Church, the rate of young people joining obviously is higher now. According to the survey, the percentage of believers under the age of 55 in Ping-yang Catholic Church is $(256:335=76.4\%)$ 76.4. The percentage for the four Protestant churches is 61.8 percent $(107:173=61.84\%)$, 53.4 percent $(94:176=53.4\%)$, 51.26 percent $(101:196=51.26\%)$ and 69.84 percent $(132:189=69.84\%)$. Believers under the age of 55 in the four churches make up more than half of the total of believers. Actually this is a little lower than the real percentage, because quite a number of young believers are busy with business and seldom go to church except for some big feasts.

With regard to the level of education, generally speaking most believers have graduated from elementary or middle school. Few are high school graduates and fewer graduated from college. However, the situation has been changed considerably from the past when the majority was illiterate.

Based on questionnaires, general research and individual interviews, we can see that, accompanying the tremendous changes in Chinese society from 1980s, believers' ability to adjust psychologically to the market

based society has greatly improved. In brief, there are four changes in the social (not theological) concept of believers.

1). Many believers in the early 1980s thought that believers could not do business. Believers especially could not be bosses who hired some people to exploit them. Less than one fourth of believers in Wen Zhou had this idea. However, more than two thirds of believers in Anjishan mountain village felt this. We can see some changes in this survey.

Answers of Catholics in Ping-yang County, Wen-Zhou to question 14 **“Do you think it is all right (permitted) or not for a believer to do business?”**

Table 6

Yes	No	Does not matter	It has nothing to do with belief	Does not select an answer	Total
230	0	5	93	7	335

Answers of Catholics in Ping-yang to question 15 **“Is it all right for a believer to be a boss and to hire some workers?”**

Table 7

Yes	No	Yes, if it is not illegal and for glory of God and benefit of people	Does not select an answer	Total
207	1	119		335

Answers of four Protestant churches in Ping-yang to the question 14 **“Do you think it is all right (permitted) or not for a believer to do business?”**

Table 8

	Yes	No	Does not matter	It has nothing to do with belief	Does not select an answer	Total
Yong-ping church	108	0	9	54	2	173
Shang-bu Church	80	0	32	64	0	176
Yong-yuan Church	187	0	2	7	0	196
Chi-ma church	63	0	43	83	0	189

Answers of four Protestant churches in Ping-yang to the question 15 **“Is it all right for a believer to be a boss and to hire some workers?”**

Table 9

	Yes	No	Yes, if it is not illegal and for glory of God and benefit of people	Does not select an answer	Total
Yong-ping church	48	0	125	0	173
Shang-bu Church	77	0	96	3	176
Yong-yuan Church	29	0	167	0	196
Chi-ma church	95	1	83	10	189

Numbers in the four columns for the answers of Catholics in Ping-yang in the year 2000 to question 14 are: 230, 0, 5, 93 and four people did not select an answer to the question. Numbers in the three columns to question 15 are: 207, 1, 119 and eight people did not select an answer. The total number is 335. Answers of Protestant to the second item are the same as Catholics. It seems that both Catholic and Protestant believers make the same choice that nobody thinks believers cannot do business, and only one believer thinks that believers cannot be bosses. The number in four Protestant churches is 438, or 59.5 percent, for those who think that believers can do business. The number is 208, or 28.33 percent, for those who think that doing business has nothing to do with belief. The number is 86, or 11.7 percent, for those who think it does not matter. Connected with questions 11 and 12, we can see that more than half of believers think that doing business and changing occupations have nothing to do with belief or that it does not matter. However, with regard to being bosses, 471 believers, or 64.1 percent, think that it is all right but only under the conditions of glorying God, benefiting people and obeying laws. It shows believers’ sense of virtue when it comes to doing business. Some non-religious believer bosses treat their hired workers cruelly. They practice fraud, employ trickery and cheat their consumers. Believers, including bosses among believers, hate the phenomenon of such practices. The goods that believers sell have a good reputation. Consumers like to buy things from them and this is one of the reasons why business at believers’ shops is better than others in the Wen Zhou area.

2). Believers on one hand insist on pure belief, while on the other hand they are broader minded than in the past and can live harmoniously with non-believers

From question 17, we know that only 181 Catholics, or 54 percent, are from families whose members all are Catholics. 17 Catholics are from families whose other members are all non-Catholics. 129 Catholics are from mixed families of believers and non-believers. In the four Protestant churches in Ping-yang, 426 believers, or 58.03 percent, are from families whose members are believers. According to results of question 18, 230 Catholics, or about 68.6 percent, encourage family members to join the Church. 89 Catholics, about 26.5 percent, think it does not really matter. Only 5 Catholics do not encourage their family members to join the Church. And only 2 Catholics strongly oppose family members joining the church. Among Protestants, 41.97 percent believers encourage their family members to join the Church or hold an attitude that “it does not matter” attitude. Only 16 among 734 believers do not encourage family members to join the Church. And 1 person strongly opposed. Compared with the past, it shows that the situation in Christianity is much better since the 1990s. On the other hand, believers’ attitude toward non-believers has been changed considerably. Most believers think that believers and non-believers should pay mutual respect to each another. Here is the result of question 19 **“How do you think if some practice a religion, some do not practice any religion and some belong to other denominations or other religions in one family?”**

Answers of Catholics in Ping-yang to question 19

Table 10

Evangelization to family members and invite them to join the Church	Practice individual beliefs and respect each other		Does not matter	I do not know how to do it	Does not select an answer	Total
164	129	8	21	13		335

129 Catholics, or 38.5 percent, chose the second answer "respect each other." And 41.28 percent of Protestants choose this answer "to respect each other."

3). Believers' psychological adjustment ability obviously has improved. Most believers agree that modern society has a good effect or at least has a good side for the development of Church.

Question 13 is "Do you think that modern society and the current market economy system are good or not good for the Church that you are participating in?"

Results of answers of Catholics in Ping-yang to question 19.

Table 11

Good	Not good	It has both a good side and a bad side	I do not know	Does not select an answer	Total
201	0	63	65	6	335

Results of answers of Catholics in Ma-peng to question 13.

Table 12

Good	Not good	It has both a good side and a bad side	I do not know	Does not select an answer	Total
105	19	32	89	6	251

The above statistics show that 60 percent of the believers in the developed Wen Zhou area think that the modern society and current market economy system are good for the Church. However, the percentage of those choosing "good" is only 41.8 percent in Catholic villages west of Zhejiang Province. And 35.4 percent believers choose the fourth answer "I do not know." This is related to the strong negative response to the enormous impacts of modern economy on Christianity in villages.

The above conclusion can be further verified by the results of questions 20, 21 and 24. From statistic tables we can see that around 30 percent believers think that the modern society and economy have "largely good effect" or "very good effect." 35 percent think "some good effects." While around 30 percent think they do not really have any good effects or "no benefit."

This is a very interesting question. We plan to do further analysis of the several answers in order to assess differences among believers in different genders, age groups, intellectual levels and professions. We also want to know specific content of their ideas of "good" or "not good."

4). Comparatively, believers are more sober-minded and objective in estimating Christianity’s position and perspectives in current Chinese society.

Question 25 is **“The general mood of society is not very good. It is money-striving and material benefit striving. What role do you think your Church will play for the development of society and improvement of morality and prevailing practice?”**

Answers of Catholics in Ma-peng and Ping-yang County to question 25

Table 13

	It has significant effect	It has effect and contribution	It has little effect	It has no effect	Does not select an answer	Total
Ping-yang	83	235	6	1	10	335
Ma-peng	11	199	25	13	3	251

Obviously, most chose the first and the second answers. This is exactly the same with surveys of Protestants in Ping-yang. Here is the statistic table that you may consult:

Answers of four Protestant churches in Ping-yang to question 25

Table 14

	It has significant effect	It has effect and contribution	It has little effect	It has no effect	Does not select an answer	Total
Yong-ping church	129	44	0	0	0	173
Shang-bu Church	62	114	0	0	0	176
Yong-yuan Church	68	128	0	0	0	189
Chi-ma church	21	168	0	0	0	189
Total	280	454	0	0	0	734

Note that 38.15 percent of believers think their Church has “a significant effect” and 61.95 percent choose “it has effect and contribution.” None of them deny that their Church has positive social functions. There are many mass organizations and party organizations. If you ask the same question of their members, there will surely be some numbers in each of the answers no matter what the party or organization (e.g., Youth Organization, Woman Organization, Neighborhood Committee, etc).

Question 26 is **“There is a great development of Chinese economy in the 21st century. Compared with other Churches, what do you think of your Church’s prospects?”**

Table 15

Answers of Catholics in Ping-yang and Ma-peng to question 26

	It will have a great development	It will have certain development	It will meet some difficulties, difficult to develop	I do not know	Does not select an answer	Total
Ping-yang	56	219	4	51	5	335
Ma-peng	29	77	56	86	2	251
Total	85	296	60	137	7	586

The above statistics show that percentage of those who choose “it will have a great development” is 14.26 percent. And percentage of those who choose “it will have certain development” is 50.51 percent. In total, it is 64.77 percent, which means that two thirds of believers have confidence in their Church’s development. 10.2 percent believers think it will have difficulty developing. During our individual interviews, we learn that the reasons are: China and the Vatican have not built diplomatic relationship and the government controls the Catholic Church more tightly than the Protestant Church. Others think that some priests give out dated homilies. Some young people think that old priests (here it identifies Fr. Zhou in Ma-peng) have not integrated the spirit of Second Vatican Council. The reasons why 23.37 percent (about a quarter) believers chose “I do not know” are the same as the reasons for those who chose the third answer “it will meet some difficulties,” but they are more pessimistic. The old generation especially thinks the younger generation has changed, while the younger generation thinks that they cannot stay at home to suffer poverty.

Question 22 is **“What do you think about the importance of your belief in your life?”**

Answers of Catholics in Ping-yang and Ma-peng to question 22

Table 16

	Very important	Important	A little important	Does not matter	Does not select an answer	Total
Ping-yang	116	169	38	3	9	335
Ma-peng	39	178	16	14	4	251
Total	155	347	54	17	13	586

We can see that only 15.53 percent Catholics in Ma-peng, a traditional Catholic village with 11 priests from it, chose the first answer “very important.” However, the corresponding percentage in Ping-yang is 34.62 percent. Even 30 Catholics, or 11.95 percent, choose the third and the fourth answers. It shows that certain potential crisis is developing in current village Catholic churches under the stimulation of market economy and “all the nation’s peasants running toward comfortable lives.” After three years we went back to Ma-peng for research and found that the people are wealthier than before and more and more young people go out for temporary work, business or managing orange enterprises.

Another interesting phenomenon is that Protestants in Ping-yang County are more confident and they are enormously proud of their successes. We can see it through the following table.

Answers of Protestants in Ping-yang to question 26 **“There is a great development of Chinese economy in the 21st century. Compared with other Churches, what do you think of your Church’s prospects?”**

Table 17

	It will have a great development	It will have certain development	It will meet some difficulties, difficult to develop	I do not know	Does not select an answer	Total
Yong-ping church	144	28	0	1	0	173
Shang-bu Church	39	135	0	2	0	176
Yong-yuan Church	25	155	16	0	0	196
Chi-ma Church	14	174	0	1	0	189
Total	222	192	16	4	0	734

According to the table, 30.24 percent think there will be a great development; 67.02 percent think there will be certain development; 2.17 percent think it will be difficult to develop; only 4 people, or 0.54 percent, are not sure or do not know. The corresponding percentages in Catholic are: 16.71%, 65.37%, 1.19% and 15.22%.

According to the survey in Ping-yang, the percentage of those who think their Catholic Church or Protestant Church will have develop in a certain manner is very close. Protestants, however, are more optimistic. 30.24 percent think their Church will make good progress. Because of the problems of the China-Vatican diplomatic relationship, only 16.71 percent Catholics are optimistic. And 15.22 percent Catholics expressed their concern and they think it is hard to be hopeful.

This is my research and analysis of the 26 questions in my questionnaire. Because of time limitations and this summer’s heat, which we’ve not had for more than 100 years, a drought and loss of power, it would have been better if I had had more time to do further work. Regarding these materials, I would like to continue to collaborate with colleagues and friends from home or abroad so that we can also open up some new fields to research.