Appendix
Preliminary Survey on the New Generation of Scholars of Christian Studies in Mainland China

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Introduction
The academic study of Christianity has resumed in Mainland China since the 1980s under the reform and open policy of the Chinese government. During that time, along with the introduction of Western thoughts into the Chinese academia and society, Chinese scholars of various humanistic disciplines began to research into the study of Christianity or Christian studies in the course of exploring Western cultures.

Owing to the special religious policy and political environment, Christian studies in Mainland China possesses several characteristics when resumed in 1980s. In terms of the characteristics of the researchers, most of the scholars of Christian studies proclaim themselves to be intellectuals rather than theologians, academicians studying Christianity rather than practicing Christians. They usually do not adhere to any Christian church. Furthermore, these scholars mainly came from different humanistic disciplines in universities instead of from denominational churches, theological seminaries or academic departments of religious studies in universities. Over the last thirty years or so, Christian studies has successfully gained public recognition in the Chinese academia due to the work of these scholars. As more and more scholars participate in Christian studies, various approaches to the study of Christianity have been developed: historical, philosophical, theological, sociological, etc. In the development of this burgeoning academic discipline, significant changes might have taken place within the discipline itself and the scholars involved.

According to Prof. He Guanghu, scholars of Christian studies in Mainland China can be classified into three generations.1 The first generation consists of scholars who were active mainly during the period of 1950s to 1970s and can be further divided into two groups. The first group consists of church members who received patronage from the government and their main concerns were more political than academic due to the special political environment of China in that period. The other group of the first generation refers to scholars who, though not within the church circle, began to reflect and discuss the religious issues in

China during the late of 1970s. As for the second generation scholars, most of them are graduates (aged twenty to thirty) from humanistic disciplines such as history, philosophy, literature, etc. in universities when China began to implement the reform and open policy in the beginning of 1980s. At that time, there were only two or three departments of religious studies in universities in Mainland China. As a result, very few scholars of the second generation had received the specialized training in religious or theological studies. According to Prof. He, the second generation scholars, who played the leading role in the field of Christian studies from mid-1980s to the later half of 1990s, can be described as “from knowing to understanding, from seeking to reward”, whereas the third generation scholars are characterized as “from learning to specializing, from interest to commitment”.

Prof. He’s crude classification and general delineation of the characteristics of scholars of Christian studies in Mainland China of the three generations may provide an important hypothesis concerning the development of Christian studies in Mainland China. However, Prof. He’s hypothesis is based primarily on his informal observation and impressions, which may better be tested and confirmed by a more concrete survey on the scholars of the third generation.

Under the auspice of a research project directed by Prof. Lai Pan-chiu of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, a survey of the new generation of scholars of Christian studies was conducted. This survey is conducted respectively by Dr. Gao Xin during a conference organized by the China Academy of Social Science, Beijing in December 2008 and Dr. Sha Mei during a conference held at Heilongjiang University, Harbin, in January 2009.

The scholars being targeted for survey are primarily those of the age 35-45 with the academic rank comparable to associate professor or below. They are supposed to belong to the third generation according to Prof. He’s classification. The survey aims at testing if this batch of scholars has any characteristic making them distinguishable from the older generation, especially the second generation according to Prof. He’s classification. These characteristics may include: academic orientation, research interests, religious commitment, church affiliation, professional training, understanding of the academic, personal, cultural and ecclesiastical significance of their research work, etc.

As the topic remains sensitive to some scholars, the participants being invited to take part in the survey had been shown beforehand: (1) a formal letter from Prof. Lai Pan-chiu, indicating the academic purpose of the survey and

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pledging to keep confidential the personal identification of the scholars participating in this survey; (2) a questionnaire in one page listing the 5 questions to be asked with blank space for filling in short answer; and (3) a consent form which the scholar participating in the survey has to sign to indicate his/her consent.

The main questions that this survey sets out to address are as follows:

1. What is the major reason or motivation for your engaging in Christian studies? Is it purely for academic interests, purely for religious reasons or both?
2. How do you evaluate the achievements and limitations of the “senior” scholars of Christian studies in Mainland China?
3. Do you have any religious affiliation? Do you worship at a Christian church - never, occasionally or regularly?
4. How do you perceive the significance or meaning of Christian studies to the Chinese academia, churches, culture and society?
5. To what extent are you affected by the academic study of Christianity in your own personal or spiritual life?

There are total 28 scholars surveyed. Of the 28 participants, 14 of them are accomplished by means of face-to-face conversation, the other 14 by filling in the questionnaire by the scholar himself/herself. Below is a summary of the results of this rather preliminary survey of the new generation of scholars of Christian studies in Mainland China.

Why Studying Christianity?
With regard to the first question, 13 out of the 28 participants indicate that they engage in Christian studies for purely academic interests. There are 11 participants stating that the motivations of their studies originate from both academic interests and religious reasons. There are 2 participants suggesting that their research motivations began as some sort of “faith seeking understanding”. Another scholar suggests that the motivation of his / her study of Christianity is to search for the goal and meaning of life. Only 1 participant replies that his or her reason for studying Christianity is due to chance with no specific intention. Among the 11 participants who are motivated by both academic and religious reasons, some of them think that they can make a clear distinction between academic consideration and personal belief. They believe that personal religious preference should not and will not offer any methodology for academic research and teaching. They can thus ensure that their academic activities would measure up with strict academic standards and educational requirements. Other participants who are also motivated by both academic and religious reasons suggest that it is not easy or even realistic to make religious involvement thoroughly separate from academic research. According to their own
experiences – both academic and religious, in the pursuit of the ultimate value of life, the study of Christianity is deemed to have a positive influence on the personal development and to help them to achieve a more reflective attitude towards life and belief, and hence strengthen their religious convictions. At the same time, they also believe that while they can maintain an objective and neutral stance in their teaching and research, their religious experiences can provide some sort of insights and critical perspectives on their academic studies. In short, Christian studies can combine their academic activities with their lives and make these two benefit each other.

Evaluation of Previous Generation

With regard to the second question concerning the achievements of the senior scholars, as most of the participants started their academic work, consciously or unconsciously, on the foundation accomplished by the senior scholars, how to understand and evaluate the achievements of the senior scholars will be an important indicator showing their perception of the academic trends and the difference between the two generations. Based on the results of this survey, there is a rather extensive consensus among the participants that the senior scholars of Christian studies in Mainland China have made considerable contributions to the Chinese academia. Through translating relevant books into Chinese, teaching courses at universities and writing books about Christianity, they took on the responsibility of introducing the knowledge of Christianity to the whole of Chinese academia, helping Chinese intellectuals and ordinary people understand Christianity in an appropriate way. But their most important achievement remains that they were the first to bring Christianity to the Chinese academia. During the period of Cultural Revolution, Christianity and its relevant studies were associated with reactionism and foreign invasion. Thanks to the senior scholars, the subject-matter and nature of Christian studies had been changed from a political or ideological enterprise to an academic discipline of humanities. Due to their endeavors, Christian studies had successfully established itself as a fairly systematized discipline in Chinese academia more than twenty years ago. They could thus be regarded as the pioneers of Christian studies in Chinese academia.

In addition to the academic accomplishments of the senior scholars, some participants also express their admirations and respects for the senior scholars. Considering the special political environment where they started their initial work and the ideological burden which they bore for years, the younger scholars are particularly impressed by the passion and the courage of these senior scholars. It is agreed that the pioneering work of the senior scholars laid the solid foundation of Christian studies in Chinese academia and made a great impact on the younger generation.
Besides their praises of the contributions made by the senior scholars of Christian studies, the participants also give their reflective and critical comments on the work done by their seniors. Their comments can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, from the academic perspective, the works of the senior scholars are not critical enough to match the academic standard in terms of originality and creativity due to the fact that they mainly concentrated on translation and introductory work. According to the participants, the translation and introductory work are absolutely important but they are not adequate for the further development of Christian studies. The growth and progress of this discipline, including the theoretical articulation of Sino-Christian theology which remains under construction, require novelty and expertise at a higher level.

Secondly, as very few senior scholars of Christian studies were formally trained in religious or theological studies, most of them started their studies of Christianity from the perspectives like history, philosophy, literature, foreign languages, etc. Their academic background made the research foci of the senior scholars sometimes not so directly relevant to religious or theological studies. Though this might be quite inevitable in Mainland China especially at that time, the participants agree that the construction of the conceptual framework and methodology of Christian studies calls for a much more specialized training of religious or theological studies.

Thirdly, since most of the senior scholars devoted themselves mainly to the translation and introductory work, they have not fully explored the diverse aspects of Christianity at length. The participants unanimously pledge to take up the responsibility to carry on and further promote the multidisciplinary studies of Christianity and to delve even deeper into Christian studies.

Religious Affiliation
Regarding the third question concerning religious affiliation, 8 participants express that they have Christian faith. Among this group of declared adherents, 3 are regular churchgoers, including 1 serving as deacon in his or her church; another 3 worship at a church occasionally; the remaining 2 never go to church and prefer their individual way of worshiping or together with their family members. There are 14 participants indicating that they do not have any religious affiliation but their detailed answers are interestingly diversified. Among those who gave further details about their religious activities, 4 of them have never attended church worship, 1 is a frequent churchgoer, 6 attend church worship occasionally, and 1 claims that he/she sometimes attends church activities but with no religious implication. Concerning this question, there are 3 participants who do not explicitly express whether they have any religious

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5 The 2 scholars who have no religious belief do not indicate whether they go to church or not.
belief, but they seem to show observable religious sentiment during the conversation. One of these 3 participants says that he/she has religious sentiment; another says he/she wishes to adhere or commit to the Christian faith; and the last one indicates that he/she attends worship at church rather often. Among the 3 participants who prefer not to declare their religious affiliation(s) due to personal reasons, one of them discloses that he/she goes to church occasionally and the others indicate that they do not exclude themselves from church activities and worship.

Interestingly, we can see from the replies that most of the participants who do not profess the Christian faith are open to church activities and some of them often attend church activities. One of the possible reasons for this is that participating in church activities is regarded as a direct means of acquainting the scholars with Christianity and in this way they can have a better understanding of Christianity. Another possible reason may be that some scholars consider the Christian church, similar to the Buddhist temple, as a nice and peaceful place for contemplation and spiritual cultivation.

Social Significance of Christian Studies
Relating to the fourth question concerning the significance of Christian studies for the Chinese academia, churches, culture and society, responses offered by the participants are quite positive and affirmative. No matter how diversified their research interests and personal belief are, all the participants share similar recognition of the significance of Christian studies in Mainland China. They agree that Christian Studies has exerted great impact on the Chinese academia, culture and society. From the perspective of academic structure, Christian Studies offers a significant frame of reference to the Chinese academia. Some participants suggest that Christian studies in the universities can complement and save the inadequacy of ecclesiastical theology. Furthermore, Christian Studies is able to respond to the development of ecclesiastical theology and the dilemma of “faith crisis” in China. It is the consensus of the participants that the resumption and development of Christian studies in Mainland China contributed greatly to the integrity of the humanistic ecosystem of Chinese academia, the construction of human sciences in China and the cultural exchange between East and West. Other than the tremendous impact on the Chinese academia, the participants also mention that Christianity as a global religion with a long history will contribute to the moral civilization and social transformation of contemporary Chinese society. Regarding the prospect of Christian studies in Mainland China, the participants also agree that Christian studies will continue to play an important role in various areas in the future.

Concerning the non-confessional Christian theology formulated by the Chinese scholars, especially those of the previous generation, the opinions of the participants can be divided into two camps. One camp suggests that this
kind of academic Christian theology articulated mainly by scholars with almost no Christian faith and no ecclesiastical function is very meaningful. It brings forth significant influences to the contemporary Chinese society, such as offering guidance to the government’s policy related to religious issues. It can function as a bridge between believers and non-believers. It can also provide some sort of mediating function among different religions and between Christianity and the government. The other camp takes a more critical stand and argues that this kind of non-confessional theology or Christian studies accomplished mainly by scholars of public universities is inadequate. It is because it intentionally or unconsciously ignores from time to time the faith community in China for certain reasons. Scholars of this camp of thought propose that Christian studies in Mainland China, instead of being restricted to the academic tradition of refraining from making contact with religious communities, should include various academic traditions and the contemporary religious lives in a broader sense. In the long term, they suggest, Christian studies in Mainland China should face the faith community in a more gentle and positive way, which may benefit the growth of faith community. When Christian studies in China is better integrated with the faith community, a genuine and dynamic “Christian community” will be formed in Chinese society. Moreover, they also suggest, Christian studies should concentrate more on the theological perspective rather than the philosophical or historical. As a result, a more active interaction between Christian studies and Chinese churches can be expected in the future.

In terms of the meaning of Christian studies to the society, some participants think that the significance or influence of Christian studies in Mainland China has already gone beyond the academia itself. It provides an opportunity for the Chinese people to understand Western cultures and religions in an objective and multi-dimensional way. In turn, the recognition obtained by Christian studies also helps the Chinese people to reckon the realities of China in a new way. As some participants suggest, some Chinese people began to understand the realities of China from the perspective of Christianity. When people can perceive the tensions demonstrated in Christianity, they may have similar view on the practical problems in China. In the eyes of some other participants, Christian culture can also enrich traditional Chinese culture and will bring out the best from both sides in the future. Since Christian culture has some unique features which Chinese traditions cannot provide, including the ideas of original sin, confession/repentance, etc., Christian culture can function as a valuable complement in this respect. Owing to the possible contributions of Christian culture, some participants suggest that Christianity should be an indispensable partner for the establishment of the public value in China. At the same time, the development of Christian studies in China can be regarded as a re-interpretation of the Christian tradition and an extension of Chinese culture. In other words,
Christian studies can enrich Chinese culture and can contribute to a more flourishing future for Chinese society on the whole.

Concerning the prospect or future development of Christian studies in Mainland China, most of the participants come to the general agreement that Christian studies in Mainland China should be undertaken by well-trained Christian theologians and scholars with specialized training in religious studies. The study of Christianity in China should be more inclusive to cover different Western theological traditions. Furthermore, the participants also think that Christian studies in Mainland China should keep on bringing fresh ideas to the issues concerning social welfare, social transformation and morality. It will then enhance the plurality of Chinese culture and society as a whole.

**Personal Significance of Christian Studies**

As to the last question concerning the impact of Christian studies on the personal or spiritual life of the researchers, most of the participants recognize that the study of Christianity, though an academic activity by nature, has a rather beneficial effect on their personal or spiritual life in various ways. One group of the participants indicates that their studies of Christianity made them committed to Christianity. Scholars of this group usually had no religious belief before engaging in Christian studies. However, in the course of their academic explorations, they were deeply inspired by the vital principles and the uniqueness of Christianity, and thus became attracted and even adhered to Christianity. Another group of participants feel that they were perplexed by the tension between Chinese tradition and Christian culture especially when they strived for their personal liberation and spiritual cultivation. Though attracted by Christianity as a religion, they have not resolved the problems or tensions between the distinctive traditions of these two cultures. One of the obvious characteristics of these participants is that facing the conflicting elements of Chinese and Christian traditions, they have the difficulties in identifying themselves as Christians. For instance, they still feel that it is not easy to forsake entirely the Chinese tradition and accept wholeheartedly the Christian doctrines. Answers given by the third group of participants, who makes no commitment to Christian faith, are quite diversified. Most of participants of this group admit that Christian Studies has influenced their worldviews in a constructive way. For example, through studying Christianity, some of their previous negative impressions on Christianity, such as the misunderstanding of Christianity as an ideological weapon of Western Imperialism, have been rectified. Being inspired by the spiritual power of Christianity, some participants think that their academic studies of Christianity affected their lives deeply and offered an important alternative way of living apart from the Chinese traditions. As the message or spiritual resources of Christianity is so closely related to life, their spiritual lives were positively enhanced and expanded after studying Christianity. It is Christian studies that made them
experience the transcendence and religiosity in their lives. Therefore, they can adopt a more sensible and open attitude in the subsequent years of their lives.

**Prospect of Christian Studies**

As some of the participants involved in in-depth interviews, they had the chance to elaborate their opinions on issues not listed in the questionnaire. During the interviews, some of the interviewees expressed their proposals or visions for Christian studies in Mainland China. As the future development of Christian studies in Mainland China will be dominated sooner or later by this new generation, the proposals or visions articulated by the interviewees may shed light on the prospect of the discipline of Christian studies in China.

The first aspect to be mentioned is that some of the interviewees propose to broaden the scope of Christian studies on the one hand and to delve deeper into some specialized areas on the other. Whereas scholars of the older generation focus on philosophical studies of Christianity, the interviewees propose to promote a wide range of sub-disciplines within Christian studies, including biblical studies, sociology of religion, spirituality, original theory of Sino-Christian theology, moral role of Christianity in Chinese society, etc. With regard to the translation work, some interviewees argue that the translation of works in foreign languages other than English, for instance, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. is also very important. These non-English foreign languages and their materials are necessary for studying literatures and Catholic studies, and hence deserve to be taken seriously. They expect that Christian studies in Mainland China should grow in a comprehensive way covering various areas or aspects and develop its own creative theoretical framework in the future. As a branch of the humanities in Chinese academia, Christian studies may then become more mature as well as specialized and can play a significant role in the Chinese academic tradition.

Another observation from the survey is that the interviewees place emphases on the realities of Chinese society, the establishment of public values in China and the relationship with the faith community. According to some of the interviewees, research on sociology of religion and public theology will be beneficial to discussion of the cultural, social and religious issues from the Christian perspective, which can provide new options different from those of the Chinese traditions. Some interviewees believe that they should give their responses to the relevant social problems in contemporary Chinese society. For instance, some of them claim that they have the obligation to response to the increasing number of Christians in China and to apply the results of their research to practical religious matters in contemporary China. During the interview, many of the interviewees expressed from time to time their concerns which cover human spirituality, Chinese society, moral issues, and even ecosystem or environmental problems. The interviewers got the impression that
most of the interviewees do not take their studies of Christianity as merely a job for earning a living. Instead, they regard Christian studies as a vocation which deserves their greatest passions and devotions to further promote it both for the sake of academic interest and for the well-being of the society. It is thus expected that more and more of this kind of socially engaging discourse will emerge and even become dominant in Christian studies in Mainland China in the future.

The third aspect to be mentioned is about religious experience. According to the friendly sharing of the interviewees, the religious experience of the scholars of the younger generation may be much more extensive and intensive than that of the senior ones. This refers to both the survey findings that the percentage of declared/confessional Christians is expected to be significantly higher than the older generation and that more scholars of the new generation show some sort of religious sentiment towards Christianity. With regard to the latter group of scholars, though they have not committed to Christianity, they can evaluate Christianity positively in a frank manner. Even those who study Christianity merely from a detached position have plenty opportunities to contact Christians around them and to understand the practices of Christianity in China and the West. As a result, some new features of Christian studies may emerge in the future, for example the study of Christian Spirituality. As the subject matter for the study of Christian spirituality is the subjective religious experiences or feelings of Christians, the researcher is expected to have analogous experience or feeling in order to have any in-depth understanding. The religious sentiment or spiritual experience of the scholars of the younger generation may have made them better equipped (in comparison with the older generation at least) to understand and even further develop Christian spirituality into a genuine academic discipline. For those who have no Christian faith or sentiment towards Christianity, they may not have the desire or passion for the study of Spirituality. However, through attending the church activities and observing or even participating in the prayer and/or ritual of Christianity, they may be able to contribute to the study of Christian spirituality through their “field studies”. In short, given the increase of Christians in number as well as the overall religious sentiment among the younger scholars, the prospect for the development of the study of Christian spirituality should be much more promising than before.

Summary, Analysis & Reflection

Though the size of sample of this survey is rather small in number, after analyzing the records, some significant observations can be made.

In terms of academic orientation, the younger scholars participating in the

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survey agree that Christian studies should be broaden in scope and further specialized in the future. Since the senior scholars have contributed a lot to the introduction of Christian studies into the Chinese academia with a strong cultural mission and have established successfully the legitimate status of Christian studies as an academic discipline in the Chinese academia, the younger scholars accepts that it is the task of this new generation to further develop the discipline in a different way. The younger scholars propose that while the philosophical and historical perspectives adopted by their seniors remain very useful, these perspectives do not constitute or exhaust the entirety of the methodological framework for Christian studies. Other methodologies like theological, sociological and anthropological approaches should be taken into consideration seriously and deserved to be promoted. Other than the methodologies, the participants also point out that, though the introductory work and translation are important and still deserve to be continued, much attention should be paid to the innovation of original theories in Christian studies. The Christian Studies in China should not be exhausted by the introduction of the Western theories or translation of the famous works of Western scholars. It also should not indiscriminately adopt the methods used in Hong Kong and Taiwan either. In short, scholars of the younger generation share the opinion that the methodology of Christian studies in Mainland China should be more pluralistic in the future and should aim to develop its own characteristics, theories and even methodologies according to the concrete conditions in Mainland China.

Another observation to be made from the survey is that the proportion of Christians shows a considerable increase among the younger generation scholars. Approximately 30% of the participants declared themselves as Christians in the survey. In contrast, most of the senior scholars devote themselves to the study of Christianity mainly for their academic interests and do not declare themselves as believers, adherents or practitioners of Christianity as a religion. This difference in terms of attitude towards Christianity is reflected in the participants’ perception of the significance of Christian studies in Mainland China. Whereas scholars of the older generation tend to overlook or downplay the significance of Christian studies for the Christian churches, some of the participants clearly indicate the positive significance of Christian studies for the Christian churches, including the ecclesiastical theology. Some participants even voice their criticism of the work of the senior scholars at this juncture – lack of commitment or relevance to the religious community. Though it is not easy to carry out a comprehensive survey to get the accurate numbers and percentages of Christians of the two generations, most of the participants state that they can sense the phenomenal difference between the two generations with regard to their religious affiliations.

Possible factors for this significant change can be manifold:

Firstly, dramatic changes took place with regard to the political and social
environments in which the older and younger generation scholars conduct their research activities. Most of the senior scholars had experienced a highly ossified ideology in the Cultural Revolution before they began their academic study of Christianity. At the initial stage of their academic careers, they needed to tackle the remaining ossified notions widespread in Mainland China at that time. Compared with the senior scholars, the surrounding environment of the younger generation scholars are much freer and pluralistic. They have not experienced the ossified ideology and tough times of the senior scholars.

Secondly, in terms of learning experience, in comparison with the senior scholars, the education and training received by the younger generation scholars are more systematic and specialized and less ideological. Under the call for the urban-educated youths to go to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, most of the senior scholars who were primarily considered as the educated youth at that time had to drop out of school and interrupt their formal studies. It is thus quite fair to say that their background trainings were more fragmentary and ideological. In contrast, having been systematically trained in schools and universities, the younger generation scholars are better equipped with a solid knowledge base and a more open attitude for their future developments. The university education the younger generation underwent is relatively less ideological. Moreover, their proficiency in foreign languages allow the scholars of younger generation to acquire resources in those languages and thus digest the information about Christianity in a more direct, reliable and comprehensive way. Besides the formal education received in China, a good number of the younger scholars have the experiences of studying abroad, attending the overseas academic exchange programs, visiting the seminaries, divinity schools and the departments of religious studies in the universities overseas, etc. They thus have a lot of opportunities to contact the Christian scholars abroad and to know the recent developments of both Christianity as a living religion and Christian studies as an academic discipline. It is evident that the communications between Chinese and Western scholars to a certain extent helped some Chinese scholars to overcome the ideological barrier or prejudice against Christianity. It can be said that whereas the senior scholars normally conduct their study from a relatively distant position and taking Christianity merely as part of human civilization, the understanding of Christianity the younger generation achieved is much more concrete and comprehensive. However, it is noteworthy that based on the results of the survey and the academic background of the participants, there seems to be some sort of loose correlation between the younger scholars’ attitudes towards Christianity and their academic background or specialties. Generally speaking, scholars specializing in Marxist Philosophy usually hold a more indifferent or even alienated attitude towards Christianity as a religion, especially the confessional or devotional aspect of Christianity. At the same time, very few of these Marxist scholars have made the commitment to Christianity.
Thirdly, the internal development of Christian studies as an academic subject in the Chinese academia is another important factor. The senior scholar had to grope and struggle for ways to establish this new discipline when they started the study of Christianity, with extremely limited resources and the uncertain political situation at that time. After years of development, the younger generation scholars can develop their research on the groundwork prepared by their seniors with relatively plentiful resources at their disposal.

Referring to Prof. He Gaunghu’s hypothesis, the results of this survey seems to support the overall observations that there are some significant differences between the older or second generation and the younger or third generation. In terms of religious affiliation, this new or third generation of scholars as a whole is relatively more religious and less alienated to the Christian churches. In terms of academic orientation, the new generation tends to be more specialists rather than generalists, to be more open to the spiritual dimension, and to be more socially engaged in a more public way.

As a survey aiming at identifying the differences between the older and younger generations of scholars and sketching the characteristics of the younger generation, it is far from comprehensive due to the size of the sample and the number of questions asked. Though one may find some significant differences between the two generations, some sort of commonalities among the younger scholars and some general trends of development, one can hardly draw any definite or decisive conclusion on the new generation of scholars of Christian studies in Mainland China from the results of this survey alone. More time and concrete evidences are needed in order to further explore how the future development of Christian studies will be effected by the characteristics of the scholars of this new generation. It is noteworthy that during the interview, many participants expressed that it is time to conduct a similar survey because enough materials have been accumulated in this area since 1980s to support such kind of survey. Furthermore, a similar survey on a broader scale will be beneficial to our understanding of the past and will serve as a reference for the future.7

7 The survey reported here is part of a research project conducted by Prof. Lai Pan-chiu, Department of Cultural & Religious Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, concerning scholars of Christian Studies in Mainland China. The research funding is gratefully received from the General Research Fund provided by the Research Grants Council, Hong Kong (project no. CUHK445207H).

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