Multi-sited Faith: Chinese Canadian, Young Adult Evangelicals and the Negotiation of Ethno-Religious Identity in the Greater Toronto Area

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.
This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.
I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

In 2016, Census Canada found that more than 1.5 million of Toronto, Ontario's roughly 5.4 million total population were second-generation immigrants. As part of this significant cohort, Chinese Canadian young adults are coming of age in a diverse, multicultural landscape. This project investigates the experience of my 18-35 year-old Chinese Canadian participants as they negotiate their connection to both their Chinese heritage and their sense of being evangelical Christians. Drawing on 51 formal interviews, 18 months of participant observation using multi-site ethnographic methods, and analysis of material culture, I argue that Chinese Canadian, young adult evangelicals form a variety of identity combinations in order to build and maintain attachment to ethno-religious communities. I found that while some explore and use multi-ethnic congregations and ministries to form these combinations, a far larger contingent of Chinese Canadian young adult evangelicals are drawing from a network of institutions and organizations rooted in the Chinese evangelical community. This network constitutes one of the chief findings of the study and illustrates how the unique second-generation religious forms that it fosters and allows for may help sustain and strengthen continued involvement in immigrant congregations for years to come.

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Dedication

To Darlene

"For one human being to love another: that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation."

Rainer Maria Rilke

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Attributions

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List of Figures

List of Acronyms

Note: I encountered the frequent use of acronyms by participants and informants during the interviews (formal, informal) and ethnographic observations of this project. These functioned as a marker or form of cultural shorthand within the Chinese evangelical community I was studying -- where a speaker almost always made an assumption of their listeners' knowledge in conversation. They were used most often when individuals referred to Chinese Canadian evangelical congregations or institutions. My ability to identify and use these aided the latter stages of my research, especially in identifying social networks between institutions and building rapport with interviewees who I had not met previously.

I offer a list here of several commonly used examples and prominent Toronto congregations that were frequently referenced, while also including those that I use in my main text as my participants would have in interviews.

ACF — Asian Christian Fellowship

AFC — Ambassadors for Christ

ESCM — English-speaking Chinese Ministerial

CCSA — Chinese Christian Softball Association

CBC — Canadian-born Chinese
(could refer to an individual, or the generational cohort)

GTA — Greater Toronto Area

IVCF — InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

RHCCC — Richmond Hill Christian Community Church

TC — Teens Conference

TCAC — Toronto Chinese Alliance Church

TCC — Toronto Chinese Church

TCBC — Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

TCMC — Toronto Chinese Methodist Church

UTCCF — University of Toronto Chinese Christian Fellowship
(often just shortened to CCF)

1. Introduction

1.1 First encounter

On a winter evening right after Christmas of 2012, I boarded a charter bus in Kitchener, Ontario. Snow started to fall as we left town – a long line of buses like mine heading south toward the US border. This caravan was carrying hundreds of Canadian teens and young adults to St. Louis, Missouri, to attend a large, triennial conference called Urbana where attendees interested in and committed to evangelical missionizing gather for training, education, and an event experience. I was going because, having just started my dissertation fieldwork in Toronto, I had heard some Chinese Canadian evangelical leaders talking about the conference, how big it was, and (more importantly) how many of their second-generation congregants were planning to attend. With a price tag of over $500 USD plus travel, food, and accommodation costs, it was no small matter that my bus was one of more than twenty carrying students and their leaders to St. Louis – joining nearly 1,700 other Canadians at Urbana. Most of the buses started their journey in the Toronto area and, by a significant majority, carried students affiliated with Chinese Canadian churches and ministries in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Mine was filled with youth – none of whom I knew – from the Toronto Christian Community Church (TCCC), a large Chinese Canadian congregation of over a thousand attendees.

The snow continued to fall and accumulate as we drove south, eventually forcing the buses to stop around 11 p.m. at a roadside rest area with a central facility housing restaurants, restrooms, and a gift shop. Along with everyone else, I trudged through the parking lot snow in hopes of grabbing something hot to drink before we were called back to continue our journey. As I entered the building, I was immediately struck by how loud it was inside. These venues are usually busy during the day as travelers purchased food and then sat to eat at the tables, not

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unlike the food court of a mall. It was nearly midnight however, and consequently the loud voices and boisterous laughter caught me by surprise.

The line for coffee was far too long, so I abandoned my original plan and just stood by the door to wait, and as any researcher I tried to pay attention to my surroundings. The building was full to capacity, and nearly everyone inside was a young Chinese Canadian student. Several church groups were present, identified by leaders taking the opportunity to gather attendees to give instructions and make plans for the coming days. It was apparent, however, that many individuals knew each other despite being from different groups – a significant portion of the noise coming from people as they recognized and greeted and hugged each other excitedly. The sheer number of people in the building added to the intensity, and as I stood by the exit I saw several other winter-weary drivers approach from out of the storm hoping to come in, only to turn around in surprise and confusion at how busy it was.

At that point, I had some limited understanding of how large and vibrant the Chinese Canadian evangelical community was, but I had not experienced it like this. That night I watched some leaders I would later spend significant time with move from one group to the next, reconnecting with old friends and discovering new ones. I watched university students studying abroad run into acquaintances and leaders from their congregations back home. I heard stories and names being exchanged as people discovered their shared social networks and connections.

This memory is significant because the further I got into my research the more that experience began to make sense to me, especially as I came to understand how interconnected English-speaking, Chinese Canadian churches and ministries are in the GTA. This interconnectedness stood out for me because I was aware of Purdue University sociologist Fenggang Yang's contention that "struggles of identity construction and tension between diverse

identities are pervasive and obvious in most Chinese churches" (1999: 9). As my participants shared their stories of such struggles, however, I realized the importance of this network of ministries and experiences and how their lives as second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals were formed by more than just congregational practice.

This understanding fueled my desire to explore how such a social group had developed, how it was largely unaccounted for in mainstream scholarship, and what role religion played in its ongoing vitality. That trip to Urbana began my study, which is guided by the following question: how are second-generation immigrant, English-speaking Chinese evangelicals in Toronto negotiating the intersections between their ethnic and religious identities? This question led me to undertake a sociological examination of a largely understudied and yet significant population.

1.2 Summary of relevant research

There is a rich and growing body of scholarship that addresses the lived experience of ethnic minorities in North America, with increased attention being paid to the role religion plays in their daily lives. As part of this effort, solid work has been done outlining the emergence of Chinese Christian communities in North America, the religious experiences of new migrants from China, and the adaptations initiated by these communities (e.g. Yang 1999; Muse 2005; Nagata 2005; Abel 2006; Hall 2006; Zhang 2006; Wickberg 2007; Cheong and Poon 2009; Chuck and Tseng 2009; Marshall 2009; Muse 2009; Han 2011a; Han 2011b; Marshall 2011; Muse 2011; Marshall 2014). With the emergence of large second-generation cohorts across a range of ethnicities, scholars in the United States have increasingly turned their attention to the communities and social practices of younger Asian Americans (Kibria 2002; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Louie 2006; Min 2002; Min and Kim 2002; Min 2010; Carnes and Yang 2004; Kurien 2007; Kim

2010; Kurien 2012; Kurien 2013; Chen and Jeung 2012; Suh 2015; Ai et al. 2016). This research

is relevant to this project given that my doctoral program at the University of Waterloo has a

particular interest in accounting for religious diversity in North America.

The American project with the closest parallels to my own is Antony Alumkal's

comparative study (2003) between a Chinese and a Korean congregation. Alumkal's primary goal

was to evaluate how race and ethnicity influenced his participants' patterns of assimilation. He

interviewed 24 individuals in each congregation and collected observation data for 18 months.

Ultimately, he uses race formation theory to evaluate questions similar to my own interests in

ethnicity, such as how race is formed in everyday actions and how Christian institutions

contribute to this. Notably, he outlines how his participants are part of ethnic minorities that are

often marginalized by anti-Asian racism in the US, and he argues that evangelical religious

practice allows them to symbolically escape from this problematic status. These findings contrast

with my own, which may be a tentative indicator of differences between the Canadian and

American contexts. While Alumkal noted tendencies in the second-generation to align with

American evangelicalism, he did not explain why this occurs and, instead, saw questions of

continued ethnic boundedness in their religious practice as derived from responses to racism. By

way of contrast, my participants were outspoken in rejecting the idea that ethnic or racial tension

was a significant issue for them. Consequently, my project looked to understand the persistence

of vibrant immigrant religious communities on the basis of a broader range of factors. American

studies like Alumkal's certainly describe and explore the role of religion among second-

generation cohorts in multiple immigrant communities, but there has not yet been a substantial

work done to account for the vibrant and interconnected Chinese Canadian evangelical

community in Canada.

That being said, there are several relevant theses and dissertations that have investigated the Chinese Canadian community. Samuel Chan (1991), founding and consulting pastor of the largest Chinese church in Canada, investigated the growth factors and strategies for Chinese evangelical churches in Toronto. His work specifically looked at important cultural markers among first-generation Chinese immigrants born between 1946 and 1964 and the relationship of those markers to church growth strategies practiced by his own community. Despite the fact that there is almost no mention of the second generation, this work is valuable due to its insider discussion of a local church's development, which maps quite closely onto my discussion in Chapter Two of immigration waves from Hong Kong and how they fueled the growth of congregations in Toronto.

Jo-Anne Chow (1998) investigated the lived experience of second-generation Chinese Canadians aged 17-50 in Calgary in the mid-1990s. Her findings, which parallel my own, related to dating and marriage, in that many of her respondents reported their parents' resistance to inter-racial relationships – though issues of gender were primary for her because she found that female youth experienced more pressure in this area than their male counterparts. Chow's analysis also looked at the practice of ancestor worship (which my evangelical Christian participants rejected), noting that practices varied significantly by family. There was no consideration of how these practices connect with other traditions such as Christianity, or with the religious practices of participants. Overall, Chow's thesis sample differs significantly from my own both on the basis of locale and historical setting, as the Chinese community in the GTA in 2015 was significantly larger than the same community in Calgary in 1995.

Jennifer Kwong's (1998) thesis investigated survey data of first and second-generation Chinese Canadians, finding clear differences between the generational cohorts in terms of

language competency, social networks, and pop culture consumption. Interestingly, Kwong noted that many young Chinese Canadians preferred an ethnically homogenous social network and speculated that this would continue as immigration populations from Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China (PRC) continued. In my own study, I observed the fulfillment of this prediction, but Kwong does not conduct any significant analysis or provide any discussion of how this phenomenon occurs. It is worth noting that while Protestant Christians were over-represented in her sample, she did not apply her discussion of ethnic identity formation to the religious communities engaged by many of her respondents – something my project prioritizes.

In her 2002 study of second-generation, Chinese Canadian high school students in Toronto, Emi Ooka incorporated 1996 Canadian census data along with survey data. She found significant evidence that young Chinese Canadians follow a segmented assimilative trajectory (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001) in their adaptation to Canadian society, meaning that there was significant diversity in the ways that these individuals adapted to and were incorporated into Canadian society. This discovery was mapped across multiple factors, including (as with Kwong above) the ethnic composition of social networks and endogamy. She observed that "social network characteristics may explain the mechanism by which divergent patterns of cultural and identity incorporation emerge" (2002: 212). However, while she included survey questions about participant religious identity and practice, she fails to account for religious communities as a significant factor in identity negotiation and assimilation patterns. In her closing remarks, she does call for further qualitative analysis, which my project addresses. The need for such research is apparent when we consider that Ooka found high degrees of acculturation on the basis of language acquisition and decreased interest in Chinese cultural content, and how these findings interact with my participants' simultaneous adoption of Canadian

identity markers while espousing a sense of marginalization in Canadian culture on account of being religious (see Chapter 4).

Kenneth Huynh's thesis (2009) represents an attempt to fill the gap identified by Ooka. His project parallels my own in that he interviewed Chinese Canadians from Toronto aged 22-34. Huynh's primary interest was the negotiation of "Chinese Canadian" identity by his participants, and their attempts to address the ambivalence surrounding the category. His analysis centers on his gendered findings – namely, that the feminization of Chinese identity contributes to second generation, economically secure Chinese Canadian women being more comfortable with the hyphenated identity marker than their male counterparts. While this finding has interesting implications for my own sample, Huynh neglects religion or religious institutions in Toronto as sites of identity formation.

One final point of comparison is the work done by Enoch Wong (2015), whose research paralleled my own in terms of sample and timeline. In fact, we met several times to discuss our projects and share preliminary findings. Wong's PhD research was conducted in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University, and therefore his primary concern was with identifying the key practices of leaders in mediating the transition of young, second-generation Chinese Canadians from first generation congregations to their current communities. Interviewing thirteen individuals from five different Canadian cities, he limited his sample to young adults and the congregations they attended at the time. These included a second-generation, English-speaking group, a "Pan-Asian" group, a multiethnic group, and a Caucasian group. Wong focused his analysis on the actions taken by leaders in Chinese congregations and leaders in the alternative congregations chosen by second-generation participants. He emphasizes congregational experience exclusively and skews toward those who are leaving ethnically bounded

congregations (without discussing the size and vibrancy of the Chinese evangelical community).

My study attempts to understand the social factors that have contributed to this community's

formation but then also evaluate its strength in a particular locale and how this shapes identity

formation.

Several studies address the apparent exodus of young Chinese Canadians from the

evangelical churches started by earlier Chinese immigrants. One example of this is found in the

dissertation of James Evans (2008), who adopts the term "silent exodus," coined by Helen Lee

(1996) in an evangelical periodical, to claim that the Chinese second-generation is quietly leaving

immigrant churches. However, Evans' work is almost entirely anecdotal. Unfortunately, in

addition to citing American-born Chinese individuals in his discussion of the Canadian context,

Evans fails to offer sufficient evidence to substantiate his claims.

A more detailed description of this same narrative can be found in Matthew Todd's

monograph (2015), which outlines the "ministry crisis" facing leaders in Chinese Canadian

churches. As with Evans, this project fails to provide clear and compelling quantitative data for

this crisis or defection. Todd's objective is to critique leadership models that do not embrace

change and equip leaders with strategies for retaining second-generation individuals. His sample

contains ministers in English-speaking ministries, some adults who have stayed in those

ministries, and some adults who have left. The primary challenge in evaluating Todd's data

derives from the demographics of these groups not being disclosed. It is unclear how they were

selected, where they live, and how old they are. The study's energy focuses on taking the

qualitative interview data and identifying common themes that existing leaders must attend to in

order to prevent further defection. Todd does provide several reference points for the anecdotal

reports of this phenomenon, but his qualitative data do not provide sufficient insight into what is

happening and why. Responses from his participants parallel some of the themes I discussed with young adults in Toronto, with the key distinction being that my participants continue to have some connection with the ethnically Chinese communities that shaped them. At the very least, my project provides concrete data that contrasts with these claims, and this points to the need for further investigation of how religious adherence and practice changes in successive immigrant generations. My argument is that the strength and vitality of communities and organizations in the Toronto area do have a significant impact on the ethnic and religious identities of many young adults, and only comparative, longitudinal studies with other groups in other regions could confirm if this is a sustained trend or an anomaly.

1.3 Conceptualizing my participants

My objective in pursuing a doctoral research project in religious studies was rooted primarily in addressing sociological questions of if and how Canadian society and religion might be changing as its immigration patterns have changed. Coinciding with this sociological curiosity was a secondary personal motivation born out of my own religious experiences in evangelical and Pentecostal environments in several Canadian provinces – experiences that exposed me to the growing ethno-cultural diversity in some of these religious groups. These interests sparked the foundational research questions of the project, but in no way was I operating from the assumption that these questions were unique to a recent socio-historical environment. The ethno-cultural diversity of Canadian Christian churches in fact has been a long-standing reality (Clark 1968; Rawlyk 1990; Bramadat and Seljak 2008). However, two forces—secularization and immigration—have dramatically changed the context in which ethno-cultural, racial, and religious diversity interact. Fading colonial, nationalist, and traditional forms of Christianity (imported in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries) may be eclipsed in the next few decades—

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first, by an increasingly secular public culture and, second, by re-imported forms of the Christian identity from the global east and south. The Canadian religious landscape of the late 20th and early 21st century has undergone significant transformations as a combination of cultural changes brought on by industrialization, secularization, and heightened socio-religious pluralization have shifted the major Christian groups (Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian) from the cultural centre. Bishops, prelates, and religious officials no longer set and control the moral or socio-cultural compass of the nation. In addition to this displacement, we see a growing (and unprecedented) number of Canadians – especially young Canadians – self-identifying as non-religious. This appears to indicate waning socialization practices across most religious groups in line with Clarke and MacDonald's recent research (2017), to the extent that many children are not walking away from religious institutions so much as never setting foot inside them in the first place.

Of course, there are exceptions to this phenomenon, one being the efforts of evangelical Christian groups to "hold on" to their young. Reginald Bibby has acknowledged that the heart of evangelical Canadians' ability to maintain their percentage of religious adherence in Canada is tied to their socialization practices; they hold on to their children better than most others (2011, 2012). This claim has gone largely un-examined in the sociological literature, though it is credible on the surface given that, unlike the mainline churches, conservative evangelical churches are among those that have maintained their levels of membership and participation, as Clarke and Macdonald's discussion of "other Protestants" indicates (2017: 121). The other significant factor for the maintenance of evangelical numbers in the Canadian Census counts is the immigration of Christians, mostly from the global South. These new citizens have joined the ranks of Canada's religious groups in a myriad of ways: filtering into already-existing parishes

and congregations, starting their own language-specific groups, or initiating forms of social activism that engage the broader society. These social processes mirror the actions of, for example, Irish Catholics, German Lutherans, and Dutch Reformed Christians in earlier generations who adapted and adopted new strategies within their religious organizations as they moved from immigrant settlers to citizens.

My awareness of these social and historical factors played a key role in how I attempted to approach my participants while avoiding what Peter Li named as a "conceptual bias" in the study of Chinese Canadians (1998: 10). Li's contention is that Chinese immigrants and residents have been objects of studies rooted in ethno-racial bias and orientalism because they are "representatives of a remote and ancient culture" (1998: 10). Rey Chow has expressed a similar concern over how "against the current façade of welcoming non-Western others," there is still a "tendency to stigmatize and ghettoize non-Western cultures precisely by way of ethnic, national labels" (1998: 4). These tendencies, if unnoticed and uncorrected, are harmful because they inform a perspective that fails to see the Chinese community as an "integral component of Canadian society" (Li, P. 1998: 11). Consequently, I attempt to frame my participants as cultural contributors to the Canadian social landscape by pointing to their active religious practice in a secularizing culture and their retention of ethnic boundaries in an ethnically diverse environment. These factors do not single my participants out as unique, because the essence of Canadian multiculturalism is rooted in the conviction that citizens are free to engage, value, and employ cultural histories and practices under the auspices of an ever-emerging Canadian public culture. In other words, Chinese Canadians are trying to do what Canadian immigrants have been doing for centuries. However, this fact should not lead us to ignore the unique qualities of the Chinese

Canadian evangelical experience. I highlight this unique experience not in order to marginalize this population but to further our understanding of this particular Canadian phenomenon.

This project, however, also interacts with the ongoing conversation around the contested nature of Chineseness. Rey Chow has argued that notions of what it means to be Chinese are rooted in a particular form of imagined history, in that "the dead and the living are separated by what amounts to an entangled class and race boundary" where pure Chinese identity belongs to those in the past and today individuals are forced to build identity with some measure of that untainted quality combined with their own "contaminating contacts with the foreign" (1998: 17, author's emphasis). Chun (1996) astutely points to how this reality has played out in the 20th century contest of culture between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, posing the question, "to what extent do disenfranchised voices from the periphery offer alternative conceptions of identity or of 'Chineseness'?" (1996: 120)

One answer to this query is found in the personal and embodied perspective of Ien Ang, summarized in her assertion that while "traces of Asianness cannot be erased completely from the westernized Asian" (2001: 9), there is a "flexible indeterminacy and contestability of Chineseness as a signifier for identity" and how it can "be remade and reshaped in different conditions of diaspora" (2013: 18). However, Ang also speaks about the difficulty she encounters in trying to assert her identity as an Indonesian-Dutch-Australian of Chinese decent in a world where China has emerged as a global power in the late 20th century. She points to how China's foreign policy engages the Chinese diaspora as a "conduit of investment, technological innovation, and behind-the-scenes diplomacy," and describes her own experience of being "subjected to a meaning of Chineseness that is irrevocably tied to the interests of the Chinese nation-state" (2013: 23). While she admits that Chineseness has to "refer back to some historical source and cultural continuity,"

she argues that this does not require "diasporic Chineseness…to be fastened to the Chinese motherland" (2013: 24).

The work of Chow, Chun, and Ang has not gone unchallenged, as seen in Longxi Zhang's rebuttal that while China is not a fixed subject and has seen its territories shift over time, "its central regions have remained relatively stable, and it has a unified written language, which has a strong cohesive force and makes it possible for its vast population to stay within the same 'linguistic community' despite the diversity of their spoken languages" (2015: 193-194). Zhang's broader point is that critiques of Chineseness (naming Chow, Chun, and Ang, among others) often impose western theoretical and historical constructs on a culture that has its own storied lineage and traditions of knowledge-making. He argues that we should not be surprised to find that "most Chinese, particularly Chinese intellectuals, would have a strong sense of history and tradition" without questioning "the veracity of China as a culture, a nation, and a state," an ideal that he works to solidify while cautioning against claims that China is the source of a pan-Asian regional identity (2015: 194).

With this broader and ongoing conversation in mind, I use the term Chinese Canadian to describe the participants in this study. I do so in parallel fashion to recent studies of Chinese diaspora that are aware of historical and the contemporary disagreements over "Chineseness" but then use the term and category "Chinese Canadian" to engage a particular sample (Skirbekk et al. 2012; Yu 2013; Wong, L. 2017; Mu & Pang 2019). The term is helpful in that it distinguishes Chinese immigrants and citizens of Canada from other groups in the Chinese diaspora, while acknowledging the history of racial categorization and discrimination aimed at these individuals. In Canadian multicultural discourse, the culture of minority groups is often defined as "ethnic," while the culture of the majority is assumed to be neutral or normative. Moreover, I admit that

my own European heritage and participation in the majority culture could prevent me from seeing how the terms used to define some forms of ethnic Canadian identity automatically imply a hierarchy of status. The truth is that this terminology is the product of historical development, and my project uses it alongside an acknowledgement of both cultural pluralism and shared identity under a commonly held nationalism. For example, this pluralism has been reified in how Canadian census data is collected, i.e., how people can claim multiple ethnic heritage markers, including but not limited to Chinese. However, this is not to say that the existence and use of these terms precludes racist and prejudicial practices in Canadian society. The following chapter references how Chinese Canadians have experienced a litany of tragic abuses. I acknowledge this history, while also asserting that it does not denote a 'not-yet-Canadian' status – as many of my participants told me.

Ironically, I cannot think of a single participant who, unprompted, self-identified using the term Chinese Canadian. Most, if ascribing Chinese identity to themselves at all, simply used the term "Chinese" or "CBC" (Canadian-born Chinese, the acronym echoes that of the Canadian Broadcast Corporation, Canada's public radio and television broadcaster). Consequently, my rationale for using Chinese Canadian allows me to engage the broader scholarship on the politics of diaspora, race, and ethnicity, and provides a framework to acknowledge and make room for hybridized forms of identity, including the notion that a person might not be comfortable with exclusivist or delimiting ethnic terms.

I discuss my theory of ethnic identity further in Chapter Three, but want to acknowledge that within the People's Republic of China (PRC) alone today there are more than fifty recognized subethnicities. Moreover, those who identify as "Chinese" in Canada may also come from a wide variety of countries, including Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. Within

such a framework, the term "Chinese" is a collective noun with multiple sub-divisions, which Zhang has argued did not "constitute an obstacle to Chinese identity" historically (2013: 201). Hence, it can also be assumed that the category Chinese Canadian does not capture the ethnic diversity among Canadians who claim a Chinese heritage. Indeed, Figure 1 shows that my participants are not uniform in their knowledge of and attachment to particular Chinese subethnicities, categories which did not play a major role in this project because they did not appear to be important to my respondents.

However, it is important to acknowledge the strong influence of migration from Hong Kong (and southern provinces) on my sample and the first-generation Chinese immigrant religious communities they interact with. This is a factor that I allude to at various points throughout the dissertation. It is significant because, as Allen Chun has argued, before 1950 there was little to no notion within Hong Kong's population of being distinct as "Hongkongers." A different Hong Kong identity emerged later as the Republic of China and The People's Republic of China battled over national identities and the British "colonial government took an active role in promoting economic growth in Hong Kong…deliberately steering Hong Kong away from ongoing national conflicts" (Chun 1996: 120-121; Bosco 2005). The Chinese political mainstream was marginalized while rampant capitalist growth replaced the tension that might have been felt with earlier colonial practices, leading to "a peculiar sense of Chineseness…that radically differed from the assumed synonymity of one family, one people, one civilization, and one polity cultivated elsewhere" (Chun 1996: 121-122). This historical development likely played a role in the composition of churches and organizations started in the GTA by first-generation immigrant Chinese evangelicals starting during and after the 1960s, and continues to through the ongoing divisions between Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking congregations.

However, no one in my sample self-identified as "Hongkonger." The closest any participant came was in my final recorded interview, where the young respondent answered my question about his family being connected to a particular Chinese subethncity by saying

> So, for us it would be Hong Kong. So, for us…we would talk about, like…for us, you know it's kind of sad to say this like this, but for us Hong Kong, we do differentiate ourselves from the rest of China…just because of what had happened. So, whether we liked it to end or not, we always have…like, inside we feel that we're probably better educated, probably richer in the sense that we understand more about the cultures of the world, probably speak English better, probably if we were to go on a trip with the rest of China to the rest of the world people would want to talk to us more than...So sometimes, you know, unfortunately people from Hong Kong they do kind of look down on the people from the other parts of China (F14-6).

Unlike this interviewee most participants could not name a specific ethnic identity (or did not know of one), often just referred to Hong Kong as the place of their parents' experience and departure, and rarely emphasized that these markers had any bearing on their lived experience in Canada. In this way, my project findings resemble those of a recent study in Vancouver that reported some intra-ethnic tension within the Chinese community there but found that many of their 1.5-2nd generation participants "do not have a strong identification with (sic) particular group of Chinese" (Yan et al. 2019: 462).

    With that said, I use a framework similar to researchers such as Hiller and Chow who, relying on Zhou and Bankston (1998) and Rumbaut (1996), contend that "ethnicity must be viewed not so much as a label, a tradition, or a national origin but a system of social relations in which parental relations and socialization, and kinship and friendship networks shape the nature and pace of assimilation" (2005: 80). For most of my subjects, these networks were expressed most tangibly in the language dichotomy of the Chinese Canadian community in the GTA. Most early immigrant waves from China (and those that shaped the early Chinese Canadian evangelical community), as previously mentioned, came from the southern provinces and Hong Kong, and

Figure 1 - Interview participant demographics

Site	Gender	Age	Place of Birth[1]	Parents' ethnicity or region/city of origin; immigration year, if known[2]	Parents' religious affiliation[3]	Marital status[4]	Occupation	Education	Length of interview (minutes)
TCC	Male	26	Toronto	F: Guangzhou; 1980s* M: Hakka/Indonesian; 1980s*	F: none M: none	Single	Student	Business	114
	Male	25	Halifax	F: unknown M: Hong Kong; 1980s*	F: Buddhist; Christian M: Buddhist; Christian	Single	Unemployed	MA	105
	Female	23	Toronto	F: Korean/Chinese; 1970s M: Canton; 1970s	F: Adventist; Christian M: none; Christian	Single	Advertising	Bachelor's, Applied Sc	120
	Male	23	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1960s M: Hainan/Hong Kong; 1960s	F: none; Christian M: Christian	Single	Student	Architecture	94
	Male	27	Hong Kong (4; 1990)	F: Hong Kong; 1980s M: Hong Kong; 1980s	F: none M: none	Single, engaged	Youth pastor	BSc, MDiv	56
	Male	28	Toronto	F: Shanghai/Hong Kong; 1970s M: Hainan/Hong Kong; 1970s*	F: none M: Christian	Single	Engineer	Master's, Engineering	84
	Female	28	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1960s* M: Canton/Hong Kong; 1960s*	F: none; Christian M: Christian	Single	Teacher, therapist	MA, MEd	120
	Female	22	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1980s* M: Hong Kong; 1980s	F: none M: Buddhist	Single	Student	Geography, Education	82
	Female	28	Toronto	F: Canton M: Hong Kong; 1977*	F: none; Christian M: Christian	Single	Physical Therapist	MSc	168
	Female	22	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1989 M: Hong Kong; 1989	F: none M: none; Christian	Single	Student	Master's, Pharmacy	146
	Female	24	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1980s* M: Hong Kong; 1980s	F: none M: none	Single	Registered Nurse	BSc	108

[1] The participant's age in years at the time of arrival in Canada is placed in parentheses, along with their year of immigration.

[2] F denotes father. M denotes mother. Most participants were not aware of the exact year their parents immigrated, but in many instances I was able to extrapolate to within a couple of years based on interview transcripts. An asterisk (*) denotes that they came as students to Canada/US.

[3] F denotes father. M denotes mother. These categories reflect participant description of their parents' religious identity. I have separated different categories with a semicolon to denote instances where interviewees referred to their parents as converting from one tradition to another. The category of "none" includes all instances where participants spoke about their parents as atheist, as practicing no religion, and where they alluded to varied practices or traditions but did not name a religion (hinting at how religion is a contested category in Chinese cultures).

[4] The length of any participant's current marriage (in years) is placed in parentheses. The age (in years) of any participant's children are also placed in parentheses.

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	Gender	Age	Birthplace	Parents' origin	Parents' religion	Marital status	Occupation	Education	
	Female	22	San Francisco, CA (4; 1995)	F: Shanghai M: unstated	F: none M: none	Single	Product Developer	Bachelor's, Business	112
	Female	33	Toronto	F: Shantou/Hong Kong; 1967* M: Hong Kong; 1972*	F: Christian M: Buddhist; Christian	Married (6); two children, (4, 2)	Homemaker	Master's, corporate tax	87
	Male	25	Toronto	F: Zhongshan/Hong Kong; 1970s M: Hong Kong; 1970s	F: none; Christian M: Christian	Single	Engineer	BSc	118
	Male	31	Toronto	F: Han/Hong Kong; 1970s* M: Hong Kong; 1970s*	F: Christian M: Christian	Married (3)	Insurance broker	BA	102
	Male	25	Hong Kong (15; 2001)	F: Hong Kong; 2001 M: Hong Kong; 2001	F: Christian; Taoist M: Christian	Single	Graduate Student, MDiv	BA, MA	68
	Male	33	Toronto	F: Hong Kong M: Hong Kong	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Married (5), divorced	Chinese medicine practitioner	BSc	127
	Male	33	Vancouver	F: Hong Kong M: Hong Kong	F: none M: none	Married (3); one child (1)	Employee of provincial government	Bachelor's, Economics	70
	Female	29	Edmonton	F: Hong Kong; 1970s* M: Hong Kong; 1970s*	F: Christian M: Christian	Married (3)	Administrator	Master's, Child Study & Education	102
UTCCF	Male	21	Toronto	F: Canton; 1980s M: Taiwanese/Hong Kong; 1980s	F: none M: none	Single	Student	Social Sciences	123
	Male	20	Vancouver	F: Han/Hong Kong; 1980s*	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Single	Student	Chemistry	94
	Male	19	Hong Kong (2; 1997)	F: Hong Kong; 1997 M: Hong Kong; 1997	F: Buddhist M: Christian; Buddhist	Single	Student	Political Science	101
	Male	22	Toronto	F: Toisanese/Hong Kong; 1960s M: Hong Kong; 1970s	F: Christian M: none	Single	Graduate Student, Engineering	Bachelor's, Engineering	103
	Male	18	Markham	M: Han/Shanghai; 1980s*	M: none; Christian	Single	Student	Social Sciences	103
	Male	23	Xinjiang province (6; 1997)	F: Xinjiang; 1997 M: Xinjiang; 1997	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Single	Graduate Student, Engineering	Bachelor's, Engineering	79
	Male	23	Shanghai (8; 1999)	F: Shanghai; 1999 M: Xinjiang/Shanghai; 1999	F: none M: none	Single, dating	Engineer	Bachelor's, Applied Science	82
	Male	25	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1980s* M: Toishanese/Hong Kong; 1980s*	F: Christian M: Christian	Single	Graduate Student, MDiv	Bachelor's	101

	Male	20	Scarborough	F: Hong Kong M: Guangzhou/Hong Kong; 1980s	F: Christian M: Christian	Single	Unemployed	Diploma, music production	64
	Male	19	Markham	F: Han/Hong Kong; 1980s* M: born in Toronto	F: none; Christian M: Christian	Single	Student	Bachelor's, Engineering	107
	Female	19	Hong Kong (5; 2000)	F: Cantonese/Hong Kong; 1998 M: Cantonese/Hong Kong; 2000	F: Christian; none M: none	Single	Student	Bachelor's, Psychology	114
	Female	22	Chengdu (9; 2003)	F: Manchu/Chengdu; 1990s	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Single, dating	Student	Bachelor's, Engineering	79
	Male	21	Germany (7; 2000)	F: Wuhan; 2000 M: Wuhan; 2000	F: none M: Christian	Single	Student	BA, Social Sciences	101
Urbana	Male	24	North York	F: Hong Kong; 1980s* M: Hong Kong; 1980s*	F: Christian M: none; Christian	Single	Student ministry	Master's, Geography	92
	Male	35	Hong Kong (8; 1985)	F: Hong Kong; 1985 M: Hong Kong; 1985	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Single	Youth Pastor	MDiv	132
	Male	20	Guiyang (5; 1998)	F: Han/Guiyang; 1998 M: Han/Guiyang; 1998	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Single, dating	Student	Bachelor's, Accounting	97
	Male	24	Toronto	F: Toisanese/ Hoyping/HK; 1980s* M: born in Toronto	F: none M: none; Christian	Single, dating	Graduate Student, Optometry	BSc	130
	Female	20	Toronto	F: Toisanese; born in Alberta M: Hakka/Malaysian; 1970s	F: Buddhist; Christian M: none; Christian	Single	Student	French	130
	Female	27	Hong Kong (4; 1990)	F: Hong Kong; 1990 M: Hong Kong; 1990	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Single	Student Ministry	Bachelor's, Applied Science	137
	Male	18	Toronto	F: Shanghai/Hong Kong; 1980s M: Hong Kong; 1980s*	F: Christian M: Christian	Single	Student	Bachelor's, Business	89
TDC	Male	33	Hong Kong (10; 1991)	F: Hong Kong; 1991 M: Hong Kong; 1991	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Married (two months)	Pastoral intern; MDiv student	Bachelor's in Business	60
	Male	25	Manila (12; 2001)	F: Han/Fujian; 2001 M: Han/Fujian; 2001	F: none; Christian M: Christian	Single	Graduate Student, MDiv	BSc	129
	Male	30	Toronto	F: Hakka/Hong Kong; 1970s M: Hong Kong; 1970s	F: none M: Christian; none	Married (4)	Public servant; MDiv student	Bachelor's, Business Admin	89
	Female	26	Toronto	F: Han/Hong Kong; 1970s M: Han/Hong Kong; 1960s	F: Buddhist; Christian M: Buddhist; Christian	Married (4)	Graduate Student, Social Work	BA, Bachelor's in Social Work	110
	Female	21	Toronto	F: Toisanese/Hong Kong; 1970s M: Hong Kong; 1980s	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Single, dating	Student	Bachelor's, Journalism	67

	Male	23	Kunming (12; 2003)	F: unknown M: Han/Kunming; 1990s	M: none; Christian	Single	Graduate Student, Math	BSc	71
	Male	26	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1988 M: unstated	F: Christian M: Christian	Single	Video design	Bachelor's, Marketing	132
TUC	Male	27	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1980s* M: Hong Kong; 1980s*	F: none; Adventist M: none; Adventist	Married (2)	Entrepreneur	BSc	182
	Male	23	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1989 M: Hong Kong; 1989	F: Christian M: Christian	Single	Technician	BSc	77
	Female	29	Hong Kong (4; 1989)	F: Hong Kong; 1989 M: Hong Kong; 1989	F: none M: none; Christian	Married	Flight attendant	Bachelor's, Psychology	53
	Female	25	Toronto	F: Hong Kong; 1980s M: Hong Kong; 1980s	F: none; Christian M: none; Christian	Married (seven months)	Education, laid off	Bachelor's, Early Child Education	114
	Male	29	Hong Kong (11; 1996)	F: Hong Kong; 1996 M: Hong Kong; 1996	F: none M: Christian	Married (seven months)	Entrepreneur	Bachelor's, Technology	75

consequently spoke Cantonese. Much of the current immigrant flow to and from the People's

Republic of China now is made of those who speak Mandarin. I will discuss how these language

groupings shape the evangelical communities in the GTA later but will note now that Chinese

language competency was one of the only regional ethnic factors that my participants

acknowledged as being significant for their identity formation.

Language competency differences in my sample are shaped primarily by my participants'

second-generation immigrant status. With this definition, my project incorporated those born in a

North American culture while having one parent who was born in a Chinese culture, and those

who immigrated before the age of twelve.5 This approach mirrors that of Beyer who investigated

the experience of young Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus in Canada—generally including both

1.5 and 2nd generations as those who "grow up adapting" (2013a: 5). It is worth noting that the

term "first-generation" generally refers to individuals that immigrate as adults, though it is

sometimes confused with the "first" generation born in a new culture.

Just as there are many issues in understanding an ethnic identity marker such as Chinese

Canadian, defining evangelicalism is an exercise in categorization that is somewhat arbitrary.

Some have proposed that we do so by identifying core beliefs (done famously by David

Bebbington, 1989), and in fact almost anyone who writes in the field employs some form of this

approach. Some have aligned the terminology with particular socio-political movements (such as

the Religious Right, or opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage here in Canada), which

becomes problematic due to the fact that evangelicals are often found along a very wide

continuum of expressions and ethical stances (Reimer 2003). It is important to employ the

category with a simultaneous eye on the historical developments of various traditions (in Britain,

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5 Rubén Rumbaut classifies those in the first group as technically 'second-generation,' and those in the second as 1.5 generation (2004).

the United States, and now in the global South and East) so as to first allow for self-identification ("they are if they say they are," following Tweed, 1998) but then also to account for the dynamism of particular social movements and groups that might have been or still are identified under the heading. I will note here that the vast majority of my participants are from Christian backgrounds (where at least one parent identifies with and participates in a Christian community), with only a few sharing a story of conversion with me. It is significant that my almost all of my participants described and regularly participated in a thoroughly evangelical understanding of religious identity, contrasting with the nominal and socially expedient connections that Chinese immigrants often formed with Christian groups historically (Wang 2006; Marshall 2011, 2014). In light of these factors, I identify my participants as evangelical on the basis of their involvement with church and organizations with historical ties to the evangelical tradition in North American Christianity and because of their identification with the term during our conversations. I discuss this further in Chapter Four.

In connection with my participants' identity as evangelicals, this project considers the methodological quandary of classifying churches as Chinese or Chinese Canadian. As previously discussed, Chineseness continues to be a contested category, and the subethnic diversity in my sample illustrates that we must be careful to not assign unexamined labels to a broad population. All Chinese churches in the GTA are (likely) multi-ethnic, by definition, which is why I considered using the term pan-Chinese to describe the Chinese Canadian congregations and ministries I encountered. I chose not to given that I had limited and/or anecdotal data by which to make this assertion, and because congregations themselves generally use the label "Chinese" as an overarching descriptor (as seen in the annual TCEMF directory). Consequently, I classify churches as Chinese or Chinese Canadian in this dissertation if they self-identify as such, or if

their attendance is comprised of a strong ethnic Chinese majority. I use the category "multi-ethnic" later in the project to describe congregations in the GTA that do not self-identify themselves with a particular ethnic group and whose attendance does not contain a Chinese Canadian majority.

Finally, the "young adult" descriptor is applied to my identity axes of religion and ethnicity. In limiting my sample to 18-35 year-olds, I draw on the categories used by social scientists to refer to the early years of personal and professional development as an individual leaves their nuclear family. Depending on the study, age ranges for this category can fluctuate, and therefore to constrain my sample I drew on the work of those studying "emerging adulthood" (Arnett 2004; Maira and Soep 2005; Bendit and Hahn-Bleibtreu 2008; Arnett et al. 2011; Smith 2011). This refers to those coming of age at a time when we have seen a significant rise in the average age in which people marry and become parents, and where their experience is marked by identity negotiation, instability, and possibility (Arnett 2004: 5, 8). Consequently, my definition of "young adult" included those aged 18-35 to incorporate a broad range of factors (such as education experience, career developments, marital status, and parenthood) and allow for the potential that my sample might not fit the profile of an "average" Canadian young adult. However, the low marriage and parenting rates I found in my sample may suggest that this age range was in line with both Canadian averages[6] and parallel research done with other young adult or emerging adulthood populations (Beyer and Ramji 2013; Beyer et al. 2017).

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[6] Milan (2013) reported that (on average) Canadian women and men marry at 29.6 and 31 years of age respectively, and that the proportion of Canadian young adults aged 25 to 29 who have never married rose from 26 percent in 1981 to 73.1 percent in 2011. Additionally, women aged 30-34 have a higher fertility rate than those aged 25-29, and the average age of mothers at childbirth has increased from 29 in 2001 to 30.8 in 2016 (Provencher et al. 2018).

1.4 Outline of chapters

This study begins by providing a brief historical overview of Chinese experience in 20th Century Canada, acknowledging the discriminatory policies and systemic racism that shaped the lives of many Chinese migrants. I then move to a discussion of the Chinese Canadian community in the Greater Toronto Area before focusing on the development of the evangelical, Chinese Canadian community of my research. The expansive, primarily suburban, network of congregations and ministries that my participants negotiate mirrors the growth and distribution of the Chinese community in Toronto, and so a unique historical perspective is necessary in order to understand the ethno-religious vibrancy I encountered.

Chapter Three moves to a detailed discussion of the theoretical lenses that informed the study, accounting for the influence of global factors on my young participants, and firmly situating this research in the fields of social constructivism, ethnic adaptation, and religious differentiation. These theoretical lenses help to explain the dynamic ways that some young Chinese Canadians situate themselves both as members of an ethnic and religious minority in the surrounding culture. I conclude by outlining my multi-site ethnographic methodology, which attempted to account for the ways that individuals use multiple inputs in their religious lives.

The fourth chapter begins my presentation of the interview and ethnographic data. Here I look at my participants as evangelical Christians – both in ethnically bounded communities and other evangelical churches with significant ethnic minority representation. One of the chief findings of my research is that the tension my participants claim they feel with the surrounding society is based on being a particular kind of religious person rather than being part of an ethnic minority. I explore their responses in relation to the broader question of how evangelical identity is constructed in North America. While Chapter Four focuses on how my participants are

distinguished from other Canadians by their evangelical identity, Chapter Five moves to an evaluation of my participants as being ethnically Chinese in the Canadian evangelical community. Utilizing Karner's notion of ethnicity in everyday life, I describe how three specific sites in the network of GTA ministries and churches provide havens for my participants' ethnic identity negotiation, and how they provide safe spaces that form a conduit from childhood into young adulthood for many.

My sixth chapter attempts to outline the issues that my participants encounter as members of a second-generation immigrant cohort. Here my work parallels previous research that investigated the factors of language acquisition and endogamy in other Chinese immigrant populations. I consider the ways that the Chinese evangelical community in the GTA influences my participants' experience of these factors in their negotiation of ethnic identity, but then, in addition, how some in my sample push for generational separation from their parents by embracing what they feel to be more authentic forms of Christian belief and practice. As in other places, I point to the significant role played by Americanized, evangelical sources in how my participants assert their religious identities.

Following this presentation of data, I conclude the project by pointing to the fluid nature of Chinese Canadian identity in evangelical communities, and arguing for the significance of the second-generation, English-speaking environments I encountered to the study of religious groups in Canada. These phenomena are conceptualized in a list of five combinations of identity formation I observed in my participants. The chapter ends with a consideration of possible sites and themes for future research.

What each chapter helps to build is a summary of significant findings gathered in the research. First, the interconnectedness of evangelical Chinese Canadian ministries and

organizations features prominently, especially because of how it shapes the ethno-religious

experience of my participants. This network was an unexpected discovery that required a shift in

methodology and perspective. Related to this is the connection found between the change in

immigration patterns from China to Canada in the last quarter of the 20th century and the growth

and development of the Chinese Canadian community in the GTA – a community that shapes and

enhances the ethnic and religious experiences of the second-generation I studied.

These findings set the stage for the assertions made by my participants: namely, that they

say they feel distance from the surrounding Canadian culture because of their religious identity,

that they use and value a variety of ethnically bounded groups or experiences to strengthen their

religious identity, and that they frequently distinguish themselves from their parents in an effort

to strengthen their religious identity. The fact that these Chinese Canadian young adults draw

extensively from conservative American evangelicalism in this identity formation was also an

unanticipated discovery. This reliance, I discovered, may cause tension between the first and

second-generation immigrant cohorts. Given that my participants have significant social capital

and resources at their disposal to form and shape their distinctly second-generation Chinese

Canadian religious communities, this trend toward forms of conservative religious practice and

ideology is notable for our study of religious practice in young Canadian populations. It is all the

more noteworthy given that I observed young Chinese Canadians acting as a significant growth

factor for the generic, multi-ethnic conservative evangelical churches they attend when leaving

their Chinese congregations. These phenomena, combined with continuing immigration from

China to Canada, shows that we must take into account the Chinese Canadian community as a

source of persisting Christian membership and participation in years to come.

My research shows that Chinese Canadian institutions are central to the identity formation of Chinese Canadian evangelical young adults. However, to understand the nature, scope, mission, and culture of these institutions, it is essential to know how and why they were established. Thus, we now turn to an historical overview of the establishment of the Chinese Canadian community in Canada, its concentration in the GTA and, more specifically, the emergence of a complex, widespread, and vibrant web of evangelical churches, networks, and organizations around Toronto.

2. A History of the Evangelical Chinese Canadian Community in Toronto

The purpose of this chapter is to position the second-generation, Chinese Canadian identity formation of my participants against a backdrop of historical migration and its socio-political implications. This positioning provides justification for my assertion that the second-generation individuals I observed are the inheritors of significant social capital derived through the negotiation of racial and ethnic identity by previous generations of Chinese Canadians. This social capital is one of the chief contributing factors to the flexibility granted to and exhibited by second-generation Chinese Canadians as they shape their identity as ethno-religious citizens. My discussion will proceed through a brief overview of the changes to Canada's immigration policy in the 20th century and the resultant immigrant cohorts, how incoming Chinese migrants have contributed to the significant demographic shifts in the Greater Toronto Area, and then concludes by outlining the development of the Chinese Canadian evangelical subculture in Toronto that directly informs the lives of my participants.

The history of Chinese immigration to Canada, like that of many other immigrant communities, is marked by the themes of injustice, sacrifice, and ingenuity. From the earliest accounts of a few male Chinese workers coming to Canada to the current annual practice of thousands of Chinese nationals entering under the auspices of Canada's emerging relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC),[7] the story of Chinese fortitude and resiliency has been documented for several decades (see Figures 2 and 3, which contrast early arrivals from the PRC with more recent trends). Canada's history of institutional racism and, for much of the 20th

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[7] As an example, see the report of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's visit to China in late 2014 (http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2014/11/08/canada-china-joint-list-outcomes-2014; accessed October 4, 2015. Harper's economic courting of Chinese trade partnerships has received some criticism, for example: http://business.financialpost.com/diane-francis/canada-china-trade-deal-is-too-one-sided; accessed October 4, 2015; and http://www.vancouversun.com/news/canada+must+serious+about+relationship+with+china+transition+document /11407131/story.html; accessed October 4, 2015.

century, discriminatory practice toward Chinese migrants is known, though the full extent of the emotional and personal price paid by earlier generations is only just now coming to light through the efforts of authors and filmmakers alike.[8] It is no coincidence that these stories are also surfacing at a time when the Chinese Canadian community has established itself firmly within Canada's tapestry of cultural pluralism and has begun to assert itself as a participant in the development of that pluralism.

The participants in my study did not invoke these powerful, historical stories of travel, diaspora, distance, marginalization and displacement as part of their own personal narratives. In fact, they maintained a notable silence on the history of Chinese immigration and appeared to self-identify almost exclusively as 'post'-immigrant. By this I mean that they clearly differentiated their experience from that of their parents and asserted a strong connection to their experience in Canadian society in contrast to their distance from Chinese culture and language.

The location of my participants in the social fabric of Canada's largest urban centre, with its vibrant, pluralistic ethos has contributed to their self-understanding. However, I believe that a brief historical analysis of how the Chinese Canadian community has been shaped by national immigration practices and how changes in those practices contributed to the development of an expansive Chinese evangelical community in Toronto will shed light on the significant social forces that reinforce the negotiation of their second-generation, ethno-religious identities.

2.1 Coming to Canada

The first Chinese migrants arrived in Canada around 1858, ten years before Canadian Confederation (Li, P. 1998). Many of these came on the heels of others who had made the

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[8] For example, see Karen Cho's film documentary "In the Shadow of Gold Mountain", or Jari Osbourne's "Unwanted Soldiers". There are numerous literary works that touch on these themes, including May Wong's *A Cowherd in Paradise* (2012), Chong's *Lives of the Family* (2013), and Janice Wong's *Chow: From China to Canada: Memories of Food and Family* (2005).

Figure 2[9] - Immigrants from People's Republic of China arriving in the GTA: 1961-1970
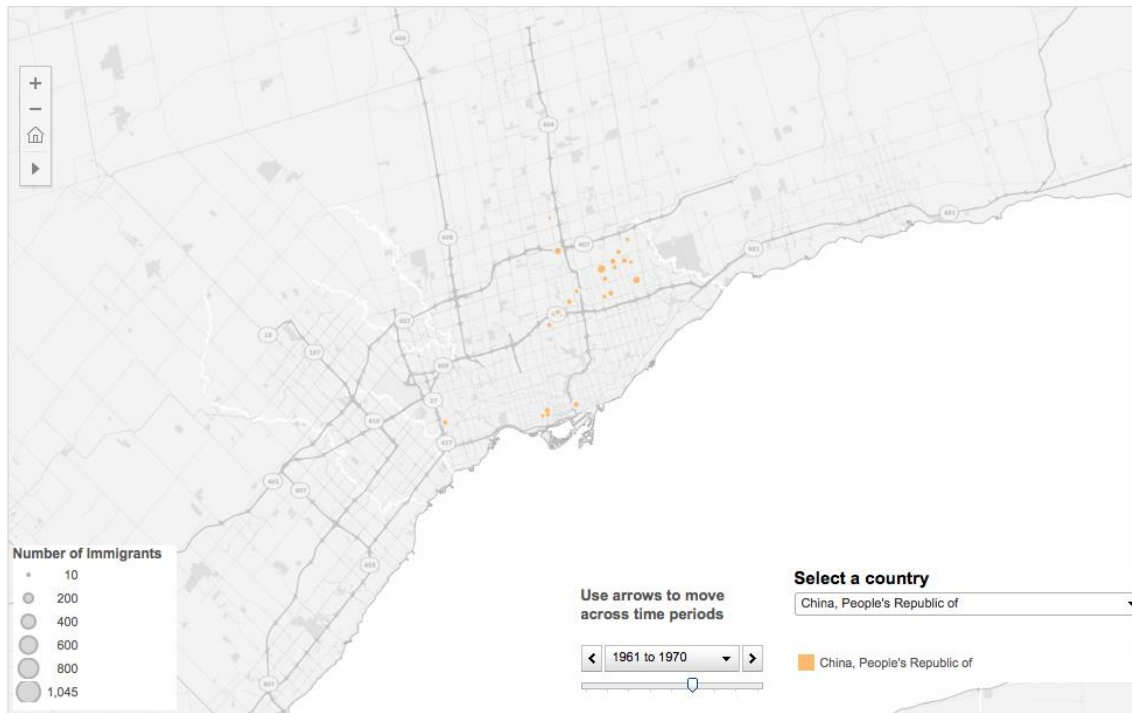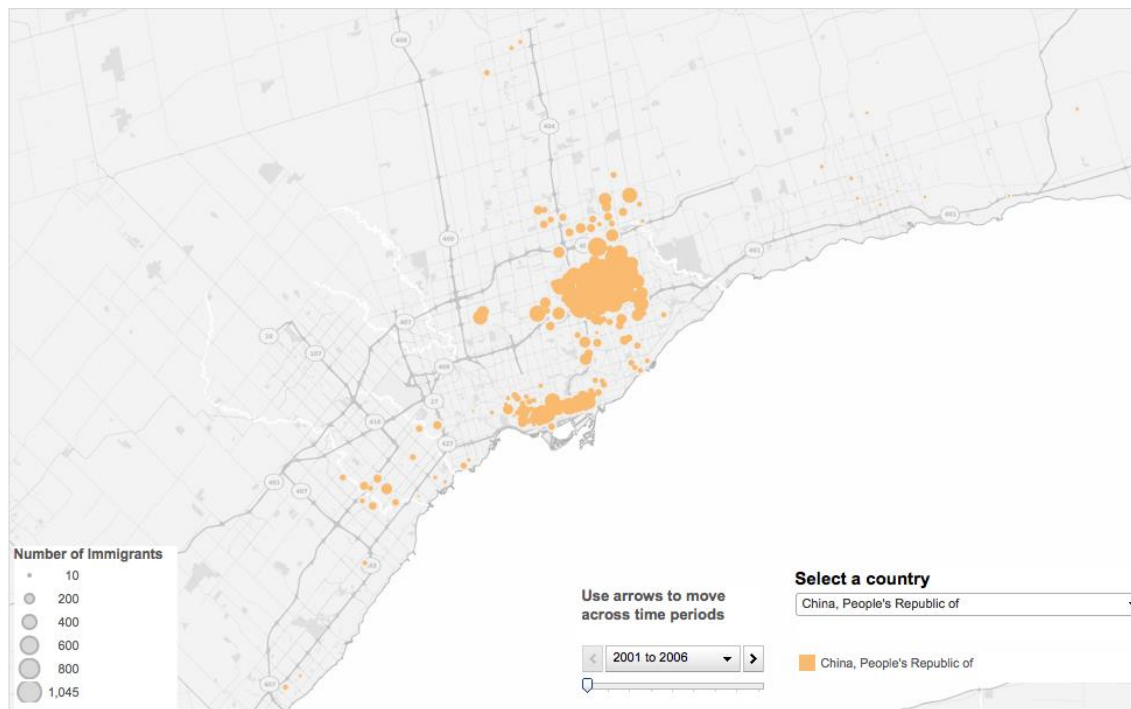

Figure 3 - Immigrants from People's Republic of China arriving in the GTA: 2001-2006

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[9] Figures 2 through 7 are derived from: http://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/gta_immigration_history.html#; accessed January 9, 2015.

arduous passage to the United States in response to the gold rush of the previous decade, continuing to stay in Canada even once the gold was exhausted (Lamb 1977; Con et al. 1982). However, Chinese workers and labourers faced significant resistance to their arrival and sustained presence in Canadian society.

In 1885 the federal government passed the *Chinese Immigration Act*, just prior to the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. This legislation placed a head tax of $50 on Chinese labourers and restricted the number of Chinese individuals an incoming ship could carry. Later that same year, Parliament passed the *Electoral Franchise Act*, excluding all Chinese persons in Canada from basic citizenship rights on the basis that they were considered transient and impermanent, and lacking in British cultural values (Backhouse 1999; Kelley & Trebilcock 2010).

The head tax was then doubled in 1900 and increased to $500 in 1903. In 1923, the federal government replaced the head tax levies with legislation that restricted almost all immigration of Chinese, including ethnically Chinese immigrants arriving from countries other than China. Only fifteen Chinese individuals entered Canada over the next twenty-four years (Kelley & Trebilcock 2010). This ban placed tremendous pressure on an already marginalized Chinese community, as many who had migrated in the hopes of reuniting with family were now prevented from doing so. Despite the fact that these restrictions created a severe gender imbalance in the Chinese community and delayed the development of a second-generation cohort for almost fifty years (Lai et al. 2009), a vibrant "bachelor society" emerged among the Chinese men who began to move east and settle across the prairies (Loewen & Friesen 2009; Marshall 2011).[10]

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[10] The Government of Canada issued an official apology for discrimination against Chinese Canadians in 2006 (http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2006/06/22/prime-minister-harper-offers-full-apology-chinese-head-tax; accessed

Despite the presence of restrictive government policies and widespread discrimination, the Chinese Canadian community continued to forge a fledgling identity (Marshall 2014) while receiving some support from the surrounding society. The Chinese Association of Canada, formed prior to the initiation of the 1923 restrictions, held a well-attended Toronto rally in 1921 to protest the proposed laws of Prime Minister Mackenzie King (Price 2011: 25). The Committee for the Repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act, formed by late 1946, is another noteworthy example because 80 percent of its membership was not Chinese, and because it was widely supported by major Protestant groups, English and French-speaking Catholic bodies, as well as various labour councils (Con 1982; Kelley & Trebilcock 2010; Bangarth 2003). After World War II, the desire for an expanded trade relationship with China, a shift in public sympathy based on the significant war efforts of Chinese Canadians (Price 2011), and the United States' abandonment of its own Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 created pressure on the Canadian government to withdraw restrictive legislation. In May of 1947, the government repealed the *Immigration Act*, and later that year granted Chinese citizens in Canada the franchise.

The end of these policies did not, however, result in immediate change for the Chinese Canadian community. The formation of the communist People's Republic of China in 1949 and the Korean War (1950-53) exacerbated suspicions about Chinese Canadians, setting off what Peter Li refers to as "a new wave of Sinophobia" (1998: 93). As a result of continuing discrimination, only 788 Chinese entered Canada between the repeal in 1947 and 1949; through the 1950s the number increased to an average of around 2,000 annually, so that between 1947 and 1962 just over 24,000 Chinese arrived (Con 1982: 217). While this cohort contained those

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September 12, 2015). However, the government's efforts to redress head tax payments to Chinese Canadians have not escaped criticism, for example: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/chinese-head-tax-redress-funds-clawed-back/article9101632/; accessed October 23, 2015.

who came as a result of shifts in Hong Kong's agriculture around the time of the Great Famine (Guo & Devoretz 2006), it also included a significant number of family reunifications and many young Chinese migrants whose presence began to shape the Chinese Canadian community (Ng 1999). In 1961, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration ended its practice of classifying immigrants by ethnicity or race and began using country of origin; more significantly, in 1962 the immigration policy was expanded to allow for four new migrant categories, including independent migrants with professional skills, close family members of Canadian citizens, and some restricted sponsorships (Li, P. 1998: 94). Five years later, in 1967, the Canadian government finally adopted a universal system of immigration based on "points" awarded for an individual's age, language competencies, previous education, and employment prospects. This change signaled a new era in the development of Canadian immigration policy and set the Chinese Canadian community on a trajectory of rapid expansion over the next thirty years, which I discuss while giving particular attention to how the majority of my sample traces their migration history to or through Hong Kong.

These significant changes in national immigration policy coincided with the developing national discussion in Canada of multiculturalism, which emerged from the binational and bicultural debates of the 1950s and 1960s. These debates centred around the notion of two founding nations, English and French Canada, as well as official recognition of two national languages and cultures. Many minority groups, including Aboriginal Canadians as well as ethnic minority groups such as Ukrainian Canadians (Forbes 2007; Lupul 2005), protested that this bicultural model excluded them. In response, the Trudeau government articulated a policy of multiculturalism in the early 1970s, combining with the earlier shifts in the governance of

Canada's immigration policy to have a direct bearing on the development of the Chinese Canadian community, among others.

Chinese applicants continued to be outnumbered significantly by European newcomers in the years following the repeal of 1947, but by the mid 1970s immigrants from Asia comprised 17 percent of Canada's total admissions (Lai 2003: 323). The increase in numbers of Chinese migrants was likely correlated to the violent riots in Hong Kong in 1967 and the uneasy political atmosphere of the region in the wake of the Cultural Revolution in China (Cheung 2009; Bickers & Yep 2009), though my participants did not refer to these events in the migration stories of their parents. The development of Canada's new points system and an expanded international relationship between China and Canada (sparked, in part, by Pierre Trudeau's visit to China in 1973) are of greater historical significance to my sample and the broader Chinese Canadian community. During Trudeau's visit, an agreement was signed in which the Chinese government agreed to permit its citizens to immigrate to rejoin their families (Poy 2013: 126), joining the many Hong Kong middle-class families and entrepreneurs coming to Canada.

Between 1968 and 1976, approximately 90,000 Chinese immigrants arrived (Guo and DeVortez 2006: 280; M. Chan 2011: 84), with many of those coming from Hong Kong seeing themselves as distinct from earlier Chinese Canadian communities (Yu 2013: 117). Figure 4 illustrates that these migrants did not begin to arrive en masse until after 1970, and within ten years their numbers had begun to swell (as seen in Figure 5). It should be noted that the arrival of higher numbers of women and a high percentage of young adults (aged 15-34) strengthened and vitalized that Chinese community during the 1970s (Li, P. 1998: 98), helped in no small part by the aforementioned international agreement that saw the number of applications for immigration from China to Canada jump initially from 2,000 in 1971 to 55,000 in 1973 (Poy 2013: 127). It is

also during this period that Canada admitted more than 60,000 refugees from countries such as Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, between 1979 and 1980, of which 20 per cent were Cantonese-speaking (Li, P. 1998: 95). These additional members of the Chinese diaspora do not factor in my sample, but the broader shift after 1947 toward Chinese immigration becoming "a family affair" did lead to the development of Chinese institutions, cultural centres, and places of worship for the Chinese Canadian community (Poy 2013: 136), social spaces that do provide a backdrop for this project.

Several socio-political developments contributed to the following wave of Chinese migrants that would enter Canada during the 1980s and 1990s—an influx that included many of my participants' parents, specifically those coming from Hong Kong. In 1984, the Sino-British Joint Declaration set in motion the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. Smart (1994: 103) argues that the Declaration caused considerable uncertainty, and shows that the most likely to leave were between 25-39 years old and economically secure. In a study of Hong Kong migrants settling in Toronto, Lawrence Lam found that apprehension over pending political change was indeed a significant push factor to leave, combined with disputes over development projects, memories of how Shanghai was handled by Communist authorities after 1949, and the appointment of political hardliners Lu Ping [Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office] and Zhou Nan [Hong Kong Branch of the New China News Agency] (1994: 166). Several of my interviewees made vague references to this kind of apprehension around 1997 as a factor in their parents' migration, though none ever spoke specifically about Hong Kong politics. Scholars have suggested (Lam 1994: 166; Li 2005: 19-22) that because Hong Kong immigration to Canada began to decline in 1995 (prior to the return in 1997) after spiking between 1990 and 1994, wider fear and distrust of the Chinese government following the events of Tiananmen Square in 1989

Figure 4 - Immigrants from Hong Kong arriving in the GTA: 1961-1970

Figure 5 - Immigrants from Hong Kong arriving in the GTA: 1981-1990

was also a significant variable in pushing Hong Kongers to leave before 1997.

In conjunction with these political push factors, the Canadian federal government expanded its Business Immigration Program in 1985 to allow individuals leaving Hong Kong to qualify for entry. This Program represented a notable immigration pull factor (along with Canadian relaxation of rules for Chinese citizens studying in Canada in the wake of Tiananmen: Kelley & Trebilcock 2010: 99; Madokoro 2012: 269), though none of my participants mentioned their parents coming to Canada as part of the initiative. Henry Yu notes that the Program was a newer iteration of previous Canadian policies that made allowances for wealthy migrants (as the 1923 *Chinese Immigration Act* had), and describes how provincial and federal governments set up recruitment stations in Hong Kong (2012: 119). Many of the individuals selected were preferred candidates due to their significant wealth and valuable skills. Lloyd Wong describes how this initiative, along with the adoption of the immigrant points system, moved away from racist and discriminatory practices and "allowed for a new form of migration which was no longer primarily working class but rather…highly skilled professional and business people" (1997: 336). Between 1986 and 1996, 83 percent of the 13,931 investors admitted to Canada were from Hong Kong and Taiwan, as were 49 per cent of the 33,449 entrepreneurs and 25 per cent of 9,111 self-employed applicants (Li, P. 1998: 95). This cohort brought with it significant capital and innovation that would transform commercial spaces in the Greater Toronto Area and greatly expand the "ethnic economy" (Wang 1999) that supports the suburban environment of my participants, which I will discuss now (and further in Chapter Four).

2.2 The Shift to Toronto

Whereas British Columbia was the home of the largest and most vibrant Chinese communities through the first half of the 20th century, by 1981 Ontario boasted a larger Chinese

community than British Columbia (Lai 2003: 324). Ontario, and specifically Toronto, became

home to "a distinctively new kind of Chinese migrant," one that was no longer "rural-born,

poorly educated, and without a knowledge of English," but "after 1967 urban, well-educated,

English-speaking Chinese" (Con et al. 1982: 245). Toronto eclipsed Vancouver as a more

appealing destination for Chinese migrants because of its economic vitality, its long-standing

tradition of hosting strong public and post-secondary institutions, and the shift to commercial

flight travel from long, arduous Pacific crossings by boat (Siemiatycki et al. 2003: 408). By 2011,

Canada was home to 1.3 million Chinese Canadians, of which 40 per cent (531,645) lived in

Toronto and its surrounding communities (Statistics Canada 2014).

These historical changes are noteworthy because of their contribution to our

understanding of how the Chinese evangelical community in the Greater Toronto Area developed

and the impact this continues to have on second-generation Chinese Canadians who live there.

The significant shift in immigration patterns led to substantial changes in Toronto's civic

composition and public spaces, and altered the small Chinese community that had endured

marginalization. Prior to the 1940s, Chinese in Toronto were subject to overt discrimination and

had found it difficult to move out of the downtown centre (Murdie & Teixeira 2003: 145). This

led many of them to gather and form a vibrant Chinatown around the downtown intersection of

Bay and Queen Street West, an expression of what noted urban geographer David Lai referred to

as "a town within a city" (1988).

Almost simultaneous to the repealing of restrictive federal legislation in 1947, Toronto's

city council approved a redevelopment, urban renewal plan to build a new city hall without

consulting the Chinese community. Chinese entrepreneurs and business owners owned 55 percent

of the buildings in the Chinatown district, but many had their property reclaimed by the city at

prices drastically below market value (A. Chan 2011: 105). This displacement resulted in the dissolution of the old Chinatown, and subsequent moves to the current Chinatown West location on Spadina, and Chinatown East.[11] By the 1960s, Chinatown West had become an important business district (Murdie and Teixeira 2003: 145) but was becoming less important in its role as ethnic enclave. Bolstered by an increase in the Chinese community's size from 34,627 in 1941 to 58,197 in 1961, the Chinese sub-economy in Toronto expanded from restaurants, laundries, and grocers built on kinship networks and work ethic to include export/import firms, gift shops, real estate investment firms, insurance and travel agencies, and a few professionals (Preston et al. 2003: 218). Many of the Hong Kong urbanites admitted under Canada's investor programs during the last quarter of the 20th century were able to use their significant economic and social capital to afford suburban Toronto housing, preferring uptown and the Greater Toronto Area to the older, crowded, dirtier core of historical Chinese settlement neighbourhoods. Geographer Lucia Lo (2006) has illustrated how real estate advertisers and land developers recruited heavily in Hong Kong as a means of capitalizing on the economic opportunity provided by the significant wave between 1984 and 1997 (in the run-up to the return of Hong Kong to rule by Beijing). By the early 1980s, Scarborough and North York housed more Chinese Canadians than Toronto. One of the first significant residential clusters developed in the historic neighbourhood of Agincourt by 1981, and the first Chinese-themed mall in North America, the Dragon Centre, opened nearby in 1984.

Shifting population movements away from downtown neighbourhoods began to drastically change the development of many public spaces in the suburbs surrounding Toronto, the most notable being the development of Chinese shopping centres. Between 1986-1996,

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[11] This location emerged a little later in the 1970s around Broadview Avenue and Gerrard Street in Toronto's east end (A. Chan 2011: 142).

Scarborough's Chinese population doubled, North York's tripled, Richmond Hill's increased by 2,300 percent, Markham's by 600 percent, and Mississauga's by 350 percent (Lo 2006: 141; see also Figures 6 and 7, though the latter illustrates how Hong Kong migration had already begun to taper by 2000). With these dramatic increases, the centre of Toronto's Chinese Canadian population moved from the historical ethnic enclaves downtown to suburban satellite communities that developed around suburban shopping plazas and grocery stores such as T&T and Foodymart. These spaces proliferated based on the growing population and the significant percentage of migrants still significantly connected to Chinese business and cultural networks, networks that spurred a post-1967 sub-economy "fueled by demand rather than discrimination" (Preston et al.: 218).

These expansive commercial facilities became synonymous with what American scholar Wei Li (1998) has called the "ethnoburb." Li coined the term in an effort to contrast the development of emerging ethnic communities in the suburbs with their traditional, urban enclaves. In the case of Toronto, the development of Chinese shopping malls and grocery superstores created a clear contrast between downtown "street-level shops serviced by sidewalks for pedestrian traffic" and their "office buildings, banks, banquet halls, and restaurants with Chinese signs…that catered to suburban drivers and their automobiles" (A. Chan 2011: 156). It was the presence of those vehicles that were a source of early opposition to the Chinese Canadian plaza developments. Long-time residents in Markham, Richmond Hill and Scarborough, for example, voiced frustrations over the increased traffic and, in more pointed terms, the lack of English advertising signage present in and around these public spaces.

The antagonism reached a crucial point in 1995 when then-Markham deputy mayor Carole Bell made derisive comments about the increasing concentration of Chinese immigrants in

the small city, ultimately questioning the place of Chinese Canadians as contributors to the

community in comparison to those "long-term" residents she claimed to represent. The Chinese

Canadian community, via a large and active ethno-cultural organization called the Federation of

Chinese Canadians in Markham (FCCM), launched a significant response and created substantial

civic pressure on Bell to apologize. Even though Bell refused to apologize and continued to

"clarify" and defend her position through a series of letters to editors in local newspapers that

only served to offend Chinese Canadian residents further, Kristin Good argues that the public

pressure was only possible because of "high levels" of ethno-specific social capital possessed by

the community (Good 2009: 122). This capital was employed deliberately by ethnic actors to

develop "an extensive network of Chinese-specific institutions" that contrast significantly with

the enclaves and Chinatowns of earlier generations (Good 2009: 137, 220).

Ming Chan argues that Hong Kong immigrants have "definitely altered the physical,

social, and cultural landscapes of major Canadian cities" (2011: 96). While Hong Kong

immigration has slowed to less than one percent of Canada's total admissions in 2008 (Zhang

2010), the future of the Chinese Canadian community looks promising as the People's Republic

of China has been and continues to be a top sender of immigrants to Canada over the past decade

(Statistics Canada 2017) while China and Canada continue to develop their economic

partnership. As Peter Li aptly contends, the Chinese Canadian community is

> an emerging and economic force in Canadian society. There are certainly many signs of
> upward mobility: the growth of the Chinese middle class, the rise in educational levels of
> both native-born and foreign-born Chinese-Canadians, the expansion of the Chinese
> middle-class consumer market, the burgeoning of Chinese-owned mansions in affluent
> neighbourhoods, and the conspicuous presence of Chinese capital in the real-estate and
> commercial sectors in urban Canada point to the plain fact that the Chinese are no longer
> the marginalized labouring class they once were (1998: 119).

Figure 6 - Immigrants from Hong Kong arriving in the GTA: 1991-1995
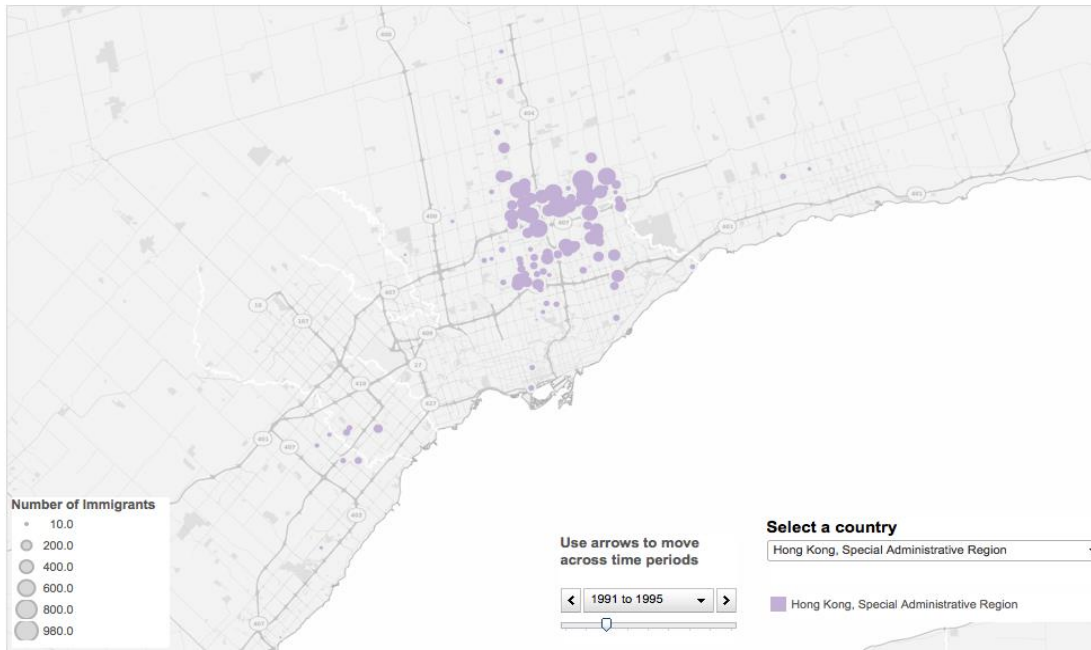

Figure 7 - Immigrants from Hong Kong arriving in the GTA: 1996-2000

It is this historical transformation that provides the sociological background for our

understanding of second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals in contemporary Toronto.

2.3 Chinese evangelicals in Toronto

The development of Toronto's Chinese evangelical community, not coincidentally,

mirrors the demographic and geographic transformations of the broader Chinese population.

Consequently, in order to map the progression of the community, I will briefly discuss significant

historical congregations and institutions, paying particular attention whenever possible to how

these shape the contemporary experience of second-generation, Chinese Canadians in my sample.

a. Foundations

During my ethnographic fieldwork in Toronto, I was told on multiple occasions that much

of the substantial Chinese Canadian evangelical community could be traced back to three of the

oldest Chinese congregations in the city: the Chinese Presbyterian Church (founded 1910),

Chinese Gospel Church (founded 1963), and Toronto Chinese Baptist Church (founded 1967).[12]

The historical illustrations below are certainly over-simplified. However, a brief discussion of

these three congregations provides a sufficient historical context for understanding the

development of the vast Chinese evangelical subculture that influences the lives of current

Chinese Canadian youth.

Prior to the establishment of these congregations, Methodists had begun mission activity

among Chinese migrant workers on Canada's west coast in 1885, and individual Presbyterian

outreach efforts had begun in Toronto during the 1880s as well (Wang 2006). In the late 19th

century, Toronto was quickly becoming "one of the great evangelical and missionary centres of

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[12] Mention should be made here of the Toronto Chinese United Church as well. Founded in the early 1950s (TCUC n.d.), this congregation sold its downtown facility and moved to Markham in the late 1980s (A. Chan 2011: 112). This group has not had any significant contact with the evangelical network of institutions I explored, and consequently lies outside the interest of this study.

North America" (Reynolds 1981:129), exemplified locally by the Presbyterian's Chinese classes reaching nearly half of Toronto's Chinese community (Wang 2006; Ye 2006). In 1903, Rev. Moon Hing Ng, who would go on to become the first Chinese minister ordained in the Presbyterian Church of Canada in 1911, was brought from Vancouver and commissioned to start a mission with the Chinese men in Toronto. Seven years later the Toronto Chinese Christian Association formed with the help of Knox Presbyterian Church, establishing what would later be known as the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Toronto (Yu 2010: 15).

By the early 1920s, several Baptist churches were running language training classes for Chinese Canadian workers, and Methodists had sent missionaries to proselytize Chinese Canadian residents. It should be noted that many evangelical leaders at the time were far more concerned with international outreach interests, including sending missionaries to China specifically. While these sentiments were in line with colonial evangelical tenets and missionizing of the time, they were also likely influenced by the broader anti-Chinese racism present in Canadian society which led them to see China as a mission field but local Chinese migrants as suspect and undesirable.

In 1925, the Chinese Presbyterian churches in Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, and Montreal did not join the newly formed United Church of Canada for reasons that are not particularly clear. The Toronto congregation, led during several periods by non-Chinese deaconesses, continued to address the significant social needs of the Chinese community during these challenging decades (Yu 2010: 17). It was in 1950, after the Immigration Act restrictions had been removed, that the Chinese Presbyterian Church was infused with new members. Ruth Ma, daughter of the congregation's second Chinese minister, started Toronto's first English-speaking youth ministry for Chinese Canadians, called the Young People's Society (Yu 2010:

17). This effort aimed at the 1.5 and 2nd generation Chinese Canadian youth predates the congregation's move to its current downtown location near Beverley and Dundas Streets. It was followed by the institution of an English-speaking worship service in the early 1960s and a bilingual service in 1972 to accommodate youth. These developments in the Canadian Presbyterian Church illustrate that efforts to include and integrate second-generation Chinese Canadians are historically rooted in the period when the Chinese community was marginal and confined to Toronto's downtown core. They predate the contemporary phenomenon spawned by the significant social and economic resources brought by later waves of Chinese immigrants.

Even so, these efforts to socialize and include English-speaking Chinese youth in the broader Chinese evangelical community were not always effective. The Chinese Gospel Church (CGC), initiated by young Hong Kong immigrants and Dr. and Mrs. Vokes, a missionary couple who had been removed from China by the communist government in 1954, serves as an illustration. The Vokes began connecting with Chinese young adults in Toronto (Wong, P. 2017) and helped to establish the downtown church in 1963 by assisting in the purchase of an old synagogue near Huron and Dundas streets (Chinese Gospel Church, n.d.; personal interview A13-2). One of the young people to be engaged by early on by the church was Steve Chu, who I interviewed in April of 2013. Chu currently serves as an English-speaking elder of the Chinese Gospel Church in Scarborough and is one of the few individuals his age still connected to an English-speaking Chinese group. He came to Canada from Hong Kong at age eight near the end of the 1950s as the Chinese community in Toronto was slowly beginning to grow and joined the church with several of his friends in 1964. When describing those early experiences, he spoke with me about the afternoon meeting times (selected because that was the only time that speakers could be secured) and the fact that the services were always translated from English to

Cantonese, or from Cantonese to English, a painstaking and time-consuming process he "endured" as a "mainly English-speaking guy."

He went on to describe the other youth he came to church with: "Many of them, kind of, I would say left the faith. I don't think they were strong Christians…because there was no strong discipleship." When I probed as to why he stayed, he responded, "There was a youth group as well so I was part of that youth group. That's what kept us together. Youth fellowship, and an English Sunday School." I asked him to describe why, in his opinion, those connections did not help others maintain their connection to the religious community; he laughed and said,

> Well, we were not well supervised. So, we were on our own. We didn't have a lot of people supervising us, 'cause most of them were Cantonese speaking or older, right? And so they don't know the language very well, so if they come…they come. But we were pretty much on our own. So if we're spiritual, we're spiritual. If we're not, we're not (chuckle).

Chu's description of early efforts in Chinese evangelical communities to address the needs of second-generation, English-speaking youth explored themes of generational tension and marginalization. Most of the early, adult Chinese members of the community were likely preoccupied with the connections and relationships they were forming with other immigrants in the community. Consequently, the needs of sincere second-generation adherents were neglected. Chu lamented how this lack of connection led to reduced religious fervour in some individuals. Many of his age group, he claimed, were "dead spiritually" and left the church.

This account of the early development of the downtown Chinese Gospel Church contrasted with Chu's discussion of the contemporary Chinese evangelical community later in our conversation. Like several Chinese evangelical groups mentioned below, the Chinese Gospel Church followed the shifting patterns of Chinese immigration by starting congregations in North York, Markham, and Scarborough during the 1990s and 2000s. Chu emphasized that the Gospel

Church network is now led by English-speaking elders and that their congregations' ability to grow and develop English language ministries is directly correlated to strong leadership and attentiveness to the preferences of young Chinese Canadians. When I asked him if he could ever see the second-generation leading ethnically Chinese churches, he paused and then replied "I think eventually it will be that way…if the English survive through the period of transition…if they [the current Cantonese leadership] allow the English to be the leaders."

b. Expansion

Chu's personal account of early English-language ministry to second-generation youth in Chinese churches offers some insight into the growth of Chinese congregations later in the historical development of the broader community. As Chinese immigration to Canada began to slowly increase through the 1960s, the Chinese evangelical community began to grow both numerically and in its geographical distribution. One of the earliest examples of this can be seen by looking at the aforementioned Toronto Chinese Baptist Church (TCBC).

The Chinese Baptist congregation was initiated out of an existing Baptist group in downtown Toronto in 1967 and subsequently purchased the Gothic-style building on Beverley Street[13] in 1972 (TCBC, n.d.). Much like the Presbyterian and Gospel congregations, Toronto Chinese Baptist Church grew initially because of its close proximity to Chinatown and the surrounding settlement neighbourhoods. As Toronto's Chinese immigrants began moving into the suburbs in the 1980s, congregational leaders attempted to follow them. In the spring of 1986, approximately three hundred members of the downtown Chinese Baptist church started the

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[13] The Beverley Street Baptist Church was built in 1886, and had been designated a City of Toronto Heritage Site (https://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=7e305a775f051410VgnVCM10000071d 60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=6c21226b48c21410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD; accessed January 10, 2015).

Scarborough[14] Chinese Baptist Church (SCBC). This group now numbers more than 2,000 in

three language-specific sub-congregations[15] and occupies a beautiful, modern facility on

Kennedy Road (SCBC, n.d.). Toronto Chinese Baptist Church also started the Eastside Mission

in 1974 "when Chinese immigrants started to occupy the east end of the city" (NTCBC, n.d.),

located at 14 Dewhurst Boulevard. This congregation developed and moved to the area around

Finch Avenue and Yonge Street to become the North Toronto Chinese Baptist Church (NTCBC)

in 1987, growing to become a tri-lingual community of more than 600 attendees that included an

English-language congregation of 250 in 2014. NTCBC has helped to establish several new

churches in Brampton (1986), Pickering (1992), and Scarborough (1995). As of mid-2015 there

are more than 30 Chinese Baptist churches in and around Toronto (TCEMF n.d.).

A further example of the Chinese Canadian evangelical expansion is found in the Chinese

Alliance Churches. With roots in the Missionary Alliance movement that, at its peak in 1934, had

more than 1,300 missionaries working in China (OMF 2015), the Christian Missionary Alliance

(CMA) continues to be active in proselytizing efforts in East Asia and around the world. In 1967,

the Canadian Chinese Alliance Churches Association (CCACA) was formed in Regina,

Saskatchewan, as an extension of the CMA's multicultural ministry portfolio, and since then has

grown from four to more than 90 churches. Almost 30 of these are located in Toronto, with many

of them starting in the suburbs since the 1980s to coincide with the second major wave of Hong

Kong migration between 1984 and 1997. Of particular note is the Scarborough Community

Alliance Church, a primarily ethnic-Chinese, English-speaking congregation of around two

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[14] Scarborough was once an independent municipality, but now forms the eastern administrative district of the City of Toronto.

[15] Many ethnically Chinese congregations in the Greater Toronto Area are actually comprised of three distinct sub-congregations defined by the language used in worship: Cantonese, Mandarin, and English.

hundred and fifty attendees that began in the mid-1990s. At that time, its sponsoring

congregation, the Scarborough Chinese Alliance Church,

> "was experiencing the blessing of exponential growth as immigration from Hong Kong
> increased with the anticipation of the winds of political change in the Far East. Along
> with this growth came an acute realization that a generation of English speaking youth of
> Cantonese speaking parents needed the ministry of the gospel in a culturally and
> linguistically relevant fashion" (SCAC, n.d.).

In response to this challenge, the Scarborough Chinese Alliance Church developed its "Dual

Church Vision," whereby the English-speaking congregation was moved toward organizational

autonomy while receiving support from the Cantonese-speaking sponsoring church, a process

that was completed in 2009. This congregation serves as an example of how some Chinese

organizations are attempting to support the religious experience of second-generation Chinese

Canadians in the midst of dramatic changes in the surrounding civic landscape. In addition to this

emphasis on second-generation ministries, the CCACA continues to proselytize Cantonese and

Mandarin speakers in Canada. Their local and global mission efforts culminate in regular mission

conferences that draw hundreds of Chinese Canadians, and in recent years they have created

Mandarin-based seminary programs at Tyndale in Toronto and Ambrose in Calgary[16] to train

Chinese ministers who have immigrated from Mandarin-speaking locales.

Perhaps the best example of Chinese evangelical expansion in post-1967 Toronto is the

Association of Christian Evangelical Ministries (ACEM). In the mid-1970s, Rev. John Kao was

commissioned by the Living Water Church in Kowloon, Hong Kong, to start a congregation

among Chinese in Toronto (ACEM 2019). Rev. Kao's impact on the Chinese evangelical

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[16] These are the Canadian Chinese School of Theology at Tyndale Seminary (Toronto, ON;
http://www.ccstts.ca/ACCTEWEB/ccstts/english/organization/introduction.htm; accessed October 23, 2015) and the
Canadian Chinese School of Theology at Ambrose Seminary (Calgary, AB;
http://www.ccstas.ca/chinese_t/Main/ct_index.htm; accessed October 23, 2015).

community were seen in his highly publicized and widely attended funeral and memorial

services, held at two of Toronto's largest Chinese churches in 2013. Following the initial group

forming in Toronto's north end, addition gatherings were started in Agincourt (1979), Markham

(1987), Richmond Hill (1989), Markham (1990), and North York (1994); most of these boast

vibrant English-speaking congregations today, some of which are home to several hundred

members. The rapid expansion of this organization into Toronto's suburbs coincides directly with

the waves of Chinese migrants in the 1980s and 1990s, and is exemplified in the prominent

places of worship that situate Chinese Canadian evangelicals in close proximity to major Chinese

settlement areas. For example, the Toronto Christian Community Church (TCCC), ACEM's

flagship congregation located just north of Steeles Avenue (which marks the City of Toronto's

northern border), operates an organization called 105 Gibson Centre that provides various social

aid programs to the surrounding area, such as free tutorials for marginalized youth, food bank

services, and career mentorship.

c. Interconnection and second-generation experience

Each of the aforementioned organizations provides a unique glimpse into how the

Chinese evangelical community has developed, and how that progress parallels the migration

patterns of Chinese to Canada in the last half of the 20th century (especially those from Hong

Kong and southern provinces such as Guangdong). While I have highlighted several historical

instances in which these groups have accounted for second-generation experience, I want to

conclude this chapter by offering three more recent examples that illustrate how the consolidation

of a large Chinese evangelical community has led to substantial investment in the English-

speaking second-generation as a means of retention and growth for the broader community.

These are Chinese Christian Fellowships (CCF), Teens Conference (TC), and the Chinese

Christian Softball Association (CCSA).

Chinese Christian Fellowships are an extension of the para-church organization

Ambassadors for Christ (AFC) which was founded in the early 1970s by Stephen Knights, a

former missionary to China (AFC, n.d.). Ambassadors for Christ attempted to form small groups

of Christian adherents to both support and proselytize the increasing numbers of Chinese

international students coming to Canadian universities. In 1973, the year after AFC was

registered as a not-for-profit organization, legislation was introduced under which students could

obtain permanent residence status while studying. David Lai contends that student applicants

were a significant contributor to the rise of Hong Kong immigrants from 5,009 in 1971 to 14,662

in 1973 (2003). Regardless of whether these early increases in migrants directly funneled into

AFC's university groups, the subsequent waves in the 1980s and 1990s brought with them a

second-generation cohort that now fills, just on Ontario campuses alone, fifteen English-speaking

student fellowship groups.

What was once an outreach to international students has now become an umbrella

organization working in consort with local GTA Chinese congregations to operate local events

(including Teens Conference, discussed below and in Chapter Five) that together draw more than

1,500 Chinese Canadian youth and young adults annually, in addition to providing varying levels

of oversight to the fellowships that are aligned with it. Ambassadors for Christ plays an integral

role in the broader evangelical subculture maintained by Chinese congregations in Toronto,

though it remains somewhat independent of congregational control or influence. Its broader

social impact creates a type of social pathway so that, by attending events during junior (grades

7-8) and senior (grades 9-12) high school, many youth and young adults go into Ontario

universities with a knowledge of and social connections to the Chinese Christian Fellowship operating on campus before they arrive. Consequently, many second-generation, Chinese Canadian evangelicals join an extra-congregational, ethnically homogenous religious community at university, and that community often surpasses the congregation as the primary locus of their religious activity. Connection to these significant social networks often continues after university careers have been completed and is a factor in some second-generation Chinese Canadians returning to ethnically Chinese congregations even if they attended a multi-ethnic congregation for a period of time. Chinese Christian Fellowships provide an extension of Chinese evangelical subculture into the initial years of young adulthood, a crucial factor for many in maintaining connection to significant sites of ethno-religious identity formation.

The aforementioned Teens Conference (TC) is a four-day, spring break event conducted by AFC for Chinese evangelical churches in Toronto each year. The gathering began in 1971 as an attempt by Chinese church leaders to create a venue that would be fun, engaging, and meaningful for English-speaking students in their congregations. In the early 1980s, prior to when most of the current Chinese community began to arrive in the GTA, English-speaking Chinese pastors took leadership of the conference and ran it out of a high school facility off Danforth Avenue in downtown Toronto's east end from 1987 until the late 1990s. They introduced a program, encouraged an expressive event culture that was unique to Chinese Canadian congregations at the time, and led youth-focused ritual practices (described below in Chapter Three) that have contributed to what is now a gathering of 800 to 1,200 junior and senior high school students from some eighty Chinese churches from Ottawa to Windsor annually. The fact that the event is no longer hosted in a downtown high school gym but in a large, Chinese

Canadian mega-church in a Toronto suburb stands simultaneously as a marker of the community's historical development and sign of its hopes for the future.

The final example of interconnection in the Chinese community of Toronto and its emphasis on second-generation experience is found in the creation and development of the Chinese Christian Softball Association (CCSA). Much like TC, the league was started by a group of English-speaking Chinese church leaders who felt that the second-generation youth needed a point of connection. Starting in 1980 with six teams (CCSA, n.d.), the association has grown to become the largest private softball league in the Greater Toronto Area, involving 1,600 participants representing thirty-eight churches in 2014. In similar fashion to the Ambassadors for Christ activities previously mentioned, this organization originates from intentional efforts made during the rapid growth of the Chinese Canadian community to address the needs of the second-generation cohort and incorporate them within the broader ethnic community. While intended as an outreach to those who are not Christian, the Association's functions as another vital, ethnically homogenous connection point for those already participating in the Chinese Canadian evangelical community in the city, with many of the larger Chinese churches fielding multiple teams each year. This leads to the experience related by several people in my sample of attending an event at some point or joining a Chinese Christian Fellowship at university and running into people they have met by attending Teens Conference or playing in the softball association: an illustration of the social networks that reinforce the ongoing development and maintenance of sites where a Chinese Canadian evangelical identity can be formed.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the socio-historical context in which contemporary Chinese Canadians live their lives. Canada's historical discriminatory policies and practices are important

examples of underlying societal values based on racism and ethnic chauvinism. Despite the fact

that most of my participants could not identify any examples of overt or intentional

discrimination in their own experience, their identity as members of a more recent (and

historically racialized) immigrant group must still be placed in context. My overview of the

development of Canada's immigration policy also attempted to place at the forefront, as several

historians of Chinese Canadian experience have done in recent decades, the costs of restrictive,

harmful, and exclusive legislation. While such social ills are hard for some to conceptualize in

Canada today and racism persists, they are part of an important narrative that must be considered

when attempting to understand the factors that shape the emerging generations of Canada's ethnic

minority groups.

Against this narrative, I have argued that Toronto's extraordinary transformation into one

of the world's most culturally diverse urban municipalities held powerful implications for

Canada's Chinese Canadian population. Over the space of little more than fifty years, a

marginalized population of Chinese bachelors was transformed into a powerful and influential

community. Where once the Chinese community was forced to limit itself to a specific enclave in

response to blatant discrimination, we now see the emergence of what Lucia Lo (2006a: 143)

calls a "multinucleated" arrangement of multi-generational, multi-language groups stretched

across Canada's largest urban area.

This significant subcultural context is an important backdrop for the development of

Chinese evangelical communities in Toronto, communities that have become part of the visible

representation of Chinese Canadian vibrancy in Canadian civic spaces. Chinese evangelical

organizations have, since the mid-20th century, attempted to recognize and account for the unique

challenges posed by their children and youth. It is this substantial investment that has played a

key role in developing the diverse and extensive social networks that undergird a robust, second-generation Chinese Canadian expression of evangelical Christian adherence.

3. Theory and Methodology

My primary intention in conducting this project was to understand the ways in which young, second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals negotiate their ethnic and religious identities. I brought an interest in the future of conservative forms of religious practice in Canada's increasingly pluralistic society, and the assumption that there is a strong correlation between immigration trends and the expansion or reinforcing of religious communities. These interests informed my development of research questions related to my research participants. How are young, Chinese Canadian evangelicals forming the basis of a religious identity? Where, if at all, do they see their notion of Chinese identity emerging from? I acknowledged the potential intersections between these identity construction processes at the outset of the project and, more precisely, I was aware that my participants might be forming their religious and ethnic sense of self in similar spaces and times.

The aforementioned questions derived from my studies in the sociology of religion, the history of evangelical Christianity in Canada, and the research on late 20th century immigrant populations that had begun to change Canada's religious landscape. My specific interest in the growing cohort of second-generation Chinese Canadians was piqued for several reasons, and expressed itself in several questions that guided the sub-categories of my research. First, how do young, Chinese Canadian Christians mediate between the highly individualized markers of North American evangelical Christianity (increasingly impacted by what Christian Smith and Melinda Denton refer to as moralistic therapeutic deism, 2005) and the community and familial bonds central to their ethnic heritage? Second, how do these particular adherents exercise religious agency in a secularizing and pluralistic society? And third, in line with my historical analysis in

the previous chapter, what role might the broader Chinese community in Toronto play in how these young adults self-identify as an ethnic minority?

3.1 Theory

I adopt a theoretical structure, which I explain below, in order to interpret and explain the data I found in answer to these questions. The project was not designed to develop a theoretical model or heuristic, but was launched from an established practice (Creswell 2014) in which theory is used to shape the methodological framework and literary review and subsequently deduce meaningful conclusions. Consequently, I launched my research phase with some preliminary hypotheses of how and where I saw my participants fitting within the broad spectrum of scholarship on Chinese experience in North America and the development of Canada's increasing ethno-religious pluralism. This did not mean that my analysis and results were fixed and inflexible, as I make clear in my discussion of my method. Rather, this approach acknowledges the inherent assumptions and frameworks that inform qualitative studies and proceeds into analysis with a readiness to critique and adapt explanatory models.

This project was conducted within the interdisciplinary environs of Religious Studies and influenced most directly by the sociology of religion. However, my primary research questions demanded an awareness of the theoretical models that inform both the sociology of immigration and the study of identity and ethnicity as well. The discussion of theoretical framework that follows aims to integrate insights from both these fields.

a. A global stage

One consideration of my theoretical approach is the global context in which the negotiations of religious and ethno-cultural identities take place. The cluster of issues surrounding familial migration and community formation in a new society have a direct impact

on my participants as second-generation, Chinese Canadians. The previous chapter outlined the context in which their formative ethno-religious communities have developed. In light of that history, this project acknowledges the transnational experience of my participants' parents in order to understand and explain the processes by which they are adapting to and engaging with 21st century Canada. The term global comes from the body of scholarship (e.g. Beyer 1994, 2006; Appadurai 2001; Robertson 1992, 1994, 1995) that describes and defines the widespread processes of economic, socio-political, and ethno-cultural interconnection that have developed over the last several centuries, accelerating in the last one hundred years. In addition, scholars have outlined how globalizing forces are impacting the tendencies and markers that religions display today (Beyer & Beaman 2007; Wilkinson 2006; Warburg 1999; Robbins 2004; Roy 2010). It is imperative to recognize this larger context in which the everyday experiences of my participants unfold, especially in light of the opportunities, challenges, and contradictions that globalizing forces create for individuals as they attempt to form personal and communal identities. Social theorists do acknowledge that, while globalization may be a crucial and beneficial economic development, the strength of globalizing forces and their ability to manipulate and maneuver individuals "corrodes inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities" (Beyer 1994: 3). Of course, Beyer goes on to assert that those same forces encourage "the creation and revitalization of particular identities" by consolidating power and impetus in highly motivated groups (Beyer 1994: 3). Thus, my principal concern lies in how these widespread, global processes manifest in 21st century migrant populations, and specifically in how they inform my participants' development of particular identities. This concern parallels similar work being conducted on other Canadian populations in an effort to grapple with the

"wider transformations in global social reality" (Beyer 2013: 4) and how these shape Canada's cultural ethos.

The study of religious individuals that have chosen or been forced to migrate within this global context has produced a deluge of scholarship (a small sample here: Kniss & Numerich 2007; Zhou 2009; Bramadat & Seljak 2005; Yang 1999; Knott & McLoughlin 2010; Carnes & Yang 2004; Künnemann & Mayer 2011; Levitt 2007; Levitt 2009; Kurien 2007; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; McLellan 1999; Matthews 2006) on the dynamic responses to the challenges migration poses to the processes of identity formation. These studies illustrate the tremendous ingenuity and creativity of migrant populations in their use and redeployment of ethno-religious identity, while also accounting for the challenges and loss they experience. Consequently, one of my underlying interpretive assumptions is that the global conditions of 21st century modern life require individuals to construct their identities through "the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives" (Giddens 1991: 5). All individuals, regardless of how far removed they are from the migrant experience, participate in this process. More particularly, the following chapters offer an example of how the experience of second-generation individuals provide us with a vivid portrait of the social structures and social agency at work in identity formation in contemporary Canadian society.

This acknowledgement of the dynamic and potent forces that impact my participants' lives is shaped by my adoption of a constructivist approach. While constructivism does not constitute a theory, it is a perspective that assumes that "social relations make or construct people" (Onuf 2013: 4). This perspective expresses itself in Georg Simmel's notion of the individual as "an intersection, a crossroads," or "an assembled being" (Pyyhtinen 2010: 39), or Lyotard's assertion that the modern person "exists in a fabric of relations that is now more

complex and mobile than ever before" (1984: 15). This perspective informs how I approach my

data, and determines the theories I use to understand my participants' use of social capital and

social networks to reinforce ethno-religious identities. I am particularly interested in the social

dynamics that influence how a connection to Chinese heritage becomes an operative identity for

some in the second-generation and how Christian adherence remains a central feature of their

lives despite religion's marginalization in broader Canadian society.

I acknowledge that each of these identities is comprised of international and local factors.

For many of my participants, their notion of Chinese identity is informed by the global networks

tying Cantonese, Hong Kong-based ministries together, and by the personal narratives of parental

migration and their own travel experiences in Asia. Their conception of a Christianity loosely

labeled as "evangelical" is informed by their appreciation of sermons and written materials from

around the world, their attendance at international events, and their participation in missionizing

efforts in various regions. While they unmistakably draw on the global sphere to build their sense

of self, I met, observed, and discussed those processes with them in vibrant, localized, and

bounded communities in the GTA. Consequently, I see Robertson's "glocal" neologism as having

a powerful explanatory value, especially because of his assertion that we may be "on the verge of

substituting glocalization for globalization" (2005). Robertson's conception of glocalization

focuses on what he calls the "reflexive synthesis of the local and the global," and the fact that it

"is an ever-present feature and, also, a dilemma of most of human life" (2005). By this, he points

to how the global informs the powerful and salient formations of localized cultural institutions,

practices, and values, and how these local representations in turn make a significant structural

contribution to the interconnected networks that bring the world's nations and territories together.

Robertson's language informs my study because it accounts for the global stage on which my

participants are currently participating (e.g. through their indirect engagement with the ongoing

negotiations of Chineseness, which I discussed above) while simultaneously offering intellectual

clarity to the localized forms of second-generation Chinese Canadian identity that I encountered

in my fieldwork. The theories I employ to explain these local experiences of my participants can

be separated into categories of religious and ethnic adaptation.

b. Theory of religious adaptation

My theoretical explanation of my participants' religious lives is informed by several

sociologists of religion and, more specifically, their understanding of religious identity and

organizations in the 20th and 21st centuries. One of the central building blocks for my theoretical

framework is the notion of differentiation in a society, derived from the work of Niklas Luhmann

and Peter Beyer. Following the trajectory of earlier theorists, Luhmann (1982) attempted to offer

an explanation for how the increasing complexity of modern societies was not producing

widespread disintegration and anarchy. He concluded that modern societies maintain their

coherence through a process of differentiation, whereby patterns of social behaviour (e.g.

medicine, law, economics) organize into systems, placing the multifarious bodies of knowledge

intrinsic to each system into amendable, distinguishing forms. In other words, "a highly complex

society must limit itself to making possible…the compatibility of the disparate functions and

structures of all its subsidiary units or parts" (Luhmann 1982: 79).

Luhmann believed that there were different types of systems, ranging from the social

contexts of person-to-person interaction all the way to the notion of a shared, global society. He

insisted, much as Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued, that social organizations (or systems)

produce behavioural cues or instructions for those in the system while also normalizing and

routinizing their daily experiences (Luhmann 1982: 76, 84). This differentiation allows a system

to distinguish itself from its surrounding environment based on the function that it plays for those inside it. This separation allows systems to offer highly specific solutions to the complex challenges and problems posed by modern societies. For example, we might look at how the study of medicine has drastically improved life expectancies by cordoning off the system of inquiry and knowledge for a highly trained and educated elite. The measure of an effective system is found in the efficiency of its function, and how well it proves or displays its viability to the society in which it operates (238).

Peter Beyer (2006) builds on Luhmann by extending his construction of system theory to the differentiated category of religion specifically. Beyer sees religion as one of many differentiated systems, and his primary concern centres on what religion does and how it functions for those who employ it. He argues that modern society uses function "as its principal mode of primary subsystem differentiation" (2006: 65). The disestablishment of religious institutions and dogma in various cultures and societies over the last three hundred years has created problems for religion according to Beyer. As societies have modernized and industrialized, some functions performed by religion in the past (e.g. government, law, physical health) have been appropriated by other systems (such as nation states, judiciary systems, and modern medicine). The presence of these systems has forced religious groups to renegotiate the viability and the terms of their own social function in such societies.

Modern societies contain a "plurality of function systems" (Beyer 2006: 98) that are not religious, and this has forced religious organizations and communities to intentionally differentiate internally as a means of asserting difference to maintain functional social coherence. One of the key ways that religious groups have accomplished this historically is through the creation of differentiated sects (or denominations, see Niebuhr 1957). Beyer points to this

phenomenon as an example of what he calls "pluralistic religious convergence," where religion is differentiated from a state or society while also being internally differentiated into smaller subsets (2006: 108). Beyer asserts that this additional differentiation allows us to more accurately determine "through what kinds of social system…religion attain[s] authoritative form in contemporary society" (2006: 108). He points out that religious organizations can take a variety of forms in order to exert influence, including being "thematized in societal (namely function) systems" (e.g. "ethnic," or "political" religion).

My use of a constructivist perspective necessitates that I attempt to understand how Beyer's notion of religious differentiation might function in the lives of my participant group, which requires a brief synopsis of the historical developments in Canadian society over the last fifty to sixty years. By the 1960s, Christian privilege in Canadian public life had begun to disappear or, at least, had been transformed into a new Canadian religious neutrality (Miedema 2005). This process accelerated – although unevenly in various regions and at different times (Bramadat and Seljak 2008: 13) – as Canada's population continued to urbanize and as immigration brought increased religious diversity after the Canadian government reformed its immigration policies in the late 1960s. It was during this period that racial and religious exclusivity – widely accepted before 1960 – became "untenable" for many Canadians (Miedema 2005: 201). These pluralizing and secularizing trends formed what David Martin refers to as residual "hegemonies" (2000: 26) corresponding to specific churches or organizations that fostered ongoing religious adherence and engagement for many Canadians. The move of religion into increasingly differentiated social spheres has followed a European model of development (O'Toole 1996), with much of Canada's landscape being defined by institutions and

organizations of significant size and historicity as opposed to following the dynamic sectarianism of the United States.

This development leaves religious Canadians that identify as evangelical, like my participants, in a significantly marginalized (or hyper-differentiated) position – given that they compose such a small percentage of the overall population[17] and that they have not traditionally held significant sway in the public sphere. While O'Toole has cautioned against a framing of Canadian history that neglects or overlooks the formative role Christianity played in the burgeoning Canadian society of the 19th and early 20th centuries (1985), evangelicalism's own historians have acknowledged the movement's position on the periphery of public life. They concede that evangelical forms and institutions appear to be "privatized into a subculture with no discernible influence upon Canadian public life" (Stackhouse 1997: 67) and that, despite their ardent religious conviction (Rawlyk 1996: 113), it has been several decades since evangelicals were positively and publicly recognized (Page 2001). These insider observations fall in line with O'Toole's assertion that, in general, religion in Canada plays out against the backdrop of disenchantment and secularization (1996: 120). The impact of secularization and pluralization leads to decreased engagement with religious institutions on one hand, but heightened and enhanced religious activity in differentiated spheres (i.e. organizations, communities, venues) on the other.[18] More recent studies have framed this phenomenon as illustrating a polarization of religious adherence in North American populations, where religion ceases to be significant for an increasing number of citizens while continuing to be tremendously vital for many others (Bibby

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[17] There are varying calculations of evangelical strength in Canada, with the lack of a precise definition of just what constitutes an 'evangelical' playing a crucial role. Reginald Bibby has estimated their numbers as holding somewhere between 8-12 percent for more than twenty years. This stability might be the most pertinent social factor for my discussion, as it indicates some facet of how conservative Christians in Canada are maintaining strong boundaries over and against the secularizing influences of the broader society.

[18] Bramadat (2000) saw this as a primary factor in the evangelical university fellowship he studied in Ontario.

2011; Putnam & Campbell 2010). Therefore, I interpret the religious lives of my participants as sustainable in Canadian society in and to the degree that they can specialize and/or differentiate from others, even other Christians or other Chinese Canadians if necessary.

In order to understand the vitality of my participants' religious lives, Christian Smith's theory of subculture (1998) is particularly valuable. Smith contends that evangelicalism "thrives on distinction, engagement, tension, conflict, and threat" (89, author's emphasis). Historians have documented these as marking Canadian evangelical history (Stackhouse 1993; Rawlyk 1996, 1997; Noll 1992). Smith argues that the strength of the movement is not derived from its defensive isolation from society but instead its intentional engagement with society. This presents as a contradiction, but he suggests that those religious groups that provide "both clear cultural distinction and intense social engagement will be capable of thriving in a pluralistic, modern society" (1998: 90). His theory is helpful because of its constructivist assertion that the collective identities formed by religious groups are the result of "active, continuing identity-work" (1998: 92), and that this work involves "drawing symbolic boundaries that create distinction between themselves and relevant outgroups" (91). He also points out that these collective identities are "strategically renegotiated" by religious groups by rethinking the ways their "orthodoxies engage the changing sociocultural environments they confront" (97).

The application of Smith's theory allows me to account for my participants' intense feelings of religious meaning despite their daily engagement with a secularizing society. It also makes it possible for me to explain how my participants construct a collective identity by idealizing their parents (and other Chinese immigrant adherents) and defining other evangelical or theological communities as relevant outgroups from which they must differentiate. It provides a framework by which I can acknowledge how the economic mobility attained by my participants

through their completion of higher education fits with widely accepted theories of cultural integration while explaining why they position themselves religiously as outsiders to that same surrounding culture (as discussed in the next chapter). Smith's theory explains how this supposed antagonism plays a powerful, identity-forming role for evangelicals. Such social boundaries provide significant structure to my participants' religious identities by giving them ongoing justification for social differentiation in a secular society. The subcultural boundaries that differentiate my participants as religious individuals in Canadian society do, however, allow for tremendous functional flexibility for their everyday lives as second-generation immigrants (which I outline in the last two chapters, noting specifically how some of my participants use morally conservative Chinese cultural values and evangelical values to draw symbolic boundaries over and against Canadian values they perceive as too liberal or secular, while others borrow evangelical biblical interpretations to distinguish their practices as sincere from those of Chinese congregations they deem to be mostly or merely culturally constructed).

Thus, my use of differentiation theory outlines the trajectory by which my participants negotiate their religious identities through a consistent process of distinguishing themselves from both the surrounding culture and their religious compatriots. It is this dynamic assertion of particularistic identity markers that best positions them to adapt and maintain religious identity in Canadian society. How this differentiation interacts and informs their notion of ethnic, Chinese identity is one of the primary interests of this project, and so I now move to a description of the sociological theories of ethnic identity that inform the study.

c. Theory of ethnic adaptation

Each of my participants identified as 1.5 or second-generation Chinese Canadian, placing themselves firmly within both the ethnic community I discuss further in Chapter Five and the

evolving social fabric of the large, cohesive second-generation cohort in the GTA shaped by the

history described in Chapter Two. Nearly all of the young adults I spoke with continue to identify

closely with ethnically-homogenous institutions and social networks, some into their mid-30s.

This social reality contrasts significantly with pessimistic pronouncements of an "impending

'silent exodus' of Canadian born Chinese Christians from the Canadian Chinese church" (Evans

2008) and a "Hemorrhaging Faith"[19] that I often heard about during my fieldwork. These

negative predictions of the local practices and adherence of second-generation Chinese Canadians

mirror what Bramadat and Seljak described as a "discourse of loss" in mainstream Christian

churches (2008). While Bramadat and Seljak encountered this grieving narrative as historically

situated in the loss of status and public attention for mainstream Christian denominations, I

witnessed leaders of the Chinese evangelical community adopt it as their description of the

ongoing process of generational distancing and separation.

However sincere these observations were, they just are not true in many cases. These

prognoses were not represented in the robust, ethnically homogenous, expressions of religious

adherence among the second-generation Chinese Canadians I observed during my fieldwork nor

in the more than fifty interviews I conducted. I do not mean to suggest that my participants did

not, at times, express disconnection and conflict with the ethnically situated foundation of their

religious identities. However, they do continue to negotiate and construct some notion of both

Chinese and Christian identity, and they are doing so in significant numbers.

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[19] This 2011 report was sanctioned and sponsored by several key evangelical organizations, including the
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and InterVarsity. It attempted to outline the social dynamics surrounding why and
when Canadian young adults are abandoning the Christian faith, but did not account for or include ethnic diversity in
its sample. Wong et al. (2018) recently applied its findings to a Chinese Canadian sample, and make a series of
suggestions for first-generation immigrant leaders and practitioners in the hopes of retaining and maintaining second-
generation engagement.

As with religious identity, the theory of differentiation explains how ethnic identity markers are used. Zerubavel argues in his discussion of cognitive sociology that the varied ways in which we conceive of and understand the world around us (i.e. the way we think) are "a by-product of the growing structural as well as functional differentiation within modern society," and that we "come to inhabit more specialized thought communities" (1997: 18). In other words, personal identities must become increasingly specialized in order to be valuable and operational in the everyday experiences of individuals. My application of a constructivist approach to my participants' conceptions of self accounts for them as social actors "who interpret the world around them through a pervasive prism that constructs ethnicity as a powerful force" (Karner 2007: 11, author's emphasis). Karner's larger notion of ethnicity builds on Giddens' oft-cited idea of the "duality of structure" (1984: 25), wherein social actors are influenced by and reproduce social structures (such as ethnicity) in a reciprocating fashion. For example, this perspective can help to highlight my participants' experience of being formed by Chinese Canadian evangelical institutions and their use of those organizations to create new social environments marked by ethnic homogeneity. Karner posits that ethnicity provides venues of social interaction and agency through "structures of action," as a "way of seeing," and through "structures of feeling" (2007: 27ff). These categories form a useful theoretical template on which to chart the dynamic agency of my Chinese Canadian participants.

Karner sees ethnicity as functioning as part of the guidelines used by social actors "in sustaining a sense of familiarity" and that these guidelines reproduce social structures (29). These "structures of action" are comprised of the codified rules and expectations governing permissible behaviour across a wide variety of social venues. Following Giddens again, Karner argues that these structures are both "rules and resources" for the individual (29). One such example of this

process at work in my participants is their frequent admission that endogamy is something they value in pursuing a life partner (see Chapter Six). While some claimed that endogamy was not essential for their own personal preferences to be satisfied, several indicated that they were looking for someone who was Chinese or had Chinese cultural competency in order for family relationships to be maintained (i.e. Karner's idea of "sustaining a sense of familiarity"). Those participants expressing this sentiment represented a wide array of language competencies and varying levels of engagement with Chinese culture: making their prioritization of endogamy a great example of the dynamic employing of ethnicity in a "structure of action."

Karner's notion of ethnicity as a person's "way of seeing" provides further insight into the dynamic ways in which my participants perceive and project their Chinese identity. For this category he relies heavily on the increased attention being paid within sociology to the cognitive processes and relationships that define how we position ourselves in the world. He emphasizes the centrality of the "us/them" binary in understanding ethnic boundaries, recognizing that this is, inherently, a process of differentiation in modern pluralistic societies. I observed this in many of my participants, though (again) in a range of expressions. Some valourized Chinese history and cultural superiority as playing a role in their understanding of their personal identity, while others lamented the exclusivity of Chinese communities and organizations as being incompatible with their understanding of themselves as Canadians and Christians. Such instances exemplify what Karner refers to as complex knowledge structures or "schemas" that subconsciously inform "a non-reflexive processing of information and interpretation of the world" (33). Several respondents characterized this social reality by referring to the nature and definition of Chinese ethnic expression as being self-evident, something that they had rarely considered. Such assertions were often made as they reflected on their experience of Chinese Canadian social

environments from their childhood but also surfaced as they strained to describe accurately their

inherent respect for their parents' generation.

These examples of my participants labouring to describe their lived experience illustrate

Karner's point that, in fact, these schemas can be brought into focus and questioned by

individuals. I observed this process at work when I would push participants to be more specific

about what constituted "Chinese culture" for them. In several cases, they would self-consciously

grope for descriptive phrases, or say something akin to "I don't know how to explain it." I recall

in several conversations the participant attempting to describe the Chinese value of respecting the

familial and communal elders as a self-evident social fact for them, but one that they were unsure

I would be able to conceptualize. It was as if they were attempting to describe the "collaborative

performance and maintenance of a background of 'seen but unnoticed' common understandings"

(Karner 2007: 40). I also encountered this negotiation of schemas when talking with my

participants about any experiences of stereotyping they might have had. Very few of my

participants related experiences of personal discrimination, but when probed as to whether or not

they felt there were expectations directed at them by the surrounding society, they were forced to

delve into how they feel they are perceived in particular social environments. Several gave vague

allusions to people believing that "all Chinese people" had certain competencies or skill sets, and

then followed up with an acknowledgement (sometimes with bemusement) that these perceptions

had some basis in the real world. Oftentimes, their reflection on what people thought of them

correlated with their own conception of Chinese people as "hard-working" or "intelligent." These

examples are not offered as generalizations applicable to all second-generation Chinese

Canadians. They do, however, offer some explanatory power of ethnicity as a "way of seeing,"

and how some Chinese Canadian young adults construct notions of their own Chinese identity via

the interpretations of cultural outsiders and their own inherited and learned conceptions of Chinese cultural values.

Finally, Karner argues for an understanding of ethnicity as being expressed in "structures of feeling." Here, Karner attempts to account for the affective weight that ethnicity bears on individual experience (as Marshall describes in the lives of Chinese immigrants on the prairies, 2014). He asks, "is ethnicity not also about the taste of familiar foods, the experienced rhythm of daily life, the multiple layers of meaning we detect and negotiate in our first language? Is ethnicity not also…simultaneously shared and profoundly personal?" (34) He argues that we can observe ethnicity this way in the "deep emotional salience of an individual's biographical recollections" (35), and that the telling of one's story allows for a reflexive assertion of identity. I observed the "simultaneously shared" quality of these structures of feeling at various times in my fieldwork when, in both formal and informal conversations, participants would assert the assumption of shared experience to legitimate their own claims. This often took place when, as they related their experience in an ethnically-homogeneous environment, they would say something to the effect of "I'm sure you find this in all your subjects." Their assumption of ethnic uniformity was not constrained to the second-generation, as illustrated by the one young man who remarked to me with a smirk: "Why are you studying Chinese churches? Aren't they all the same?" These types of assertions stood out to me both because of the underlying assumption of shared experience, but also because they often coincided with participants conveying a moment or experience that was either particularly sensory, formative, or typical (in their opinion) of Chinese Canadian evangelical environments.

I encountered several examples in which participants' discussed notions of ethnic identity that were "profoundly personal" as well. Perhaps the best example of this came when I

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interviewed a young woman who was especially persistent in making time for our sit-down conversation. She made it clear that she wanted to speak with me because of her perception that she was "an outlier" based on some of her life experiences. This participant became emotional during our interview, especially during her painful recounting of the disjuncture she feels when relating to her stereotypically demanding Chinese parents and her frustration with their attempts to appear successful despite their lack of familial affection and time spent together. This participant's emotional and embodied description of these experiences, over and against her projection of the rules connected with normative Chinese "structures of action," serve as an example of ethnicity as profoundly rooted in "structures of feeling."

These theoretical explanations of how ethnicity is constructed in my participant group become particularly evocative when integrated with broader theories of migrant integration. Hammond and Warner's essay (1993) on the relationship between religion and ethnicity asserts that both are subject to social circumstances that weaken their salience, namely, cultural and religious diversity. Their conclusions were based on a framework that aimed to understand how ethnicity and religion related to each other, as seen in their conceptions of ethnic fusion (Amish, Jews), ethnic religion (Greek Orthodox), and religious ethnicity (Swedish, German, Danish Lutherans). Roy Loewen's thoughtful discussion of Canadian Mennonites (2008) offers a slightly more nuanced taxonomy, outlining six distinct approaches to ethnicity identified from his study of the Mennonite community. He found that 1) some embrace Mennonite ethnicity but deemphasize or reject its religious practices because they are areligious themselves; 2) others (who identify closely with Canadian evangelicalism) celebrate Mennonite identity and history but balk at its traditional religious elements because they find it too liberal or too focused on social activism; 3) some urban thinkers name their faith Mennonite or Anabaptist because of their

respect for historical figures they see as progressive and peace-oriented, but they are wary of Mennonite ethnicity that they see as backward or isolated; 4) some contemporary writers note and celebrate how the religion and ethnicity embraced in old-order and conservative groups leads to high rates of retention in youth; 5) there is a large majority for whom Mennonite ethnicity is more symbolic than determining in their religious practices, and 6) newer immigrant groups join Mennonite churches despite having no ties to traditional Mennonite ethnicity and no affinity to Anabaptist theologies (2008: 346-356). With this taxonomy, Loewen joins Hammond and Warner in illustrating not just how religious adherence is practiced by an ethnic group, but also how the religious practice is maintained and continued by successive generations of ethnic adherents. Hammond and Warner concluded that the "…overall trend is predictable…The decreasing importance of ascribed characteristics, and the correlative increase in individuals' autonomy, diminishes the inheritability of both religion and ethnicity, and that means a decline in their relationship" (1993: 66). While the nuance in Loewen's breakdown does illustrate that we should use care when making correlations or predictions about the relationship between religion and ethnicity over time, he too points to how there may be a gap emerging between the two factors for a growing number of Canadian Mennonites.

The diversity within a particular ethnic group that Loewen highlights serves as an interesting parallel to what I observed in my participants. Namely, all my interviewees maintain connections to ethnically homogenous Chinese religious organizations, even those who no longer attend an ethnic congregation. The fact that my participants have access to a broad social network in the Chinese Canadian evangelical community and a variety of religious organizations that reinforce (to varying degrees) a sense of connection to Chinese ancestral heritage in a second-generation iteration cannot be overlooked. It is also notable that some participants espoused

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"low" connection to Chinese ethnic identity while maintaining steady involvement in ethnically homogeneous religious communities! The fact that these significant connections persist in the second-generation supports my use of constructivist explanations for how young Chinese Canadians see themselves in relation to their familial past and their emerging future as Canadians.

This discussion leads then to the relationship between ethno-religious identities and broader conceptions of integration and assimilation. More recently, scholars have acknowledged that, unlike earlier generations of migrants that would see ethnicity weaken into more "symbolic" (Gans 1979) than operative forms within three generations because of increased economic mobility and subsequent assimilation, immigrants of the late 20th-early 21st centuries follow varied courses of integration. The theory of "segmented assimilation" (Portes & Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1996; Portes 1997; Zhou 1997; Warner 2007) observes that some migrant groups see their upward mobility constrained by social and economic factors, thereby leading them to delayed or failed assimilation. This theory is an important point of consideration in the emerging scholarship on second-generation citizens (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Alba & Waters 2011; Kurien 2007; Connor 2014; Beyer & Ramji 2013; Satzewich & Wong 2006; Levitt & Waters 2002; Min 2010; Kasinitz et al. 2015).

However, in contrast to a strict application of segmented assimilation theory this project recognizes "a shift away from mobility (or lack thereof) to that of identity as an indicator" for adaptation and integration, following the work by Hiller and Chow (2005: 76) on young Chinese Canadians in Calgary. Building on the work of other theorists, Hiller & Chow recommend that ethnicity be seen as "a system of social relations in which parental relations and socialization, and kinship and friendship networks shape the nature and pace" of individual development and

integration into society (2005: 80). Their survey data revealed that some Chinese Canadian youth do not feel significant segmentation from broader Canadian society, and they argue that this "is a consequence of a clear differentiation between the public and private sphere" (2005: 89). They saw the significant efforts of young Chinese Canadians to offset any perceived disadvantage produced by racism in public settings with active socialization processes (e.g. Chinese language use) in familial and domestic contexts. My qualitative research revealed a very similar tendency. While all of my participants maintain connection to ethnically bounded religious communities, most downplayed the role of those communities in fostering a sense of connection to broader Chinese culture and identity. They placed the primary locus for ethnic awareness and experience firmly (and sometimes exclusively) within the context of the family, hinting at the privatized form of ethnic identity that Hiller and Chow discerned in their sample. This observation further necessitates the use of constructivist theory to explain the diverse expressions, though robust and persistent, of ethnic association in my second-generation participant group.

3.2 Methodology

Much of the work produced on evangelical Christianity in North America in the last thirty years has focused on the congregational model of social organization, a well-founded mode of investigation given the proliferation of congregations in the unfolding religious landscape in the United States (Ammermann 1997; Kniss & Numerich 2007; Miller 1997; Ellingson 2007; Marti 2005, 2009; Wellman 2008; Luhrmann 2012; Reimer and Wilkinson 2015). Additionally, many of these studies have observed the relationship between congregationalism and the historical impact of race on attendance and social organization, as well as the political impact of conservative forms of Christianity on the broader social system of governance. They have shown that the congregation is a crucial site of cultural religious innovation, which is why my own

project accounts for the congregation as one locus of religious world-making for young Chinese Canadians.

Accounting for the congregation situates this research in close alignment with ongoing qualitative research on evangelicals in Canada. As stated in Chapter One, I identified my research subjects as evangelical based on their affiliation with communities and organizations with ties to this historical movement that has been identified on the basis of widely held beliefs and practices. In their book, A Culture of Faith: Evangelical Congregations in Canada (2015), sociologists Sam Reimer and Michael Wilkinson identified evangelical churches on the basis of the following criteria: they self-identified as such; they were members of an evangelical denomination; they were affiliated with a transdenominational evangelical association such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; or they adhered to Bebbington's (1989) widely cited quadrilateral of crucicentrism, biblicism, conversionism, and activism. Reimer and Wilkinson acknowledged John Stackhouse Jr.'s contention (2007) that the evangelical movement in Canada can be traced to 19th century revivals that spawned adherents in Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Methodist churches, and that these adherents have often collaborated across denominational lines. This definition and choice on their part parallels other studies (Reimer 2003; Smith 1998; Bowen 2004; Pew Forum 2011; Rawlyk 1997; Bibby 2002, 2004) that have illustrated a strong continuity of belief among evangelicals across a variety of institutions and organizations. These studies are all built upon established quantitative methodologies that have offered insightful data on longitudinal changes in evangelical belief and regional similarities across various samples.

These studies also illustrate that evangelicals tend to respond to the same types of questions in very similar ways. For example, Reimer and Wilkinson found this in their study of evangelical leaders who tended to justify the importance of their evangelistic efforts on the basis

of the same two particular scriptural texts (2015: 94ff).[20] Smith saw the same type of pattern in the "pervasive and natural" boundaries of language used unconsciously by evangelical respondents (1998: 124). In other words, evangelicals appear to register strongly in quantitative studies because they often share clear positions on theological, ethical, and cultural issues that inform their sense of what it means to be Christian. What is often obscured by their strong responses in quantitative sampling are the reasons and causes for those responses. Questions of how and by what means such consolidated beliefs and practices persist are left unanswered.

The awareness of these questions informs my use of qualitative methods. I assumed some consensus of participant shared belief on the basis of the aforementioned studies and identified my initial site visits using criteria similar to that of Reimer and Wilkinson. However, I felt that while a quantitative approach might allow me to account for young Chinese Canadian attendance, belief, and involvement in congregations as evangelicals, it would not offer perspective on how they negotiate their religious identity. I also had concerns about the limitations of studying a highly fluid and mobile demographic, as I was aware that many university students and young professionals make a variety of significant choices and draw on multiple religious sources during this challenging life stage. I wanted to account for factors of religious identity formation in a variety of settings and trusted that significant quantitative differences of belief would become apparent during my fieldwork.

This commitment to qualitative analysis allowed me to investigate the structure and widespread impact of what Randall Baller, Sam Reimer, and Christian Smith call evangelical

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[20] The two texts are referred to as The Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission and are found in Matthew 22:36-40 and Matthew 28:19-20 respectively. Reimer and Wilkinson do point out that such institutional priorities "are not always put into action" and that, in fact, "the value of a priority cannot simply be measured by quantitative results" (2015: 109). They too draw on Smith's theory of subcultural practices in North American evangelicalism (1998), and contribute extensively to our understanding of how these are shaped within the context of congregational institutions. Their sample is limited to the accounts of congregational leaders only, and their consideration of experiences and practices inside the congregational space exclusively.

"subculture," and the growing influence of immigrant Christianities, categories that transcend the congregational model. Hence, my formulation of a multi-site methodology was predicated on several limits that I saw in congregation-exclusive research on evangelical experience. These include: a research perspective overly focused on secularization in modern societies, emphasizing waning religious practice; an under-developed understanding of deinstitutionalization in individual religious life (in which lack of weekly attendance is equated with decreased religious interest and commitment); and a failure to account for the variety of resources individuals use in forming a religious life.

a. Multi-site method

While I intended to base parts of my work on the tested and established methods of congregational ethnography, I also aimed to expand my scope of investigation by including relevant conferences and university groups that might help me account for the religious experiences of those in the project's target demographic. Consequently, I began formulating and structuring my methodological approach in the spring of 2012, making my initial contact with the Chinese evangelical community in the GTA through the English-speaking Chinese Ministerial (ESCM). This group comprises primarily individuals involved in English-language ministries within Chinese churches or with para-church organizations with significant connections to Chinese congregations. The English-speaking ministerial functions as a branch of the Toronto Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship (TCEMF), a broader association that connects and supports ministers and leaders of Chinese congregations and ministries, whatever their language. These ministerial groups gather each month for a mid-week meeting that often includes ritual worship, teaching, training, and social networking. The gatherings are conducted in one of approximately 180 Chinese church facilities in the GTA, with the combined attendance ranging

from approximately 120 to 300. I attended ten ESCM events during my fieldwork and two joint meetings where the ministerials combined.

The ESCM served as a vital entry point for me into the broader Chinese evangelical subculture. Not only did I meet several leaders (including those who participated in my leadership focus group, and the pastor of the congregation that I would spend most of my time in) but I was also exposed to the wider array of ministries and organizations aligned with Chinese congregations in southern Ontario. The ESCM frequently addressed particular challenges based on congregational trends, giving me insight into the ethos of many English-language congregations but also tipping me off to upcoming events or meetings. Announcements were regularly made about major initiatives (such as preparations for Teens Conference or Urbana fundraising) that became valuable fieldwork experiences for me, and the group's tradition of having lunch together at a nearby Chinese restaurant gave me many opportunities to interact informally with ministers and second-generation contributors that provided innumerable anecdotes from and insights into the social environs of Chinese Canadian evangelicals.

From its inception then, my project was designed to incorporate multiple sites in the hopes of accounting, to some small degree, for the breadth of experiences and encounters used by second-generation Chinese Canadians evangelicals in their construction of ethno-religious identity. The impetus for this design was derived both from my study of broader scholarship on evangelicalism in North America and my own experience in evangelical environments. More than twenty years ago, Christian Smith contended that American evangelicalism is "less an organization than a vast, loose network of small denominations, denominational and nondenominational congregations…parachurch ministries, missions agencies, and educational institutions" (1998: 86). This characterization is reaffirmed with remarkable accuracy in Randall

Balmer's (2006) portrayal of his pilgrimage through a variety of sites and institutions loosely gathered under the evangelical descriptor. The strength of Balmer's account is how closely it maps on to the social and institutional experiences of many evangelical Christians in North America, including summer camps, over-the-top evangelists, and mega-church environments. This milieu that Balmer maps provides the background for Sam Reimer's study (2003) of evangelical congregations and individuals on both sides of the 49th parallel, in which Reimer discovered remarkable agreement and resemblance between individuals and congregations based on their integration within this subculture.

These depictions and insights of the multifarious institutions, organizations, and environments utilized by evangelical adherents demand a flexible and dynamic methodological approach. My own strategy mirrors various elements of Prema Kurien's detailed and insightful study of young American Hindus (2007). Kurien identifies five separate social organizations that were significant for her participants, namely satsangs, bala vihars, temples, student organizations, and Hindu umbrella groups. Studying these locations helped her account for the ways in which immigrant religion functions "as the repository of ethnicity" for many Indian Americans (2007: 7). Following earlier studies of immigrant faith in America (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Warner 1993, 1994, 1998; Yang and Ebaugh 2001), she acknowledges that religious organizations are sites of ethnic and community consolidation. Her work on university campus religious groups for young Hindu Americans provides an intriguing parallel to my own investigation of how such groups provide a site by which students can articulate a specific ethno-religious identity in the face of broader dynamics of assimilation. Kurien's consideration of multiple sites provides a valuable model for how researchers must consider the ways in which individuals draw on various organizations to form new religious practices and interpretations.

In order to examine the evangelical subculture experienced by my participants and its expression in multiple sites, I attempted to employ a perspective of ethnography that acknowledged the inherent discursive quality of interview-based research whereby both researcher and participant are heard (Clifford 1986). I was challenged by more recent theorizing of what anthropologists call para-ethnography to approach the field with the awareness that various members of my research communities are in fact "knowledge makers and not merely holders" (Coleman & von Hellermann 2011: 5). One of the crucial ways this awareness emerged in my fieldwork was in how my research sites themselves were shaped by participants and other community members. For example, my decision to undertake fieldwork at Urbana 12 and Teens Conference was based solely on the assertion of Chinese Canadian evangelicals that these were crucial environments for the second-generation cohort. Secondly, in response to participant suggestions, my research design underwent subsequent expansion to include two sites not identified at the outset. The first inclusion resulted from my determination that the ethnically homogenous group at the University of Toronto was a more frequently traversed social pathway for second-generation Chinese Canadians than the multiethnic InterVarsity fellowship I had originally chosen. The second materialized in response to participants who repeatedly asserted that some second-generation Chinese Canadians were leaving for and congregating in two multiethnic Toronto churches, communities not originally targeted for investigation.

In these cases, a para-ethnographic emphasis influenced my multi-site approach by allowing me to account for the mobility of human subjects across varied social environments (Mand 2011) and to traverse the same social networks and institutional gatherings as participants (Coleman & von Hellermann 2011). Allowing community leaders and other second-generation Chinese Canadians to influence the selection of research sites also provides insight into the

identity work being done by various community members to describe and measure the second-generation cohort. The inclusion of multiple sites helped me to account for the networks and relationships that stretched from site to site, connections that clearly provided social support for many participants. The project was conceived initially as a series of brief case studies that would (with ease and brevity) allow for a comparison and contrast of the means by which identity formation happened. What I unearthed was a much larger, considerably more complex, and more subtle social environment. My study of this environment attempts to be an actualization of "research [that] pushes beyond the situated subject of ethnography," allowing participants to become "intellectual partners" of the project – "counterparts rather than others" (Marcus, 2011: 19).

Interview participants were recruited through the use of snowball sampling and personal contacts, for a total of fifty-one (see Figure 1). These interviews were conducted and recorded in a variety of environments, most often in a public space (e.g. café, church facility, university building, etc.) that was convenient for the participant. In twelve instances the entire interview was completed using Skype video software, and twice I used the software to continue and complete a conversation that had begun in person. I used an open-ended, semi-structured interview format in which I proceeded through a list of pre-determined questions (see Appendix), allowing participants to answer and explain as they wished. This structure resulted in a wide variance in interview length, ranging from just under an hour to over three hours.

The question format was designed to gather a clear demographic profile. I spoke with interviewees about their family history, including their childhood experiences of migration, language practices, and religious involvement. Some spoke with me at length about their parents' experiences and background. Following these histories, the conversation moved into a discussion

of current religious community practices. This allowed young adults to describe the various communities and ministries they participated in, while I also asked them to reflect on the ways these groups shape their attachment (or lack thereof) to their Chinese heritage. I then moved into a series of questions intended to gather qualitative data on participant experiences of discrimination, social networks, and gender. Finally, I asked interviewees to discuss their perspectives on their religious identity, accounting for their definitions and understanding of evangelicalism and their frequent religious practices. I proceeded through all of my questions in most interviews, conducting follow-up conversations when necessary and convenient for participants. There were four individuals that limited our discussion to one hour and did not make themselves available for a follow-up meeting. In those instances I focused my attention on their personal histories and their involvement and experience in their current religious communities.

b. Description of sites

I turn now to a brief description of the primary research sites, and my fieldwork practices in each.

i. Toronto Chinese Church[21]

The Toronto Chinese Church was chosen for two reasons. First, the size of the community placed it in the mid-range of Chinese congregations. Related to the size of the congregation was my desire to observe a community that ran several different types of programs and ministries for young second-generation adherents as a means of deciphering how ethnic congregations retain their participation. Smaller congregations do not tend to offer a range of such opportunities and, more practically, would have limited the number of potential interview participants significantly. Secondly, the church's location near a major public transit route north of the 401 ensured that I

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[21] Sites i-iii were given pseudonyms, which the community leaders requested when agreeing to allow me to conduct research in the communities.

was able to attend services and gatherings with ease. With my research being conducted across multiple sites and my desire to attend as many gatherings as possible, other suitable (and potentially interesting) congregations were not chosen.

Like many Chinese churches in the GTA, this community is home to three different congregations partitioned by language of worship. The largest congregation at the time of fieldwork (2013-2014) was the founding Cantonese-language group, averaging around 260 attendees. Just slightly smaller, averaging between 240-260 attendees during my fieldwork, was the English congregation. This group's primary demographic was 1.5 and second-generation Chinese Canadians. Some of these had familial ties to the other congregations, while many others had transferred from other Chinese churches or, in some cases, converted to Christianity in their adolescence or young adulthood. Some more recent immigrants to Canada with high English competency attended, as did several parents and relatives. The third congregation was Mandarin-speaking, averaging 90-110 attendees; it is the newest group in the community but the one experiencing the highest rate of growth in recent years.

As part of my fieldwork, I attempted to attend as many events and gatherings as possible. I participated in twelve Sunday worship services, each of which was followed by an extended time of socializing in the church's gymnasium and then by age-specific Sunday school classes for those interested. I found myself in a cross section of classes during my observations: an all-male class on biblical manhood, a young adult class that investigated the claims of other religions, and a course on introductory biblical hermeneutics.

After the Sunday school classes, most of the English-speaking young-adult congregants would make their way to the entry area of the facility and "hang out" (as many of them referred to it), discussing where they might go to eat. I accompanied various groups of congregants on

these culinary excursions whenever possible, often engaging in informal discussions about life and church experience in these groups of six to ten. On three occasions, I was able to attend the church-wide membership meeting held in a large multi-purpose room. Lunch was prepared and served by both male and female members of the Cantonese congregation, with diners sitting close together at tables running the length of the hall. These meetings gave me the opportunity to observe the broader life of the church, how it attempts to grapple with the multi-linguistic, multi-generational challenges of its community, and how the second-generation participants engaged the organizational and institutional structure.

By the middle of the afternoon, either following an off-site lunch or the monthly congregational meeting, a group of twenty to thirty youth and young adults would gather in the gymnasium to play a variety of sports. These activities often stretched into the early evening, with several individuals mentioning to me that they often spent their entire day at church as a result. I joined these athletic gatherings at their invitation whenever possible, and noted that individuals not affiliated with the church would frequently show up to participate in the friendly (though spirited) contests. The group usually consisted of a gender breakdown of 40 percent female and 60 percent male, with ages ranging from mid-teens to early forties. Participating in these afternoon competitions gave me opportunity to connect more intentionally with several members, connections that yielded half of my site interviews.

My connection with this church was formed when I met the pastor of the English congregation through the ESCM. As a second-generation Chinese Canadian himself, he had a natural interest in my research and was warm and receptive to my many initial questions. He eagerly agreed to my presence at the congregation's gatherings and introduced me to several significant lay leaders and deacons during my first few visits. This welcome facilitated my

participation in congregational social times which, in turn, led to the frequent remark of those I met, "You must be that guy doing research on CBCs [Canadian-born Chinese]. Someone told me about you." These comments betrayed the intricate social networks at work in the congregation, though they also stemmed from my identity as a tall, blond, obviously Caucasian researcher in a nearly homogenous ethnic environment, a factor I will address further below.

I hesitate to generalize my congregational findings at this site to all "Chinese churches," for instance, but I do acknowledge the shared quality experience that young adult participants in my project assert regarding their experiences in the Chinese congregations in Toronto. On more than one occasion, participants stated matter-of-factly a variation of "if you've been in one Chinese church, you've been in them all." What such statements reflect is a perception or awareness in the second-generation cohort of the ethno-cultural markers that define their own lived religious experience, even if they are not completely serious. The fact is that the vast majority of Chinese congregations in the Greater Toronto Area were started and grew by virtue of the large influx of Hong Kong and Cantonese migrants after 1980 (see the previous chapter). Immigration from Hong Kong has since nearly stopped and been replaced by the arrival of significant numbers of Mandarin-speaking Chinese each year. This historical context is largely responsible for how and why many Chinese congregations, regardless of denomination, are multi-lingual and multi-generational, how they often organize with leadership structures centralized around key elders (leading to forms of what Fenggang Yang refers to as "seniorarchy," 2004), how they employ similar language and vocabulary to describe aspects of their ecclesiology (e.g. "fellowships"), and how they are linked through several extra-congregational networks. The dominant influence of the migration narrative and the subsequent and effective consolidation of ethno-religious resources in the evangelical Chinese community

are vital stabilizers that inform the lives of second-generation individuals. These factors have had such a prevailing influence that my participants, representing a variety of congregational communities, describe the structure and ethos of Chinese churches quite similarly.

ii. Toronto Downtown Church (TDC)

Started in the mid 2000s, the Toronto Downtown Church congregation gathered more than 500 attendees to its weekend service in a rented education facility in Toronto's core at the time of my research. Several respondents indicated that this site might be important because they had heard or knew of second-generation Chinese Canadians leaving their English-language Chinese congregations to attend. The congregation's ethnic diversity has, in fact, increased significantly in the last five to seven years so that at least a third of the congregation are young Chinese and Korean Canadians. This diversification has led the leadership group to incorporate Chinese Canadian interns and staff, with the senior leader joking publicly that they have become one of the largest Chinese churches in the GTA.

I frequently walked from my accommodations in Toronto to the TDC, often entering with others arriving on foot from the nearby subway station. The congregation is decidedly young, with the majority in their early forties and under. Another key indicator of this demographic was the presence of many children under the age of ten. The church runs a vibrant and often over-taxed children's program each Sunday, but offers no regular programming for those in junior and senior high school.

This congregation is part of the Presbyterian Church of America, with roots in the Reformed tradition. Consequently, their weekend service follows a structured format that invites congregants into a thoughtful and contemplative atmosphere. Ritual music is minimalist by evangelical standards, with downplayed amplification allowing congregants to hear themselves

sing, and paper handouts replacing the almost ubiquitous use by evangelicals of PowerPoint projections of lyrics. The liturgy frequently employs elements designed to involve the entire congregation, including responsive prayers, readings, times of silent reflection, and weekly participation in the Eucharist.

The pastoral leaders of the congregation were very interested in my research and participated in formal interviews and informal conversations over the course of my fieldwork. They were somewhat reserved about the possible public dissemination of my project given that previous journalistic representations of the community had not always been favourable, especially in relationship to the church's proximity to and perspective on Toronto's vibrant downtown LGBTQ+ community. They were open to me contacting parishioners and attending events, but asked me to be sensitive, discreet and to limit overt recruitment attempts. However, they facilitated my request for interview subjects by contacting several lay Chinese Canadian members and inviting them to participate. These connections resulted in a couple of interview contacts, which in turn aided in my snowball sampling. I interviewed a total of seven participants from this site.

I attended eight weekend services during my fieldwork at the Toronto Downtown Church, often staying after the service for a time of extended socializing. In an effort to account for and engage with the congregation's self-positioning as an urban community of faith, I attended two weekday events focused specifically on prayer for Toronto as well as one of their training events intended to explore the nexus of vocation and faith in everyday life. Roughly a third of those in attendance at these events were second-generation, Chinese Canadians. Finally, I was able to attend one of the church's downtown small group gatherings based on my connection through one of my interviewees.

iii. Toronto Uptown Church (TUC)

The Toronto Uptown Church is a suburban, multi-ethnic congregation that formed around 2005 out of two independent groups. It now attracts more than 800 weekly attendees at three weekend gatherings and runs a full complement of programs and activities that involve all age groups. Its location in a northern Toronto community required that I make a significant commute on public transit. I attended six Saturday night services as part of my observation, and while this service is smaller and not the primary ritual gathering of the community it does attract some second-generation Chinese Canadians (5-10 percent of service attendees).

This congregation is part of an expanding network of churches started in the United States in the mid 1980s. These churches are thoroughly evangelical, especially in their strident assertions of Biblicism and criticism of broader society. Their ritual spaces and activities are intentionally and professionally constructed to facilitate a celebratory social environment. Lighting and sound production play a key role in immersing adherents in a vibrant sensory experience, and the use of technology and two projection screens follow what has become normative practice for many aspiring and growing evangelical congregations. The liturgy of the community is understated and follows a typical congregational model of singing, community announcements, collection of monetary donations, and an extended deliberation on the Christian scriptures.

As with the TDC, I approached the TUC only after hearing that it had become a receiving community for young Chinese Canadians, estimated to be between 12-15 percent of total attendance by the senior pastor when I interviewed him. My initial contacts with the leadership were very encouraging, and the senior pastor was happy to share with me how their young adult ministry had expanded from less than two dozen participants to nearly one hundred in a short

time, largely based on incoming Chinese Canadians. However, I encountered tentativeness and resistance once I asked for more formal access to the community to conduct observation and potential interviews. The senior leadership of the community pushed me for a full disclosure of my own religious identity and positioning as an evangelical Christian before allowing me to proceed, something I did not experience at any other site. I was not immediately comfortable with this development due to my desire to maintain strong qualitative methodology via reproducibility in future research, but after consulting my advisor proceeded in good faith in an effort to collect some data from this valuable site. My access was restricted to the corporate weekend gatherings, and I was asked to refrain from recruiting participants at these gatherings. I perceived that these requests were made with an accompanying threat that my failure to comply would result in me being asked to leave. In addition to these restrictions, the leadership controlled my sampling completely by contacting a closed list of potential candidates by email. Some of these individuals responded favorably, though my attempts to engage in subsequent snow-balling technique were met with obvious tentativeness or deferral to the oversight of the senior leaders. Consequently, I conducted six participant interviews and one informant interview with the senior pastor but was not able to conduct observation beyond the weekend services.

        iv. Chinese Christian Fellowship

I included the Chinese Christian Fellowship (only ever referred to as CCF by my participants) after determining that my initial objective of finding and observing second-generation Chinese Canadians in multi-ethnic university groups such as InterVarsity (IVCF) would fail to account for the experience in ethnically homogenous groups. As one CCF alumni humorously stated in one of our informal conversations, "only a few weird ones [Chinese Canadians] go to InterVarsity."

The Fellowship at the University of Toronto is a student led and organized social group that has been in operation for a little more than 50 years. It operates as one of 19 such student groups on Ontario campuses, of which 15 use English as their only language. The groups organize under the umbrella of a broader student ministry called Ambassadors for Christ (or AFC), a ministry started by a former missionary to China to reach out to the increasing number of Chinese students coming to Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. What was once an outreach to international students has now become an umbrella organization working in consort with local GTA Chinese congregations to operate several events that draw in excess of 1500 Chinese Canadian youth and young adults annually, in addition to providing varying levels of oversight to the fellowships that are aligned with it. AFC plays an integral role in the broader evangelical subculture maintained by Chinese congregations in Toronto, though it remains somewhat independent of congregational control or influence. Its broader social impact creates a type of social pathway so that, by attending events during the junior and senior high life stage, many youth and young adults go into university with a knowledge of and social connections to the Chinese Christian Fellowships operating on campus before they arrive. Many second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals enter the rigors of young adulthood by joining these extra-congregational religious communities, which quickly surpass the congregation as the primary locus of their religious activity (as many participants asserted).

Each fellowship actually forms in its initial stages at an AFC event run every August called Frosh Connexion. At this event, incoming freshmen to various Ontario schools gather at a suburban Chinese church for a night of ritual worship and brief orientation to their looming university life. The most important part of the evening comes when the large group divides into smaller campus-specific groups to meet alumni from CCF that would be serving as leaders for

the coming years, and to socialize. It is at this event that I met several members of the fellowship, including the elected student Chair and primary leader. For those who organize the event, the impromptu ice-breakers and testimonies from third and fourth year students are intended to act as a bridge into the life of the on-campus fellowship, giving potential attendees a chance to connect and feel comfortable with other members of their freshman cohort in the hopes that this better improves the chances that individuals will join more permanently once on campus.

Once the fall term launches, the University of Toronto Fellowship kickstarts its schedule with events for incoming students, and a large welcoming session for the entire group. For much of the year the fellowship provides its members with opportunities for connection almost every single day of the week. My fieldwork involved attendance at several large group Friday meetings (which included participation in a small group), as well as attending other functions that were open to me, such as the men's fellowship, the Fall Retreat (at a cottage facility off Georgian Bay), outreaches in downtown Toronto, and an activism event co-sponsored with the well-known, international para-church group World Vision and conducted at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The CCF was the most welcoming and flexible of my groups, and I interviewed a total of fourteen individuals.

v. Teens Conference

This event has run annually since the 1970s, and now serves hundreds of Chinese Canadian youth each spring. It is largely organized, staffed, and run by the same organization that organizes the CCF groups discussed in the previous section: Ambassadors for Christ (AFC). As part of Frosh Connexion and the university fellowship groups, Teens Conference forms an AFC assembly line of events and communities produced for second-generation individuals that can carry young Chinese Canadian evangelicals from junior high through their university career.

Several individuals recommended that I attend the conference when I shared my research questions and interest with them, and consequently I attended two events (March 2013, and March 2014). I was there strictly as an observer, attending main sessions and large seminars in which I could sit without being a conspicuous presence. Several of my interviews came from young adult staffers and volunteers whom I met at the event or through engagement with other communities and ministries in the Chinese Canadian evangelical network. This site receives extended treatment in Chapter Five given its importance for second-generation experience in the GTA.

vi. Urbana

I incorporated attendance at Urbana 12 into my fieldwork because of the significant attention given to recruitment and fundraising efforts for the event that I observed at the English-speaking Chinese Ministerial. On December 27, 2012 - January 1st, 2013, I travelled with several hundred Chinese Canadian participants to join more than 15,000 evangelical Christian students gathered in the Edward Jones Dome in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. Drawn by promotional events, videos and pamphlets filled with bold imperatives like "Be Part of History" and "You Were Made for Something Great," these students were met by raucous music, addressed by several prominent evangelical speakers from around the world, and engaged in small discussions and seminars for five days. The purpose of this elaborate event, labelled as North America's largest missions conference, is to invite, encourage, and challenge university students from around the world to commit their lives to conservative Christian fervour, global evangelism, and local service.

Urbana has run every three years since 1946 and is an extension of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a Christian organization that begins, builds, and supports student groups on

university campuses. My key interest in attending was to observe both how such intentionally multi-ethnic environments are constructed by evangelical organizations, and how my Chinese Canadian participants negotiated their ethnic and religious identities in such environments. I limited my study to seven interview participants from this site for two reasons. First, the event occurred very early in my fieldwork before I had significant connection with English-speaking Chinese communities, and despite my repeated attempts to gain access for follow-up feedback I did not receive assistance from church leaders. Secondly, the sprawling nature of the conference environment itself made a rich and detailed description of individual experiences an especially daunting task for a solo researcher.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter describes the theoretical lenses I use to explain my findings and outlines the methodological framework that shaped the project. In consort with the historical background provided in Chapter Two, it provides the foundation for my primary claims. First, that like all social actors, my participants actively construct their sense of personal identity. Second, that they attempt to construct a coherent sense of identity by balancing two practices against complex, urban, and global forces: differentiating themselves from various groups, and negotiating bonds of solidarity with others. Third, that the evangelical Chinese Canadian network of congregations, groups, and institutions that they participate in performs a powerful dual function (see Giddens 1984): in how it shapes their sense of being Chinese and being an evangelical Christian person, and how it becomes the landscape on which they build a new or renegotiated sense of being Chinese and being evangelical. Fourth, that by using a multi-site approach I illustrate the significant role played by the local Greater Toronto Area in how my participants construct their ethnic and religious identities, and the need to incorporate similar methodologies when studying

religious practice in the 21st century. Ultimately, the veracity of these claims is supported by the

responses of my participants outlined in the following three chapters, to which we now turn.

4. Being Evangelical in a Chinese Community

In 2015, the Toronto Chinese Evangelical Fellowship released its public directory of Chinese congregations and ministries in the Greater Toronto Area (TCEMF n.d.). This fifty-seven-page document lists more than 200 congregations, organizations, and institutions that constitute and serve the evangelical Chinese Canadian community. As discussed in Chapter Two, these organizations provide a significant base of support and social structure that influences the experiences of my second-generation participants. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explain how this network shapes my participants' identity as evangelical Christians. I begin by outlining how most of the second-generation, Chinese Canadian evangelicals in my sample participate in religious communities set against a stable, suburban environment. I acknowledge how this social setting provides increased social capital to my participants, contributing to their sense of integration and decreased racism in Canadian society. In conversation with me, most claimed that they did not experience overt racial, ethnic, or religious hostility, but that – by way of contrast – Canadian social values of secularism and pluralism made their practice of evangelism difficult. My conclusion is that, in contrast to some American studies that find young Asian Americans constructing communities in response to racial and ethnic marginalization, my participants form their religious identities by creating distinct boundaries over and against the surrounding Canadian society on the basis of a religious identity – rather than racial or ethnic ones. This antipathy is rooted more in their identity as evangelical Christians than Chinese ethnicity or Asian racial identity. Thus, we must look at the composition and practice of their evangelical Christian identity.

4.1 Suburban life—suburban Chinese churches

Soong-Chan Rah's The Next Evangelicalism (2009) is a scathing, insider indictment of

racial exclusion throughout the history of North American evangelicalism. As an Asian American

pastor and theologian, Rah uses the following image early in his narrative to contrast the

Protestant establishment with new immigrant Christians:

> In Cambridge, there is a massive church building that dominates a central, busy
> intersection. In recent years, on a typical winter Sunday, that church will meet in a back
> room rather than in the main sanctuary. The church cannot afford the heat to meet in the
> thousand-plus person sanctuary…Within a half-mile radius of that church, there are close
> to fifty churches (most of them immigrant, ethnic minority or multiethnic churches) that
> are crammed into much smaller spaces. Right down the street from that large empty
> sanctuary are over five hundred worshipers from five different congregations meeting in a
> small, cramped space—the host congregation of about forty worshipers, a multiethnic
> congregation (with the largest group being Asian American college students), a Haitian
> congregation, a Cape Verdean congregation and a Friday-night gathering of Chinese
> international students (2009: 11-12).

Rah's argument proceeds from the simple observation that North American Christianity is

anaemic and waning in the prodigious cathedrals and auditoriums it still occupies, while new

immigrant groups are vibrant and growing though they remain hidden in strip malls or

commercial buildings. His objective is to challenge the systems of power and control that

marginalize new immigrant congregations, drawing attention to the opportunity such groups

present for North American evangelicals to grow, develop, and ultimately flourish.

Rah's reference to recent immigration presents a picture of how evangelical Christian

organizations have maintained their numbers over the past twenty-five years. Reimer and

Wilkinson (2015) found that immigration is one of the only growth factors for evangelical

denominations in Canada, a factor these organizations have been aware of for quite some time

(Reimer & Wilkinson 2010).[22] The sociological significance of religious affiliation among newer immigrants was a central justification for this project, as there is a gap in our understanding of what kinds of Christianity new immigrants are practicing and employing in Canada. These theoretical considerations might appear to parallel Rah's critical argument and lend themselves to similar conclusions, but once I began my fieldwork I discovered a significant dissonance between his depiction of immigrant Christian groups and the experience of my participants.

As I have already discussed in Chapter Two, the Chinese evangelical community in Toronto emerged early in the 20th century and has expanded significantly in the past forty years. The extension of the community from a handful of downtown Toronto churches into an expansive network of congregations, institutions, and organizations has created a substantial base on which second-generation Chinese Canadians are able to negotiate and build their own identities. My fieldwork experience suggests that many second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals in the GTA are far more likely to be forming their religious identity inside a modern, technologically equipped, spacious, suburban church facility than in a small, nondescript, urban, strip-mall, store-front meeting space. This is notable given Wilford's study of suburban evangelicalism in the United States, in which he contends that "place (and other geographical concepts such as space, landscape, and scale) emerges not only as a setting or stage for religious action but as fundamentally integral to such action" (2012: 4).

The settings that shape the religious lives of my participants emerged as a result of the suburbanization of the Chinese Canadian population in Toronto. Social geographers have shown that towards the end of the 20th century, earlier waves of Chinese migrants began to move out of the downtown core. By 1986, more than 53,000 Chinese had settled or resettled in Scarborough

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[22] Reginald Bibby (Hutchins 2015) has acknowledged that he did not account for the variable of immigration in his earlier work that forecasted the decline of religious affiliation in Canada.

and North York in the first round of suburbanization (Lo 2006a). This is significant given that in 1961 there were approximately eight thousand people of Chinese origin living in the GTA, 83 percent of these in the city of Toronto.

In 1996, at the end of the second wave, Scarborough and North York were home to 150,000 Chinese combined, an increase of 64 percent since 1986; in Richmond Hill, Markham, and Mississauga, the population was 100,000, of which 85 percent were new to the area (Lo 2006a). The influx of Cantonese-speaking Chinese from Hong Kong in the 1990s differed from earlier Chinese migrants in that they were able to bypass urban settlement in downtown Toronto's Chinatown for suburban living (Wang 1999; Lo 2006a, Murdie 2008, Murdie & Teixeira 2003). This suburban movement paralleled the fact that Hong Kong migrants came "with human and financial capital, management experience, business acumen, and transnational connections" and that they did not "need to stay in or around Chinese residential enclaves" because of their more diverse economic interests and assets (Lo 2006b: 86).

The (re)settlement of first-generation, Hong Kong immigrants in Toronto's suburbs is directly correlated to the vast network of Chinese churches that exist today, as is reflected in the demographics of my participant sample. Figure 8 shows the concentration of Chinese evangelical congregations23 in Toronto's north and east communities, the vast majority of which were founded by Cantonese-speaking immigrants who arrived in the last thirty years.

In addition to this network of congregations, there are a host of interdenominational and para-church organizations that serve and strengthen the Chinese evangelical community. One of my respondents called this matrix "the Chinese Christian system." When I asked him to define

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23 This figure represents the majority of congregations listed in the Toronto Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship directory (TCEMF n.d.).

Figure 8 - Chinese Churches in the GTA: 2015
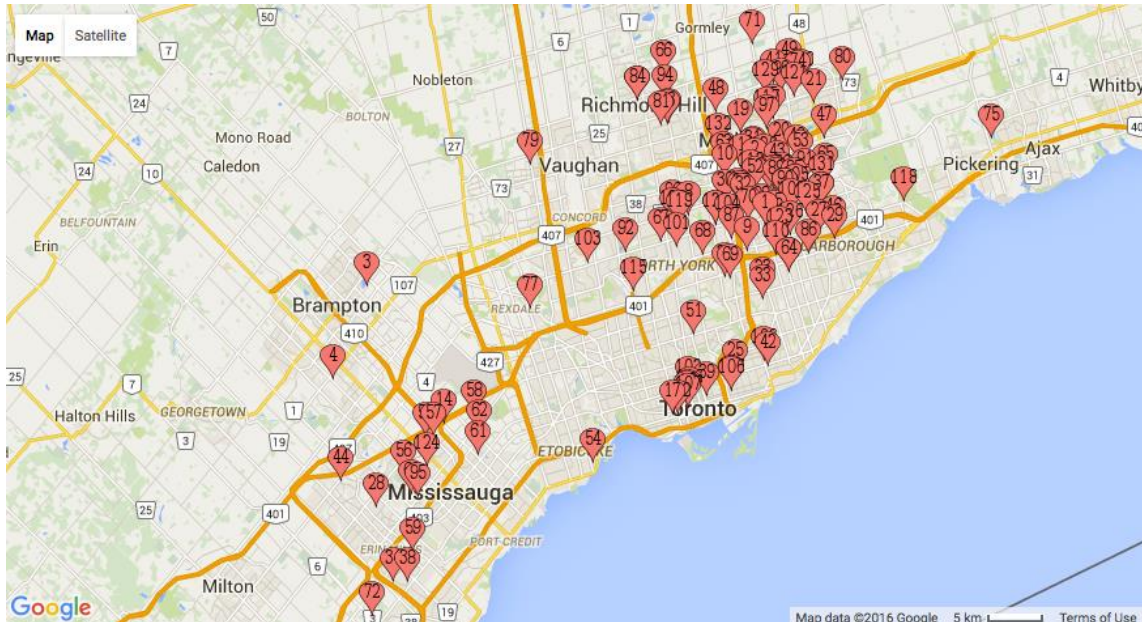
that term he laughed loudly before saying,

> the Chinese Christian community in Toronto is, I think, one of the…like really interesting Christian communities in Toronto. Um…they're very tight…I think Chinese Christians in general have a very strong focus on community and in-reaching. And they're very much about like 'Oh, let's have community events…let's have events that bring together several churches and have craze nights and things like TC [Teens Conference] and softball in the summer.' I think Teens Conference[24] and Chinese Christian Softball Association[25] are the two huge things about the Chinese Christian circle that if you go to either one of these things you pretty much know somebody from every Chinese church. Like everybody from the Chinese Christian community in Toronto knows that everybody has at least a few mutual friends with every other Chinese Christian in Toronto. No matter what school, what church you go to…like, it's guaranteed you have a mutual friend with, like, some other Chinese Christians. 'Cause I think the circle is very small in that way but at the same time it's very big because there's so many Chinese Christians" (May14-4).

As I conducted fieldwork at my sites, I became more aware of how large and integrated this

network is. This observation aligns with previous research that has described and theorized the

networks used by Chinese Canadians outside of, during, and after migration experiences

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[24] This event gathers more than one thousand predominantly Chinese Canadian youth each March, and I analyze it more extensively in Chapter Five.

[25] This Association served approximately 1,600 players and 38 churches in 2014.

(Wellman et al. 2002; Li 2005; Salaff et al. 2007; Yu 2015; Wong, L. 2017). It also serves as an interesting parallel to how historical and ongoing practices of *guanxi* ("a person's network of social connections composed of family, close friends, and people…interpersonally connected to one's family and friends," Taormina & Gao 2010: 1196) and *renqing* ("the symbolic and/or material resources exchanged in this web of social relations to establish or strengthen relations," Jia 2006: 49) have played a role in the development of the Chinese Canadian community for quite some time, as Alison Marshall (2014) argues. This project accounts for these terms and understands their significance for first generation Chinese immigrants, while noting that none of my participants used them or conceptualized their experience in the "Chinese Christian system" of the GTA with these ideas. However, the need to understand the persistence or adaptation of these practices as a factor for identity making represents a key opportunity for the extension of this research, especially given that previous work on Chinese evangelicals in North America has largely overlooked or just not found similar networks.

It is worth noting that the widespread establishment of suburbanized Chinese evangelical congregations and ministries appears to overlap with the economic stability and status of many Chinese immigrants arriving in the late 20th century. Most of my participants (forty-five of fifty-one) have benefitted from this stability in their religious experience by attending one of these suburban Chinese congregations – Figure 9 shows the congregations attended by my interviewees. This is not to say that all of my participants were wealthy. Instead, I observed that their experience in religious communities is marked by access to facilities and groups that possess significant physical and social capital.[26] This issue of economic stability and social capital is largely untouched in the scholarship on Chinese Christian groups, and a full

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[26] This in contrast to other immigrant groups: e.g. McClellan 2009, Matthews 2006, Ghosh 2007, Beyer & Ramji 2013.

investigation is beyond the scope of this project. However, the qualitative observations made during my fieldwork illustrate that the facilities and resources available to many second-generation, Chinese Canadian Christians are substantial and warrant attention, especially as they differ from those of other immigrant groups (e.g. as McLellan found with her Cambodian participants, 2009). For the most part, my participants are forming their religious identities in well-supported and institutionally vibrant communities in Toronto's suburban and post-suburban landscape. Additionally, the interwoven network of ministries, events, and fellowships that support congregational life provide significant social capital (Putnam 2000; Ostrom 2009; Halpern 2005).

The resources provided by this network increase and reinforce the psychological and social distance my participants maintain from the broader Canadian culture as part of their evangelical identity. The reality is that my participants form their evangelical identities in institutions and ministries that leverage ethnic solidarity and monetary resources to provide substantial security as well as opportunities for self-expression, self-development, and group partnerships through various life stages. The tension with the broader culture they perceive from the social position those institutions provide derives from their participation in an evangelical subculture, especially as they exhibit "a keen perception of external threats and crises seen as menacing" to values and institutions they feel are "true, good, and valuable" (Smith 1998: 121). This tension forms one of the major points of identity differentiation used by young Chinese Canadian evangelicals in my sample, and it is noteworthy that this contrasts with prominent American studies on similar populations. For example, Antony Alumkal, in his work on Chinese and Korean young adults in two New York churches, notes that evangelical, subcultural themes were present in his sample but only offers a couple of general examples (2003: 61-67). He goes

Figure 9 - Churches attended by participants
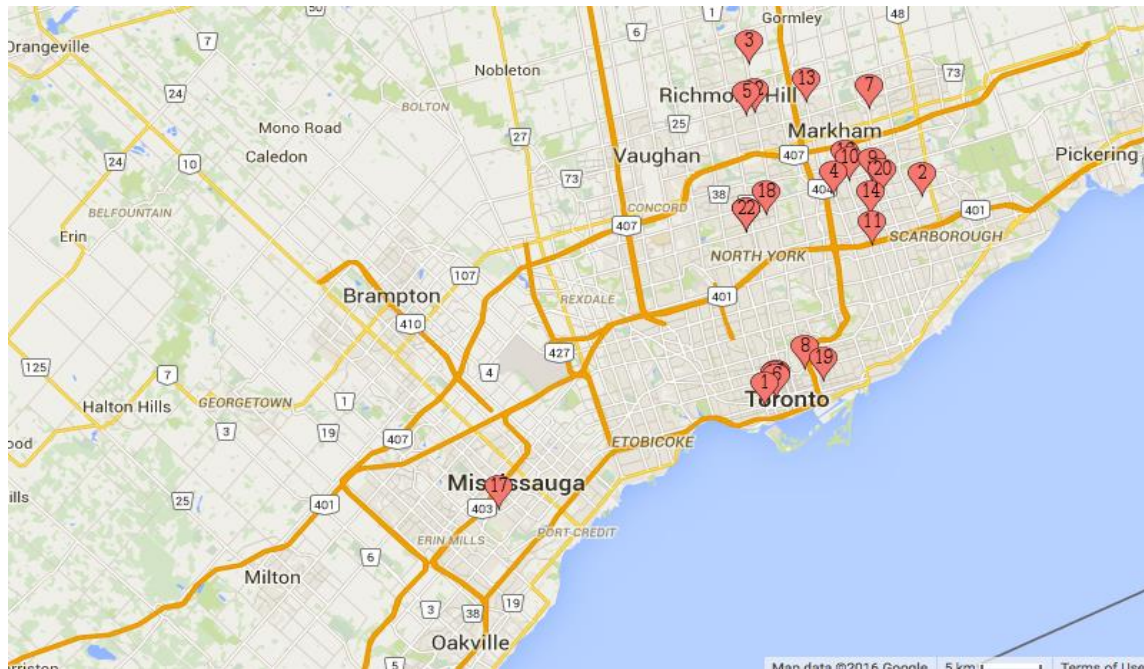
on to assert that the religious minority identities claimed by his Christian participants "do not replace" their status of being a racial minority (2003: 92).

Alumkal's prioritization of racial and ethnic identity is not unique, as similar themes characterize the conclusions of other case studies of young Asian Americans. Russell Jeung argues that racial differentiation and the institutionalization of racial minority status in the US have allowed some Asian Americans "to gain power, resources, and a new group identity" that he observed in emerging pan-Asian congregations (2005: 62). Rebecca Kim found that the dynamic university student ministries started by Korean Americans were a direct response to widespread racial and ethnic profiling, leading her participants to seek out communities in which they could hold a majority status (2006: 81ff). Pyong Gap Min, in his comparative study of young Korean evangelicals and Indian Hindus, found that while around 10 percent of the Korean sample claimed to have experienced prejudice on account of their religious identity, "a majority had encountered subtle forms of prejudice and racial slurs because of their physical differences"

(2010: 180). This led to his conclusion that racial and ethnic distinction were key factors in their

choice of religious affiliation and involvement. Each of these prominent cases found that the key

differentiating factor for young Asian Americans was that of residual and persisting racial

minority status, a status that was frequently articulated by their participants. What is striking is

that my participants offered a contrasting perspective, in which their religious differentiation as

evangelical Christians acts as a more significant identity marker than their ethnic minority status.

4.2 Ethnic solidarity and critical mass

One of the crucial discoveries of the interviewing process was that my participants feel a

far greater sense of separation from broader Canadian society on the basis of their religious

identity than their ethnic or racial identity. While the following chapter looks specifically at the

negotiation of ethnicity in the second generation, a brief summary of interview findings related to

ethnic identity is valuable for comparison here. Interview subjects responded to a pair of

questions related to possible experiences of marginalization or discrimination: the first related to

their religious identity while the second focus on ethno-cultural identity.[27] The question related to

religious discrimination was paired with questions related to evangelism and barriers to

evangelism to provide a more nuanced perspective on participant's conceptions of evangelical

practice. These results are discussed further below. The question related to ethnic or cultural

discrimination stood alone and yielded some interesting results.

First, four respondents offered unequivocal affirmative responses to having experiences of

ethnic or racial discrimination. These include the story of a young woman who acknowledged,

> Uh, yes [I have experienced discrimination]. More so when I was…or at least maybe I
> saw it more when I was in high school and university. University…little things like
> people imitating Chinese to you…Also, when I was in high school, my father picked me
> up from school and I walked out to a bunch of guys throwing snowballs [at him and]

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[27] I received 42 and 40 responses, respectively.

yelling racial slurs. So…I wasn't impressed…neither was my father! He kept yelling at them (S13-2).

Another example came from a young male who related,

> One distinct memory…I went to [summer camp]. And one of the kids, he was Caucasian, and, uh, he said something about my family heritage. I don't know if you know this, but I think about a hundred years ago a lot of Chinese people came over to Canada to work on the national railway. So he made a smirky comment about something like that…
> SW: Like, about working on the railroad?
> Ya, exactly. And that's one of the distinctive moments of racism that I can remember (F14-11).

In addition to these instances, another three individuals mentioned having people yell disparaging racial slurs (e.g. "chink") at them in public. Two of these individuals hastened to add that this had "only happened twice" during their time in Canada, while the third went on to assert that he faces far more prejudice from "Chinese people themselves" on account of his choice to pursue a degree in the Humanities instead of something "practical" like Engineering or Business.

A second group of respondents all downplayed instances of discrimination or marginalization either by infusing humour into their response or by referring more generally to their experiences. Some claimed to encounter stereotypes directed at Chinese Canadians, like one young male who told me, "[I didn't experience discrimination] in Hong Kong, but here definitely in terms of everyone thinks I'm good at math and computers or something (laughing). And I'm like "Noooo, I'm not good at math! I'm not good at computers!" (A13-3) Two young male participants (D12-1; Mar14-2) told me about others assuming that they knew Kung Fu when they were younger while another, when asked if he'd been marginalized, said, "Uh, there were stereotypes in high school. I mean, there were expectations that I was good at math and science…In that respect, it was kind of like racism…but, like, it was always pretty subtle" (Mar14-1). Several individuals used similar language to describe their perception of

discriminatory practices in contemporary Canadian society. A young male, who was actively

involved in performance arts claimed that he had been marginalized later in his life, but added,

"Ya. I think not blatantly but…but I think especially in the media industry, like, Asians are very

under-represented. Um, but I think it's not that big of a problem. But then for me, because I want

to act, like…it affects me a lot" (May14-4). Another told me a story when I asked if he'd been

mistreated because of ethnic or cultural identity. He said,

> Because I'm Chinese? Um…ya (voice dropping in volume)…that's actually happened
> before. I used to play a lot of basketball. So, most people who play basketball are
> black…they're not Chinese, right? So, they're like…especially with pickup basketball,
> like YMCA somewhere like that, it'd be like a bunch of black guys 'We need one more
> guy', and I'd be like 'Oh, I want to play'. And they're like (mimicking a shrug)…right?
> And I'm just like 'What?' They're like 'You're Chinese.' And I'm like 'So?! I'm good
> (laughing),' and they're like, 'Okay'. So things like that…but nothing too bad. More
> subtle than anything (Jn13-1).

What such examples illustrate is that racial tension and conflict are still present in Canadian

society, and that these social realities have impacted the lives of young Chinese Canadians in the

21st century. What they cannot account for are the ways that some of my interviewees may have

experienced racial marginalization without being aware of it, for example through the "white

washing" of Canadian media (Fleras 2011) or the sexualizing of Asian male bodies (Fung 1996;

Chua and Fujino 1999; Gerschick 2005; Kong 2006). However, they illustrate that my

participants, for the most part, still feel secure and integrated within Canada's multi-ethnic

landscape, and that they feel that their networks of human and social capital have prevented them

from experiencing systemic injustice or abuse.

A third group of responses illustrates this final point even more clearly. Several

respondents asserted that they had not experienced any adverse treatment related to their cultural

background. One young woman said, "I don't think so…because I probably grew up most of the

time in very Chinese settings. We may joke about it internally (laughing), 'We're just all

Chinese'" (Ag13-2). A young male paused briefly before responding, "Not that I can think of.

Simply because…growing up, and even now I'm pretty much around Chinese people most of my

time. Or at least in the presence of other Chinese people" (A13-6). Another young male framed

his answer specifically within the context of his university experience,

> At UofT, no. Because we have a lot of Chinese students. And I think growing up in Canada the majority of my friends were so used to diversity. So everyone…you can joke around about stereotypes and whatnot but there's really no segregation or marginalization because someone is of a particular race. We all get together…we have common interests, and friendship develops. Just because you're Chinese doesn't mean I'm going to marginalize you for some reason, right? Predominantly, I've grown up in the Chinese culture…in the environment, but I'm still fine. I'm not at a disadvantage or marginalized when I hang out with people of other races or other cultures (F14-9).

Others responded with surprise that I would suggest that discrimination was possible, like this

young male,

> [Because] I'm Chinese? Um, no. Just because, you know, we've been living in Scarborough and Markham and, you know, there's definitely more Chinese people here than anywhere else I can see outside the GTA. So we're very comfortable here! You know, there's more Chinese signs in certain parts of the town [than English ones] (chuckling) (F14-6).

This refrain of Toronto's diversity was repeated by others; for example, one young female stated

that she felt ethnic tension "not so much in Toronto, because…I guess, Toronto's generally more

multicultural already" (May 13-1), and a young male who told me, "I mean, growing up in

Canada you don't face that much racial discrimination…especially in Toronto" (Mar14-2). It is

worth noting that outside of its major cities, Canada's population tends to be far more ethnically

homogenous. However, what this final group indicates is that the influx of Hong Kong migrants

alluded to earlier, along with the suburbanization of Chinese GTA residents, has had a substantial

impact on the lives of many second-generation Chinese Canadians.

Several participants mentioned these demographic changes when they described the

increasing numbers of Chinese students in their schools. For instance, one University of Toronto

student discussed his experience of growing up in North York, which he claimed was "actually quite famous in China and Hong Kong for being a top area of immigration" (S13-5). He went on, "Demographically, my area is mainly comprised of Chinese people…with smatterings of Korean, Middle Eastern, and Caucasian ethnicities…As years went on, um…there were less and less, uh, non-Chinese people. So as I went into junior high and especially my high school, it was primarily Chinese. 95…97 percent." A young female shared a similar story when describing how her family had a home built in Markham. Initially she attended a school in Thornhill where "at least half [the students] were Jewish." After returning to attend school closer to home in Markham, she noted "that there was, like, a lot of Chinese people. Mostly Cantonese people though." She continued,

> I thought I went to an elementary school that had a lot of Asian people; this high school was, like, next level!!! Like, oh my…I don't even know…I just want to say…and then I was like 'Oh my goodness, I've just never seen…' And we joke about it too. Like, we always joke about how when we walk through the main hallways, which are always packed, it's like walking through China sometimes (laughing). Anyway…um, ya, it was so many Chinese people. But a lot were also, like, international students because the rankings were good so a lot of international students came in. And that was also the time where you…even when you go into school at first, you're like 'Oh, so many Asians!' But you can see the cliques…like, of the people who are more Canadian born Chinese…we don't speak Chinese at all. And like the people who speak Chinese…and then, like…ya, there's a clear distinction (May14-2).

For many, social developments like these have provided Chinese Canadian young adults with significant demographic critical mass, which has in turn alleviated some of the racial tension described in well-known studies of young Asian Americans. The lack of ethnic tension results in many Chinese Canadian young adults feeling a sense of familiarity with the surrounding culture, one that is, conversely, problematized by their negotiation of their religious identities.

4.3 Chinese Canadian evangelicals – embattled?

Christian Smith, in his theory of religious subcultures, argues that in modernized societies the strongest religious groups are those that "create both clear distinction from and significant engagement and tension with other relevant outgroups" (1998: 119). Smith's proposition bears true in the lives of my participants in that the factor that distinguishes them as evangelical more than any other is their active process of differentiating from and engaging with the mainstream culture. To access this data, I asked participants whether or not they had experienced marginalization or discrimination on account of holding a religious identity. These answers were nuanced by their responses to two questions related to evangelism: the first intended to determine their alignment with Bebbington's notions of conversionism and activism, and the second to determine where and how they felt their beliefs and practices interacted with Canadian society.

As with the question related to ethnicity, responses were quite varied. 29 percent of respondents (15) said that they did not feel they had experienced any discrimination based on their religion. In a few instances, participants cited pluralism and tolerance in Canada's society as offsetting negative responses to their religious identities. One young woman stated,

> I don't think I've come across any [religious discrimination], or at least if there was, it wasn't to my face or it wasn't serious enough that I felt the impact of it. I feel like in North America, people are…not everyone's ready to embrace it, but nobody's, like, openly discriminating. Ya…they're pretty respectful that…it's the whole idea, like, "You believe what you believe…I believe what I believe…as long as you don't impose your beliefs on me then we can have a good relationship (A13-5).

Another young female articulated a perceived ambivalence to religion in her experience of Canadian society, saying,

> I don't think anyone has said to me, like 'Why would you make this life choice?' Most people when I've said it have been more like 'Oh', and then they don't really (chuckling) participate in more conversation. Or, there are odd times when people will be like 'Oh, okay. I've thought about going to church before.' Or, 'I used to go to church before', but I haven't had any…like, persecution….More people have been more, like, I don't know if

accepting is the right word, but they're okay with it. And they may ask follow-up questions. But they're just like 'Oh, that's good that it works for you', kind of thing (Ag13-2).

A third woman responded by alluding to Toronto's diversity, "No, I've never felt discriminated against [as a religious person]. Because, I think, Toronto's a very multicultural city…and like…and people here are generally more liberal and they're careful with the things that they say. They try not to discriminate [against] other people" (S13-4). Most of those who denied experiencing any tension on account of their religious identity affirmed the safety and openness created by Canada's pluralistic social environment, and some who claimed to have experienced a type of "silent, passive" resistance (as one interviewee put it, N13-2) downplayed such instances in deference to Canadian social values of tolerance and acceptance. However, in a couple of instances interviewees felt that those values were not extended to their religious identity. One university student, when asked if he'd experienced mistreatment on account of being religious responded,

> I don't directly think so. Um, there's a lot of implicit tension at, I guess, the most public settings. So school, or whatever. Um, not to make [religion] a big deal, maybe? Uh, but I've never been attacked for it or obviously discriminated against.
> SW: Can you give me an example of what you mean by implicit?
> As in no one will take offence if you admit to it in a public setting. Like, if I told my professors. But neither will they…but they might not want to care or really make it a part of conversation at all. Um, maybe the most offence I find is a lot of any sort of comedic comments that are usually, not usually…but like if there are any religious humour, it is typically at the expense of...
> SW: Was the humour derisive?
> [He nodded, but continued] …Well, if it is directed it would be at Christianity, not any other religion. Which is in line with political correctness. You're allowed to make fun of Christians, but not anyone else (laughing) (F14-7).

Similarly, a married male in his early thirties downplayed religious tension during our conversation only to articulate a perceived marginal status.

> SW: Have you ever felt marginalized or discriminated against on account of identifying as a religious person?

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P: Uh…ya…absolutely. But not, I guess…not overtly. Like, not directly. You certainly feel that way at work…in the cultural context at work. You sort of don't want to say that you adhere to any religion because it would go against the, sort of, very Canadian ideals of diversity and multiculturalism and what not."

SW: Does multiculturalism not account or allow for religious identity?

P: Well, it seems like there's a little bit of a double standard. It's multiculturalism as long as you're on the outside…sort of, like a fringe group or a minority group. Identifying with Christianity being, sort of, the dominant cultural foundation is not popular, right? Christianity is often seen as 'Really, you're part of them?! You really believe that?!' And so…you certainly feel…like, I certainly feel that I'm not free to, uh, identify with Christianity (F14-1).

Both of these examples illustrate the dynamics of differentiation for some evangelical individuals. They do not appear to have experienced overt, systemic, or intentional discrimination on account of their religious identity, but they do form a religious identity informed by a strong sense of tension with the surrounding society. In this way, their evangelical, "embattled" identity provides cognitive assurance and group cohesion based on a perceived or contrived resistance to broader social norms. Additionally, their responses mirror those of my entire sample in that they do not acknowledge the significant resources and power that inform their religious identities via the many prominent facilities and ministries available to their second-generation cohort.

Those claiming to have experiences of religious tension offered a variety of examples. A few (3), like this young woman, claim to experience intolerance in their family:

So my family is Christian…my immediate family's all Christian. But then because my father has so many brothers, right? And my mom comes from a pretty big family too. And they aren't Christians. Ya, so because of that then part of the marginalizing and also, like, there's a phrase in Chinese which is like 'Oh, don't talk about Jesus' but then, like, basically it just means like, 'Oh, talking about Jesus is so boring' kind of thing. In a sense it's like a ridiculing of what you believe too. More so in that setting; not so much with my peers (May13-1).

As another example of this, a female participant talked to me about how her non-Christian father, several years after her conversion, still "constantly makes jokes, or inappropriate sarcastic

comments" (S13-1). Most of these reflected his critique of theism in general and his rejection of it as anti-intellectual.

In addition to these instances of familial tension, several (6) individuals said that they had experienced religious discrimination or confrontation while in high school or university institutions. One woman, a recent university grad, related an instance

> where this girl I was working on a project with found out that I was Christian. And then she was making rude remarks about how dumb that is, and how it must be because I can't think for myself and I need to rely on something. She was making very personal attacks, and everyone was like 'Woah' (laughing). And I guess…that wasn't normal, right? It's not something I normally encounter, or did at university (S13-6).

Another woman discussed a recent experience she'd had in a university Humanities class.

> P: My professor knew that I was Christian and I think there were a few other people that were Christian. And he kept misquoting the Bible…and then he would say a quote and he's like 'Well, isn't that what the Bible says?' I'm like 'Yes, but…', and he would cut me off...Anyway, I remember him targeting and it wasn't just one time, but it was constantly. Because we were studying sociology, and we looked in the past about how it was predominantly Christian. So, Christians mistreated a lot of people…that was back then, right? So he was saying that it's difficult…that God makes it so difficult for rich people to go to heaven, and things like that. And I knew he specifically looked at me when we were talking about the Bible and how much he does not agree with it. I specifically remember that incident, 'cause it was not that long ago.
> SW: Was that more awkward…embarrassing? Or was he being malicious?
> P: No, it wasn't embarrassing. And I don't feel it was malicious. But I felt like…I was upset because he misrepresented the Bible in that way (F14-4).

These examples coincide with a prominent theme in the instances of tension with non-religious individuals described by my participants. Namely, many of my participants claim to have experienced discrimination or resistance to their religious identity when they have attempted to enact that identity publicly and openly. One respondent (A13-1) told me that he had experienced belittlement, and when I asked for an example he said "So, like when we share the gospel," which was a reference to their church's regular practice of going out from door-to-door and in local malls to discuss religious topics with random individuals. Another told me that "at

school, right, definitely people know I'm a Christian. I'm outspoken about that; people know that. And I would say that there are people that would challenge me" (Jn13-1). A young male in his late twenties described how marginalization had occurred at his job where his coworkers "obviously…know I'm a Christian," but that "because nobody is Christian there…a lot of the practices…you know, praying before meals and whatnot, just seem very foreign to most people" (Ag13-1). Another student contended that his efforts to "make it known that I'm a follower of Christ" in his assignment submissions had resulted in lower grades on occasion (F14-9). Another interviewee had feared that this would happen to her if she chose to write from the perspective of her faith (S13-1). Yet another example emerged as I spoke with a young male in his late twenties who runs his own business. He told me that he regularly tried to "make my faith a pretty obvious part of my work thing" and that "there are times when I see and meet [clients] like that and they're like 'Aw, this guy's a wacko. Definitely not booking him. Let's try to end this conversation really quick…now'" (N13-2). For this Chinese Canadian entrepreneur, religious discrimination was seen as a necessary cost or by-product of being open about one's religious beliefs and practices. Such instances highlight the evangelical practice of differentiating their religious identity from the surrounding culture but show that the tension experienced by individuals is often born from their efforts to promote that identity in the surrounding culture.

This enacting of a public or overt religious identity is central to evangelical self-consciousness, despite the fact that this practice runs counter to the normative cultural expectations of modern secular societies such as Canada that have cordoned religion off in the private, individual sphere of personal, family, and local-community life (Casanova 1994; Bramadat and Seljak 2008). This structural shift was attested to, for example, by one young interviewee who works in the health care system. She asserted that "absolutely" there are

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obstacles for those trying to evangelize in Canada. When I asked her what those might be she

replied, "professional, uh, regulations."

> SW: So in the workplace you're not allowed?
> P: Uh, I'm not allowed to initiate conversation. I am only allowed to answer. So if my
> client brings it up, then I am, by my professional body, then allowed to speak on that topic
> (S13-2).

Evangelical adherents tend to emphasize the theological ideas of Jesus' sacrifice and its

significance for the individual person (see Bebbington 1989). Those convictions mesh with the

evangelical use of literalist (or, at the very least, conservative and devotional) readings of the

Christian scriptures to fuel forms of activism and missionary efforts aimed at making more

individuals aware of their religious message and encouraging them to make a personal decision in

response to that message. Many participants were asked whether evangelism (the active effort to

share the story of Jesus and convert individuals) is an important facet of Christian life; all

answered in the affirmative. For many of them, the answer to this question was self-evident

because "it's what we're called to do. Um, (pause) and it's through evangelism that we…we

share (pause), you know, the reason of our faith. And, uh, share the hope that we have" (Feb 14-

1).

In order to uncover any perceived tension between their espoused commitment to

evangelism and the Canadian cultural parameters limiting religion to the private sphere of

individual lives, I asked my participants if they felt there were any restrictions or barriers for

those who might want to evangelize in Canada. Interviewees were nearly unanimous in their

belief that they face barriers in their efforts to enact this vital religious practice of sharing their

faith with others, and as the health-care professional cited above illustrates, this is tied to

structural changes in Canadian society sparked by secularization.

As secularization leads to previously dominant forms of religion becoming non-compulsory, religious pluralism is often a result. Many respondents referenced this when they shared with me how they saw some variation of Canada's cultural liberalism, religious and ethnic diversity, or increasing secularization as key factors that created tension for evangelistic adherents. In many instances, it was unclear whether the participant had actually received a negative response to their own evangelistic efforts, or if they were merely drawing on widely held (but unexamined) conceptions of the surrounding society. For example, two participants discussed the resistance to evangelism as being rooted in the benefits experienced by individuals living in a modernized society. One young male told me that "comfort, and materialism" are factors in people's resistance to evangelism. He continued, "Just the idea that 'I'm living in a pretty comfortable place, got all that I need', you know, 'I've done a lot of things for myself, so I don't really need another god or something in my life.' That's the biggest obstacle" (F13-1). The young entrepreneur cited earlier noted a similar challenge that he felt is paralleled in "a lot of the other, I guess, first class countries. If everybody's already doing okay, if you're not in need, like, if all your buckets are filled, what do you need God for? So they think, right? What do I need a Saviour for?" (N13-2) He went on to link this perspective with a corresponding morality that some people claimed: "you hear all the time…'I'm a good person. I'm a good person, right? Like, all my good outweighs my bad. Why do I need a Saviour? I'm not that bad.'"

Similarly, most participants made broad, sweeping statements about Canadian society, including the young male who referenced a law he thought had been passed in the previous year which would constrain Christian ministers "from preaching certain things." When I asked him to clarify which legislation he was referring to he was unable to recall, and quietly retracted his statement. In this way, many interviewees appealed to various aspects of Canadian culture as the

"ever-present 'other'," an element that Smith (1998: 124) notes is central to evangelicalism's

subculture. One young male talked to me about how one of the obstacles to evangelism is "the

idea of absolute relativism. 'What works for you, works for you…that's fine. 'If you want to be

Christian, that's okay. If I want to be Buddhist, that's okay'…kind of thing. So the idea that all

roads lead to heaven is definitely a big obstacle" (A13-3). These comments relate to the

continuing processes of secularization, where privatized religion becomes the prerogative of

individual choice – and once confined to that private, individual space, it become non-

compulsory and religious pluralism results. I heard this theme described again when a young

female in her early twenties shared that she felt there are barriers to Christian evangelistic

practices because

> Canada's very accepting…I don't think people readily talk about religion. And it's
> generally a very accepting environment. That's kind of Canadian culture, where you
> accept other religions and, you know, and…we're a very accepting culture. So be it with
> homosexuality…with, I don't know, differences and religious background, cultural
> background and, anything really, I think Canada tries very hard to be very accepting of
> that. And then it kind of seeps into the culture because you don't want to be, um, you
> don't to be too pervasive [sic] in any way. So you…so, it's a fine balance between, like,
> 'Do I want to evangelize to them and make them uncomfortable 'cause they have a
> different religious background?' or 'Do I want to be like that nice person who is living the
> Christian life to present to them…to show godliness in that way?' (S13-3)

These two young adults made explicit reference to other religious groups, and the fact that the

perceived Canadian value of religious pluralism and acceptance runs contrary to their

responsibility to evangelize. A couple of students felt that resistance to evangelistic efforts is tied

to inherent misunderstandings and stereotypes of what Christianity is. One related that,

> I guess there's just so many definitions of what Christians are…like, there's a lot of
> stereotyping. But it does make it difficult because when you do tell someone that you're a
> Christian, you don't really know what kind of stereotype they think you are. I mean, like,
> 'Oh, are you…'…I guess Christian stereotypes like, I don't know, the Ned Flanders of
> Simpsons. Like, even in the media, you do see a lot of the stereotypes and stuff like that.
> And the mockery of it…ya. There's a lot of…like, you just don't know what they might

be thinking when you say that you're a Christian. And usually it's not a positive thing (F14-3).

Another student, studying in the Humanities, offered a more critical perspective on this point. When asked if he felt there are barriers or resistance to evangelism in Canadian society he responded enthusiastically,

> Oh yeah! But I don't think that's just in Canadian society. I think people…it's just a foundational problem, in a sense. That people are being raised with biases, right? Also, that the road to understanding the gospel is an uphill battle…considering, you know, you start in a place where you should know nothing about the gospel. But as well, you learn the horrors of the Church, what has been done. Like, Indulgences, Crusades…even still what's going on now with a lot of, you know, Westboro Baptist Church. Um, Christianity is framed so negatively that I think it's always an uphill battle…So I think it's a very uphill battle considering how people are evaluating, like, things that would seem to be dissenting with Christianity. I think there are definitely barriers. Plus, histories that we have to be very concerned about…And I think especially that in America we are fighting an uphill battle because we are a fairly remarkably educated population as well.

The student went on to contend that the percentage of the North American population with Bachelor's degrees is 24[28] percent, "…so people are in contact with knowledge that the Church does screw up a lot, and plus politics lean towards a specific lens. It sees the Church as conservative…you know, that it's against progress, that it hates gays, that it hates women. And it's framed in a very negative manner by the press, by society, even by the government itself" (S13-5). While articulating a perceived antipathy between his religious tradition and his secularized social world, this student simultaneously alluded to the fact that some of the tension is historically and culturally justified. This more nuanced perspective juxtaposed sharply with another male student who responded to the question of whether there are barriers to evangelistic practices immediately, "Oh ya. Very. Like, for example….one of the biggest things, right? Gay

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[28] American census data from 2009 shows that the figure is around 28 percent (http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p20-566.pdf: accessed May 24, 2016), while Canadian data from 2006 shows it is approximately 24 percent (http://well-being.esdc.gc.ca/misme-iowb/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=56: accessed May 24, 2016).

rights…abortion. Those are two of the biggest issues" (Jn13-1). He continued, albeit randomly,

by citing two recent incidents involving reactions to comments by professional athletes[29] as

instances of what he felt were clear examples of LGBTQ+ rights activists going too far. Despite

his somewhat scattered response to the question, he attempted to clarify how he felt these

instances expressed an underlying tension between his Christian identity and the surrounding

culture.

> …I feel that people don't want to hear what the gospel is, and the saddest thing and the
> worst thing is that when you really talk to these people and really ask them 'What's the
> gospel?' they're like 'I have no idea what it is.' They don't know what the gospel
> is…they don't know the story. And I think that's one of the things…is that there are all
> these issues out there and we've been stereotyped as these, like, bigots that, whatever, 'I
> hate gay people'. So that's one of the things.

This young student attempted to differentiate himself from a society he believes is more liberal in

its social ethics than he is. However, he does so in a largely symbolic fashion in that he did not

offer instances from his own experience or recognize that the examples he offers as barriers to

evangelism do not correlate to the response he claims individuals make to "the gospel" (a

recurring motif I address further in Chapter Six). He serves as an example of evangelicals

differentiating themselves from the surrounding culture because they feel their religious beliefs

and practices are marginalized and distinct. Two other individuals articulated a similar sense of

resistance and they overtly distinguished the exclusive claims of Christian truth from Canadian

society. The first, a civil servant in downtown Toronto, stated,

> Uh, ya [I think there are barriers to evangelism]. Culturally, Canadian culture…you sort
> of ask someone about their religion and you say, 'Ok. I respect that.' Um, but…the whole
> thrust of evangelism is that there's a…there's a greater message. There's a more real
> message. There's something…this is real, and it is better than anything that you've heard

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[29] Roy Hibbert, an NBA player, made comments after a game in June 2013 and was subsequently fined
[http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/nba-ball-dont-lie/roy-hibbert-apologizes-saying-no-homo-calling-media-164648719.html: accessed May 24, 2016]. Adrian Peterson, an NFL player, shared his personal views related to gay
marriage on a radio show in May 2013 [http://espn.go.com/nfl/story/_/id/9340634/adrian-peterson-minnesota-vikings-ok-gay-teammate: accessed May 24, 2016].

before. And so, there's a natural tension there between the Canadian culture of acceptance and tolerance of everything…right? And that goes counter to evangelism's, I guess, main thrust that 'Ya, there is something better. It's not all the same' (F14-1).

The second, a male university ministry worker, drew an explicit link between religious pluralism and evangelical practices and truth claims. He said,

A lot of times we're very careful with our words and we don't like offending people. So earlier I mentioned here in Canada a lot of spirituality is accepted…In one sense, the struggle is how do you communicate truth but also in a respectful way that allows people to be able to make decisions for themselves. So create…allow enough tools for them to explore guidance towards certain questions that they have to answer for themselves, to make a commitment for themselves--without shoving things right down their throat. So in the Canadian context where everyone is more respectful I think sometimes you hear conversations more like 'Yeah we're Christians but that's okay.' We don't want to follow up on that because there is this sense of we don't want to be crossing into saying we think Christians are better than other people because there's that whole 'Every spirituality, every religion is accepted here and everyone is meant to be equal', and that kind of, uh…a culture. Instead of how I think in the US or in, for example England, they are generally more like 'This is what it is. We'll give it to you straight out'… And then it's more acceptable to be offensive. Like they assume 'It's okay…I offend you, you offend me.' Whereas in Canada it's like the last thing you want to do is offend people. So we talk about it on a level which is at times a bit more difficult…in our exploration of the truth. Because truth has to be, truth should be very objective. Yeah, truth should be very objective. Whereas we're like 'Oh yeah it's okay. It's subjective to what you think or who you are.' And so I think that's the difficulty in evangelism here in Canada (D12-1).

What these examples illustrate is that my interviewees feel a distinct sense of difference from aspects of Canadian society, and that this perception (in line with Smith's theory of subcultural differentiation) defines and strengthens the boundaries of their evangelical religious identity. They see themselves as contrasting with the surrounding culture simply by virtue of being a religious person.

Several of my participants responded to the question of barriers to evangelism by problematizing overt practices of proselytization, such as speaking with strangers, preaching in public spaces, or even addressing religious themes directly in close relationships. One young woman stated that she was "not super gung-ho about…just, chucking it [the Christian message] it

in people's faces and, you know, throwing them a Bible" (S13-3). In cases like this, interviewees

suggested that a more subdued or private approach might be more effective. The young university

minister I quoted above offered this extended comment,

> I think that the number one challenge of evangelism here in Canada, and I'll use probably my experiences in student ministry here, is that our idea of…in one sense it's the idea of evangelism. We usually think it's, uh, you go out…you use either tracts [printed in English]…you speak [publicly], I think probably at times borrowing from the crusade movements in the past. To think about evangelism in that sense you go out you use tracks you go out with your Bible when you quote things to people and you say 'You have to make decisions right now.' I think that's one of the things. I think in that sense there's less of an understanding of how…evangelism has a connection with community. It's always like 'You go out there two by twos…go!' ...Whereas I personally believe evangelism is you go out you talk with…evangelism doesn't necessarily mean you go out. If people come to you, you express your faith through the values that you hold. And that is very real and…real ways of relational evangelism. Um…the perception is not you…you are trying to create converts… That kind of, whole, like, their conversion is your primary goal. But the idea I'm looking at…how evangelism can be more properly done is relationally caring about the person as a whole and speaking the love of Jesus Christ into them of how the Gospel transforms their lives. Yeah, how the gospel speaks into their life and how it's really good news to their life and that's how it is (D12-1).

Another interviewee felt that religious and cultural diversity in Canadian society should inspire

sensitivity in those wanting to share their faith.

> People are so diverse, right? So you never really know what you're getting into until (chuckling)…unless you spend a lot of time with the person. Um, so it's really hard 'cause then you don't know how to approach the person. You don't know exactly what their worldview is. What their past…their history…what their experiences are. It's just difficult to do in a sensitive way, 'cause everyone's so, like, 'We want to embrace everyone equally', and it's just…like, how do you ever talk about anything sensitive? I guess that would be the main thing" (S13-1).

Another respondent, a 23-year-old female working in marketing, critically examined overt

evangelism efforts by pointing to how "social factors" might be a barrier for evangelism in

Canadian society. She explained, "Well, if it's a friend [you're proselytizing], then [the barrier is]

more internal. It's like, 'I don't want to jeopardize the friendship.' I think that's a personal

struggle. If it's just street evangelism or that kind of stuff, then you start entering the 'I might be

stepping on someone else's toes by imposing my religion on them'" (A13-5). She added a

critique of public, overt evangelism efforts later when she stated, "I think it's difficult for people

to really accept Christianity, at least in such a short, like, single meeting." This participant's

argument against public evangelism efforts was based on a possible lack of effectiveness, but her

comments regarding the personal tension felt by trying to share one's faith suggest that she

favours a more subdued approach due to the potential stigma (and resulting counter pressure)

invited by expressing a religious identity in social environments.

Another female respondent juxtaposed overt evangelism efforts with her own approach.

SW: Do you feel there are hurdles for evangelism in Canadian society?
P: I definitely can't be like 'Do you know what I believe in?' [in mocking, southern accent]
SW: What do you mean? You can't be overt?
P: I think…you can't…like, I think it's more effective when you are…like, the way that I do it, I think is easier. More comfortable, and more impactful. And then, there are instances…like, I have shared the gospel at work. With two people. A Muslim coworker, and a Jewish coworker. But in both circumstances those people were open and asking questions, right? So there was a two-way dialogue, and not, like 'pounding that book' method. Ya, but there are certain things that really…you shouldn't be saying. (chuckling) Like, 'I don't believe in gay marriage.' Like, that's (continued laughter) not going to fly very well in a professional setting.
SW: So there are some issues that, if engaged from a religious perspective, a wall goes up?
P: Yes, for sure. Ya, there was a coworker of mine…one time we were doing coffee and she told me that her daughter…she had conceived her daughter through in vitro. She was Catholic, and the Pope was talking about certain things that you shouldn't be doing, and I think that was one of the things. And she mentioned how she believes in a god, but she doesn't believe in Christianity. She doesn't believe in church and authority…church authority and stuff like that. So, there are certain topics that I think are really touchy…ya, like, that shouldn't be the face of evangelism, right? You shouldn't be using issues of controversy to be making a point. That's not going to sit well with anyone, and it's not really loving anyway. You're not sharing the right qualities about God, or people are not perceiving the qualities of God that you really should be sharing. So those hurdles [to evangelism] are there, but I don't see them so negatively.
SW: Do you mean that you see them as a by-product of people not evangelizing properly?
P: Yes! (S13-6)

This participant situated her efforts to share her religious identity firmly within a private, relational context, and implied that this was a more appropriate social behaviour than more blatant, public efforts. This illustrates how some in my sample have adapted to the privatization of religion, adopting a non-coercive position in their relationships and acknowledging the aversion others might have toward being proselytized. I found her comments similar to those of a married mother of two I interviewed just a few days later.

> SW: Are there boundaries or limitations for those trying to evangelize in Canadian society?
> P: Um, I think in Canada because it's a pretty tolerant society in general…I do think that it's not terribly easy. I'm thinking about the times when I tried to evangelize in the workplace. Um, I wouldn't come up to them and be so bold and be like, 'You know, I love…', like, talk about Jesus right away. Like, I feel like you have to have a connection with them and maybe connect with them on a personal level for them…or maybe feel that they…like, they may feel a need for God. Because to just openly talk about it…um, or to even be the person that initiates the conversation, I feel that…I don't know, there's a slight stigma to Christians in the sense that, um…how do I describe it? It's been so long since I thought of it this way. Um, like people are…they know about Christianity, or they know about it but they don't know what it really means. And so they just kinda brush it off, being like 'Oh, that's nice for you', right? And so it's really hard to make it feel like…or at least show them how important it is for me. Like, I can say things like 'Oh, you know I go to church on Sundays.' And they'd be like 'Oh, that's nice for you.' Or I can say 'I give to this cause', and it happens to be a religious cause…and they'll be like 'Oh, that's nice for you.' But you know…so you can kinda keep it, like, arms-length kind of thing. Like, I can make it clear that I'm a Christian, but to actually evangelize to them and make whatever I believe relevant to them, I feel like you have to go to a…like, you have to have a good personal relationship with them. Like, I wouldn't feel comfortable just meeting someone and maybe not knowing them that well and start telling them about Jesus, you know what I mean? I feel that there'd have to be a certain level of trust before I can really open about that.

She remarked that her colleagues expressed the most interest

> when they were going through a hard time and we were talking and sharing about more personal things. That's when I find it's more, at least…I don't know if I'd call it my style…or that's where I find it's more easy to really give a better picture of what I believe to them. In that kind of context, as opposed to…you know, a less deeper kind of relationship (S13-7).

These evangelical responses to Canada's secular, pluralistic, and liberal society offer a snapshot of how my Chinese Canadian participants differentiate their religious identity and the practice of evangelism they claim is important. Their views are perhaps best summarized in one of my male participant's comments.

> SW: Are there barriers to evangelism in Canada?
> P: In Canada? Um, I think it's just that people are so open to everything but so closed to Christianity. Um, like if you talk to any atheist or agnostic and they'll be happy to hear about Buddhism or Islam or…all these different religions. But if you talk to them about Christianity they're not interested 'cause they think they already know it. But then once they hear that your Christianity is different from the Christianity that they know, then they're still interested. I think we live in a pretty open…open-minded country, so in Toronto at least it's pretty easy to evangelize. But I think it's…people care more about relationships than having the gospel shoved in their face, you know. Like, I'm sure the street evangelists at Yonge and Dundas…like, they do good work as well.[30] But I think it's just, uh…I think people care more about the relationship and seeing how the gospel is lived in you first before they want to hear it. Ya (Mr14-2).

While they unanimously feel that evangelism is a crucial part of Christian practice, most participants believe that their efforts to perform this practice would be opposed or restricted. This perceived limitation is often vaguely attributed to a secular, pluralistic, and liberal Canadian society, forming a significant and pervasive out-group for young adults formulating their religious identities.

In addition to their discussion of religious secularization and pluralism, three of my participants cited ethnic diversity as a barrier to evangelistic practice. The first claimed to have practiced street evangelism with church and university fellowship groups, and in response to the query of what barriers he and others face stated "I guess some of it is culture, actually" (A13-6).

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[30] These "preachers" are well-known and documented. See, for example
http://www.citynews.ca/2016/04/15/confrontational-toronto-street-preacher-says-he-was-attacked-over-religious-beliefs/: accessed May 25, 2016,
https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/06/23/street_preachers_sling_religion_at_yongedundas_square.html : accessed May 25, 2016, or more humorously, a Yelp review for one of these individuals:
https://www.yelp.ca/biz/jesus-guy-at-dundas-square-toronto : accessed May 25, 2016.

He went on to say that when participating in these activities he felt more comfortable speaking

with other Chinese Canadians "just because of the cultural thing. I can relate to maybe where

they're from, or where their family's from. That's just an extra topic to talk about, to break the

ice with them I find." His comments were mirrored in the response of a young woman who made

it clear that she felt there were inhibiting factors for evangelism in Canadian. She said,

> Absolutely. I'm Chinese…someone else might not be. There's…just Canada in general with so many different people here. Number one, they have many different cultural backgrounds that might limit that, but then they also have their own religious, or just in general their faith beliefs. So, that concept of…they might not have a particular religion that they associate themselves with, but they have some sort of belief. And…as much as I can tell, even what the world calls today 'They're spiritual.' So, those kind of barriers…it's one of those things where it's like…Okay, in [my current local church] ministry or whether I was [in a different city for a professional practicum] and we were ministering primarily to mainland Chinese people, I didn't speak the language. And because I didn't speak the language, I could only go so far with my English and my actions to evangelize, in that sense. Right? The biggest barrier was for them to hear a gospel message from me, and that was just not my role. Like, I knew it…that was not what God intended for me to do (S13-2).

This young woman clearly positions herself as an English-speaking Chinese Canadian in her

account, and claims that cultural and linguistic diversity create barriers for her to effectively share

her faith. Similarly, another young woman shared a personal story about her evangelizing

practices to illustrate a similar point.

> P: I remember going…so at [my church] we have this thing…where we go to [the] mall and then we share the gospel. It's led by a young adult. And so I remember going [there] and then I didn't find any language barriers until I met this woman who only spoke Mandarin. And I had, like…well, actually, she understood Cantonese too. And I was trying so hard to communicate with her. And I think she'd heard the gospel before so she knew what we were talking about, but I did have a really hard time talking about salvation.
> SW: So [you feel there are] language barriers?
> P: But, being an Asian…I don't feel any hostility from other people (F14-4).

For these three young adults, the practice of evangelism is perceived as more challenging because

of ethno-cultural pluralism. In each case, they appear to leverage or utilize common ethno-racial

markers in an effort to mobilize their religious identities in public spaces. The young male participant addressed the perceived barrier to overt religious expression by drawing on cultural (or even second-generation) commonalities with other Chinese Canadians, while the two females shared specific examples in which their identity as young Chinese Canadians had been the common ground on which to evangelize publicly while simultaneously emerging as a hindrance to their evangelistic effectiveness.

Despite their perception of barriers to efforts to spread the gospel in Canada, young Chinese Canadian evangelicals do in fact attempt outreach efforts in the GTA. Several members of the Chinese congregation I did fieldwork in, along with several from other sites, had done "mall evangelism."[31] One participant chuckled as he described some of what transpired during these outings, making an interesting distinction between their methods and those of others. He said that they go to a GTA mall

> and share the gospel with, just, strangers. We would ask them if they were up for having a spiritual conversation. And if they were, then we would broach the topic of Christianity, what they believed in, what we believed, and share our testimony with them. So it wasn't very aggressive. It wasn't us, you know, bringing out a milk crate and preaching on the sidewalk or anything like that (Ag13-1).

The same interviewee, when asked if there are social barriers or restrictions for those who want to practice evangelism in Canada, chuckled and said,

> People think we're freaks. Ya, people think that you're taking your faith, just, too seriously. Or that, um, ya it just seems that you're over-zealous. And actually I try to qualify that at the very beginning by saying that I'm not crazy (laughing). It usually breaks the ice a little bit. And I actually try to share my fears in evangelizing with strangers, 'cause obviously I don't feel very comfortable evangelizing with strangers. And it's kinda interesting, because once you expose some of your vulnerabilities most of them kinda loosen up. And they realize you aren't crazy…you're having a difficult time talking to me as well. And so it doesn't seem as strained…it makes you a little more relatable.

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[31] I was not able to observe any of these activities as the church did not run the evangelism program during my time with the community.

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I've found that the conversations generally go better that way, when they don't think you're crazy (chuckling) (Ag13-1).

Another participant from a different site shared with me that "other times when I'm out, um, evangelizing or sharing the gospel [on his university campus or in a nearby shopping district, he clarified] there'd be times when you just get rejected, and that's that" (N13-4). These comments mirrored those of the young man mentioned earlier who claimed to have experienced belittlement when engaging in public proselytizing. He shared with me that they would offer tracts (small, paper leaflets containing religious information, printed in English) to those who did not want to converse or if an individual wanted more information. When I asked him just how prevalent his experiences of being belittled were, I was surprised by his quick reply, "I would say three out of seventy" (A13-1). This response points to the lack of actual or significant discriminatory practices experienced by my participants even when they conducted public, uninvited forms of proselytization. One young woman, whose story of experiencing embarrassment while proselytizing was mentioned earlier, reiterated that the result of evangelism was often not adverse,

> Because even I remember going to share my faith with students at Ryerson [University in Toronto], and they were all very nice. And even though, um…we were sharing the gospel and sometimes they didn't want to listen…we'd just say, 'Okay, that's fine.' But even some of them, they weren't against it…but they were thankful that we had that conversation with them. And they really appreciated it. So it was interesting, and I don't ever remember anyone treating me poorly because I was a Christian (F14-4).

This perspective is similar to that of another young woman who, after clarifying that she has not engaged in public ministries like these, asserted, "I've talked to people at church. They do, um, the [evangelism] program. Like, evangelism everywhere, or everyday…or everyday evangelism or something. And they do mall evangelism, right? So they said…a lot of the feedback is people are very open to spiritual conversations" (A13-5).

These evangelism encounters serve a dual purpose. First, they provide participants with tangible experiences of religious action corresponding to core beliefs that they hold. Secondly, the experiences reaffirm the outgroup status given to the outside world by those in the subculture, regardless of whether the experience is positive or negative. If positive, participants perceive their social milieu as receptive and affirming to their differentiated religious identity. If it is negative, participants' religious identity is bolstered via the dynamics of subcultural strength as the individual or group senses tension with appropriate outgroups. In this sense, even "failure" in evangelizing others is a "success." Whether successful or not, these efforts strengthen evangelical Christian identity among participants.

4.4 Conclusion

It is noteworthy that the majority of my participants, in contrast to those in case studies of Asian American evangelicals, do not articulate a sense of tension in Canadian society on the basis of their ethnic or cultural background. While a few offered examples of discriminatory encounters and racialization, most downplayed the occasional stereotyping they have encountered or denied having experienced intolerance because of Canada's demographic diversity and value of acceptance. Similarly, many of them stated that they have not experienced prejudice because of their religious identity. A distinguishing feature of the interview data is that, while responding participants unanimously felt that there are barriers for those who evangelize in Canadian society, most did not reference specific instances of being harassed or abused when practicing evangelism.

What did emerge from their responses is the common thread of cultural and religious diversity posing a challenge to Christian outreach practices, which they hold as central to their evangelical faith regardless of whether they practice or not. For some, this challenge and the

tension it causes is seen merely as a by-product of trying to share one's religious identity with those who have a different one. For others, it is the Canadian values of tolerance and acceptance (emerging from secularization and pluralism) that represent barriers to success in evangelization. Some interviewees respond to this tension by attempting to redefine evangelism as a private, relational activity. However, several others in my sample continue to make public efforts to form their religious identities in the process of "sharing" them with others. For those in the first group, their religious identity is formed and strengthened as they attempt to negotiate the challenges of evangelizing with sensitivity and an awareness of diversity. Those that continue to engage in overt proselytizing practices see their religious identities strengthened as they interact with a culture they perceive as restrictive or hostile when, in fact, it is often more tolerant and ambivalent in their experience. The vast majority of my interviewees, therefore, feel a much stronger antagonism with Canadian society as they negotiate their evangelical identities (through subcultural differentiation) than their ethnic ones. This is due in no small part to the wide-spread, stable, and suburban network of churches and ministries which give them venues and opportunities in which to build and enrich second-generation communities centred around ethnic, Chinese Canadian identity. I turn to a closer examination of these now.

5. Being Chinese in an Evangelical Community

The previous chapter investigated the ways in which second-generation Chinese Canadian young adults differentiate themselves as evangelical Christian adherents. One of its key insights was that they feel a much stronger and more pronounced sense of antipathy towards the surrounding society on the basis of religious identity rather than on the basis of their ethnic identity. The goal of this chapter is to investigate the ethnic identity claims of my participants using a social constructivist perspective. This approach allows me to recognize the social processes my participants utilize as they negotiate their sense of ethnic identity, while also providing a framework in which I can begin to understand the significant role played by Chinese Canadian ministries in the lives of interviewees. I do this by exploring the significance of three sites in particular: the Toronto Chinese Church (a local, English-speaking congregation), Teens Conference (an annual youth conference hosted by a large Chinese congregation in suburban Toronto), and a chapter of the Chinese Christian Fellowship (a social and religious student club at the University of Toronto). These ministries, and others like them in the GTA, provide havens for ethnic identity formation. This means that they provide social spaces in which ethnic identity can be engaged and embodied without outside social pressure, and where it can be reimagined and reinvented with considerable freedom. This chapter evaluates several variables that contribute to identity formation in the strong homogeneity of English-speaking, Chinese Canadian ministries and raises the question of how that homogeneity persists as many Chinese Canadian young adults integrate professionally and socially into the broader Canadian society.

At the centre of my evaluation is an apparent contradiction. Despite my participants' steady engagement in ethnically homogenous environments, one of the themes that emerged during the interviews (and was confirmed by observation) was that several of my participants,

regardless of fieldwork site, located the source of their perceived ethnic identity not in the religious organizations I was studying but in their domestic or familial sphere. One young male alluded to this when I asked him whether or not his church observed Chinese culture or holiday celebrations. "Uh…I don't think we officially identify any Chinese holidays. I mean, we identify stuff like Family Day…sorry, not family day. Father's Day…or Mother's Day. Or Christmas, Easter, New Years. But I don't think we celebrate any Chinese festivals" (Ag13-1). He did not think there was "official" mention of Chinese New Year or Mid-Autumn. "Not officially. I'm sure people do celebrate that…I mean, my family celebrates it too. As a nuclear family, but not within the church. So we don't hand out red pockets32 at church…we don't give each other moon cakes at church or anything like that." I asked him whether those things were done at home, or with extended family. He answered quickly, "Um, with extended family members…even some church family members too. It's just not really within the context of church itself. Friends and family." A young woman from the same congregation stated that she thought holiday celebrations and rituals "were present at home," but she did not think they were ever part of a large group gathering at the church. She then stated candidly, "I think it's safe to say [that] English congregants, unless they celebrate with their family, they might not even know what [those holidays] are" (Ag13-2). Another young male responded quickly when I asked him to describe how and when he engages with Chinese culture.

> P: Hmmm…definitely not with people my age (chuckling). More usually when I'm with my parents, and the festivities going around. That's basically it…'cause I don't feel much, uh, just when I'm talking to them in Chinese. It doesn't feel like I'm exemplifying or absorbing myself…engaging myself in that culture…
> SW: It's just familial?
> P: Ya, exactly (F14-5).

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32 Also known as red packets or envelopes, these are common in several Asian societies. Usually, they are comprised of cash gifts placed in a small envelope and are given to unmarried adults and children during holidays or to celebrate special occasions such as New Year's or a wedding.

Another male student similarly informed me that, with regards to embracing Chinese culture, "the most significant part is me calling my family, and they don't speak English. It's all in Chinese and obviously because they're an older generation…like, a large part of the culture I grew up in hangs with them much more so than I […] they're more ingrained in that particular culture" (F14-12). Some individuals who had left Chinese organizations also reiterated these themes. One such example came when a thirty-year-old male responded emphatically to my question of whether leaving a Chinese congregation had created a sense of disconnection from Chinese culture or tradition,

> Uh, no! I don't think so. I mean…we…for myself, I didn't really identify my church attendance as a sort of connection to my Chinese heritage. It was…church was the Christian part of my heritage, and that's what I identified. Like, my Chinese sort of identity I would suppose came from my family and sort of extended family…and, sort of, the ways that we would celebrate those things. Um, church was…you know, if I identified as a Chinese Christian…it was like Chinese came from family, Christian came from church and that experience (F14-1).

I asked him if there were ways that he accessed or interacted with Chinese tradition, and he continued.

> Ya, I guess the general interaction with my parents. Um, you know…a lot of it comes from that and just talking about everyday things. Speaking the language with them. Um, other things are holidays and events…like, recently just Chinese New Year. And any of the other things that come up…we still observe the lunar calendar birthdays of my parents and my grandparents. 'Cause they don't know when they were born in the western calendar…they just know their lunar calendar dates.

These sentiments reveal that a certain segment of my participants situate their ethnic affinity and identity in their experience of familial life more than the religious organizations and communities I investigated. For them, ethnic identity starts from and "consists of a set of values and ways of relating that have been socialized through home life" (Jeung 2005: 29), regardless of their participation in ethnically homogeneous organizations. Reports that they position their sense

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of connection to Chinese culture within their domestic lives mirrors the survey findings of Hiller and Chow (2005), who discovered that some young Chinese Canadians in Calgary felt strong appreciation for their Chinese identity through their use of Chinese language and their familial attachment without feeling separated from the surrounding society. In other words, their ethnic identity was not marked by the need or compulsion to join ethnically bounded communities so much as by their appreciation for their family life. The participants in my study mentioned above appear to follow this pattern in which, despite "a clear leakage away from intimate knowledge of Chinese culture" (Hiller & Chow 2005: 87), their experience in Canada's multicultural society is marked by "the persistence of ethnic differences in the private sphere" (Hiller & Chow 2005: 91).

I include these participant responses, in part, because they offer a critique of assumptions that ethnic affinity correlates directly to participation in ethnic religious organizations. However, I also have to account for the fact that they continue to end up in Chinese Canadian religious communities. Doing so allows my participants' responses to expand on earlier research. Previous studies have investigated how and why ethnically homogenous religious organizations continue to be vital social environments for Asian American evangelicals beyond the first generation (Min 2010; Kim 2006; Jeung 2005; Alumkal 2003). Moreover, the question of why ethnically homogenous religious organizations remain a formative social environment for subsequent generations of Asian American evangelicals has shaped these studies. Researchers, not surprisingly, have observed a plethora of responses and varying levels of attachment to ethnic values and practices. For example, Min found that many second-generation Korean Americans were participating in congregations that rejected the "overemphasis on Korean culture" (2010: 142) and the "emphasis on participation" (2010: 144) found in the immigrant congregations they grew up in, opting to attend English-speaking congregations that prioritized spiritual authenticity

and engagement over ethnic distinctiveness. He also discovered waning observance of Korean holidays in English-speaking congregations. Russell Jeung, in his study of emerging pan-Asian congregations in California's Bay Area, noticed a similar pattern in which immigrant cultures (including Chinese) were retained "in symbolic terms and not concrete, objective, or fixed traits" (2005: 17). He contended that these symbolic expressions of traditional values have been adopted "selectively" (2005: 33) in ritual and community practices by subsequent generations, culminating in pan-Asian congregations that provided solidarity by de-emphasizing ethnic distinction and promoting active engagement with evangelical subculture. Both Min and Jeung relied heavily on the accounts and characterizations offered by religious leaders, though Min did incorporate some survey data of second-generation participants to offset any bias introduced by this approach. By way of contrast, Alumkal investigated the opinions and experiences of Chinese and Korean young adults themselves. Many of his participants did not see their ethnic churches as helping them stay in touch with ethnic culture (2003: 104), though Alumkal does not offer extensive analysis as to why they felt "more at home" (100) in ethnically homogenous congregational environments. My interview method attempted to complement these existing studies by asking second-generation Chinese Canadians directly how and to what degree the Chinese organizations they participate in inform and shape their sense of ethnic identity. My fieldwork observations were intended to expose any participant biases that might have influenced these interviews, as the large group environments I visited were constructed without expressed or obvious efforts to account for me as an ethnic outsider.

Ultimately, these sites provide an insight into how some young Chinese Canadians form and construct ethnic identity, even as they sometimes downplay the significance of those venues. Given that I observed very few non-Chinese present in the English-speaking environments I

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studied, these sites provide an opportunity to explore connections to Karner's discussion of how ethnicity is shaped by structures of action, ways of seeing, and structures of feeling that, in turn, are used by social actors like my participants to construct "ethnicity as a powerful force" (2007: 11). Consequently, this chapter acknowledges and outlines the significant number of vibrant and healthy ethnic organizations in Toronto that have attracted many second-generation Chinese Canadians. My discussion of three fieldwork sites below provides clear evidence that a range of ethnic identities are possible, and that these sites offer havens in which ethnic identity can be encountered, explored, and affirmed regardless of whether or not any organization, community, or individual explicitly claims those identities. I provide a snapshot of the varied ways in which some second-generation Chinese Canadians are, in fact, differentiating themselves from the surrounding society on the basis of ethnic identity, and investigate the role played by religious organizations in this process.

5.1 Toronto Chinese Church (TCC)

Toronto Chinese Church sits just off of a major thoroughfare north of Canada's busiest highway. Easily accessible from multiple parts of the city, it houses three distinct Chinese Canadian congregational groups divided by language: Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. During my attendance at the church, the average number of attendees in each congregation was 313, 107, and 230 respectively.[33] I arrived each Sunday as the first Cantonese congregation was exiting the main auditorium, and the English congregants were waiting to enter and begin. With the adherents from multiple groups arriving and departing, the main lobby or vestibule of the church would become crowded and loud as people greeted each other happily. This inter-congregational

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[33] These averages are derived from the recorded attendance from the three congregations the previous week, which is listed in the handout bulletin each Sunday. Please note that the Cantonese congregational total were combined from two separate meetings.

space was the only place I heard Cantonese and Mandarin being spoken while visiting the church. As with every other Chinese church building I visited, English and Chinese signage were prominently displayed, with both English and Chinese reading materials and handouts available for pickup at tables set up to greet congregants or to publicize special interest events. I often met and chatted with my second-generation participants in this lobby space, catching them as they said hello to elderly members of other congregations or as they emerged from elsewhere in the building. Once we entered the main auditorium, the volume of conversations dropped significantly. The space itself was simply decorated but bright and welcoming, with congregants filing in to get a seat as musicians and speakers prepared on the stage. The services often started slightly late on account of having to wait for the Cantonese group to vacate the space, and there were many weeks when approximately one third to half of the attendees arrived after the service had begun.

The worship rituals followed a basic liturgy of congregational singing, corporate prayer, announcements, a sermon, and a closing song and benediction. These were performed in a "reverential and subdued" (Jeung 2005: 33) style similar to other Asian congregations. The church I attended employed a broad range of congregants in ritual leadership, with both men and women leading the singing, serving as instrumentalists and ushers, and reading the Christian scriptures. Male staff members gave all sermons I heard while at the church, with three exceptions: two visiting missionaries (male), and the pastor of the Mandarin congregation (female) who spoke using an interpreter. All lyrics for the singing and Scriptural reading were projected onto a large screen behind those leading, in a style that is now ubiquitous in evangelical churches in North America. On either side of this screen hung two decorative banners displaying the annual congregation theme: one in English, the other in Chinese characters. These banners,

along with the Chinese-language songbooks, Bibles and literature available in the seatbacks, were the primary markers of Chinese material culture present in the space.

During my fieldwork, I did not hear any speaker or leader use any Chinese dialect while leading a ritual practice. It was also very rare for me to hear Chinese dialects spoken in or around the English congregation when it was gathered. None of my participants claimed that they read any of the Chinese signage posted in the church (even when literate). These observations and discoveries led me to see a separation between the material and spatial representations of cultural Chinese identity, and my participants' use of and engagement with them. This separation is articulated somewhat by one participant who, when I asked him how he would describe the church said "For me, I think of (my church), like, my father's home…we're a very typical Chinese church," but when I asked him if he thought attending the church helped people maintain Chinese identity in any way he replied, "I wouldn't say so. I think…I think we have like Chinese traditions mixed in with Canadian. But I feel like we're losing them. Like, it's not really being maintained. It's not being done as well […] I personally don't like the word Chinese in our name. I wish that they would change [it]. I wish that we would be more multicultural…more inclusive" (A13-1).

It is crucial to consider how and by what means this site and others I visited create a social environment in which my participants connect with and employ a sense of ethnic identity. They do not appear to be doing so by providing a social environment where Chinese language is retained or required, nor through the regular practice of Chinese traditions or holidays in and around the ritual community. Sixteen of the fifty-one interviewees (31 percent) in my entire study claimed to be literate in Chinese while all but six (89 percent) claimed to be able to carry on a conversation in a Chinese dialect. Four respondents (21 percent) from the Toronto Chinese

Church claimed to be literate, while all reported having some speaking competency in a Chinese dialect. It is important to note that these percentages of language use and traditional practices are based on self-report, which may be inaccurate. They also do not account for the role internal subethnic diversity might play within the Chinese Canadian evangelical subculture. The strong representation of participants' tracing their heritage to Hong Kong and Cantonese identity in my sample might account for softened attachment to Chineseness among some young Chinese Canadians due to the influence of British rule and transnational movement on the "hybrid culture" that developed there (Chun 1996: 121; Bosco 2005). However, that same strong representation could presumably allow for a consolidation of that specific subethnic identity over against other Chinese Canadians. I did not observe the latter, nor did those of other subethnicities report any instances of tension in our conversations. The point is that, when asked if and how their English-speaking congregation contributes to their sense of connection with Chinese culture and background, many participants alluded to the presence of what Karner calls "structures of action," the rules and resources used by social actors and the social structures they produce (2007: 29). Some did so when asserting that their church actively creates a social environment where cultural practices can be experienced, while several others, curiously, took the position that their church is not conducive to the growth or development of Chinese identity.

Some, like the participants I mentioned above, identify the significance of their family to their sense of ethnic connection because their family attends one of the congregations at TCC. One young male described his experience in the church this way.

> SW: Has being involved in a Chinese church contributed to any sense of Chinese identity for you?
> P: Yeah, I think so. I think if I didn't even have this, then I'd feel even more, like, Canadian.
> SW: How has the community done that?

P: I think a large part of it is that I grew up here, and so my parents were very involved when they were young. And because of that they had a lot of friends who are more their generation who have seen me grow up and every time I come into Sunday they'll recognize me and I'll say hi to them in Chinese and we'll kind of talk in Chinese. And I guess a lot of that…I attribute my Chinese identity towards. Just the fact that I know a lot of Chinese older people and that they speak to me in Chinese and I have to communicate with them in Chinese. And that kind of keeps at least a hint of my Cantonese speaking skills going at least. On a weekly basis.
SW: You ever use those skills in other places?
P: Only when I'm with my grandma, and my aunts who are in town or my uncles, or family dinners. So that helps a lot too, like, family time outside of, just, my regular schedule. 'Cause at home it's all English speaking, because my brother and sister don't speak it [Cantonese] as much. And they've kind of lost even, I find, the drive or desire to want to speak in Cantonese that much (A13-6).

A similar sentiment was repeated by a young woman who responded to my question of whether

the English congregation created a sense of connection to Chinese culture with an immediate

"Yes." I asked her to explain how.

P: Well, I can really only speak for myself. But…like, it's the time when I'm spending a lot with Chinese people (laughing). So outside of this environment, I'm not spending a lot of time with a bunch of Chinese people, unless it's my family.
SW: So is it just the people…or are there events or practices that are overtly cultural?
P: Like…no, we don't really celebrate any festivals. We don't…like, when we eat, like, I guess…sometimes…we really eat whatever good food is around here. So mostly Korean (laughing). And then once in a while I will go [to] this Jewish restaurant…for shawarma. So, I mean…not really.
SW: So the church is the only environment where your relationships are defined by joint ethnic background?
P: Ya, just here and my family (S13-6).

Some participants believed that ethnic identity was shaped by the English congregation in

more subtle ways. One young woman (Ag13-2) gave an affirmative answer, though somewhat

apprehensively. "Mmmmm, I think there are subtle ways", she said. I asked her how this

happened and she replied,

Um, so I think in subtle ways because we still are Chinese that there are subtle connections to, like, sometimes there are some odd references that you know someone will say that only Chinese people would understand. And I think those are kind of thrown

in or sometimes in a sermon or like in a reference but most of the time we're actually more…I think we try to be cognizant of trying not to make those ties to be more accepting. Ya.

I asked her if those types of references were made with regards to prominent Chinese practices or celebrations. She replied, "I think so. Like things like Chinese New Year. Like, 'Oh, a lot of people are away because it's Chinese New Year.' But if you were in a congregation where it's very diverse you would never just (chuckling) point out one holiday." I asked whether those announcements were made from the front…or if the observing of these holidays is assumed by people attending. She thought for a moment and then responded,

> I think (pause)…I think it's underlying. So, it's not necessarily referred to. I think they'll make a comment, 'Oh! We're missing so many people. Oh, it must be because it's Chinese New Year.' But it's not like 'Oh, it's Chinese New Year. We're actually going to have a big celebration.' I don't think there's that…especially not in the English congregation. I think Mandarin (her emphasis) congregation…they would do more of that because many are more recent and trying to identify with…like, they don't identity with Canadian culture. And so…holding on to Chinese values. And then Cantonese obviously. Even growing up I think I didn't know very many Chinese holidays and traditions. Um, I think it's (laughing) just because people were just kinda like not sure and working all the time…they didn't have time to do that.

What this woman's response displays is that some young Chinese Canadians identify the Chinese cultural elements of their religious communities, and that they differentiate their experience and engagement with those elements from those of other generations or immigration waves. However, some could not define their sense of connection to ethnic identity despite agreeing that the church might foster or enhance that connection.

> SW: Did attending (a Chinese congregation growing up) affirm any sense of Chinese identity for you?
> P: (pause) I don't think I ever actively thought about it. Um, I think when I think about church then I can see that there are certain cultural things that I identify with.
> SW: Can you give me an example?
> P: Um, I think a big thing in Chinese churches is the sense of community, or the importance of community. And I think that's…like, that's something I value when I'm looking for a church. And I think that's a little bit on the cultural side. I know, like, in

general communities encourage things like fellowship. But I think the way that…like, how hospitable Chinese people are…like, in terms of feeding you, taking care of you, that kind of thing (A13-5).

This sense of community and of "family" was frequently repeated across my sites. I asked this same young woman if attending her English-speaking congregation church shaped any sense she might have of Chinese identity. "(Long pause, and then tentatively) Sure. (laughing)." She claimed that her answer had not changed since her childhood; "[it's] still that sense of community, and hospitality." When I pressed her on whether the English congregation offered any Chinese cultural celebrations she agreed that it did, but then hesitated. "I mean, (stammering) I don't know if they do. I feel…my gut wants to say (laughing) that we've had, like, Chinese New Year kind of stuff. It might be unofficial, or like just someone hosted it at their house or something." I asked if mention was made during the ritual worship services, to which she replied,

> P: Oh no. Probably not. No…or maybe the Chinese services might do a lunch.
> SW: But in the English…no reference made in service?
> P: Oh, someone might just make a remark…but it isn't really celebrating it. It's just, like you know, Chinese New Year.
> SW: Is there a lunch after, as young adults, anything special?
> P: I don't think it's anything out of the ordinary, than like a normal Sunday.

This interview response created a somewhat awkward moment when, about nine months later, I was sitting beside her when the pastor of the English congregation asked us to turn to those around us and wish them a happy Chinese New Year. As congregants began to do this in English, the participant laughed quietly in apparent embarrassment at having to turn to me (as a visible, non-Chinese researcher) and offer the prescribed greeting.

How participants like this woman define and ascribe ethnic identity to the practices of their church highlights an interesting point of tension. While they claim that the congregation does shape their connection to Chinese culture, most admit (or are hard pressed to provide contrary evidence) that the community rarely celebrates or even references Chinese traditions.

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This begs the question of how congregations impact the ethnic identity of second-generation

Chinese Canadians if they are not acknowledging and celebrating the traditional rhythms of

Chinese culture. Part of the answer to this question can be found in the responses of some

participants that align with Karner's structures of action: those rules or boundaries that define and

constrain behaviour. I came across several examples of this among those who felt their church

experience did, in fact, contribute to a sense of connection with Chinese culture. In fact, the

young participant just discussed went on to describe this point quite well.

> P: This is also one of the push factors as well for Chinese churches. Like, I don't love…it's very difficult saying "no" to serving. Because I feel like, ya…contributing to family is a very strong Chinese cultural value. And I feel like that's something that's brought into the church as well. So, the idea of being plugged into the community is not just attending but also, like, picking up slack, serving. Um, whether that's serving for snacks, washing dishes, like, serving as the leader of a small group. I don't know, it's just something, like, once you say yes, then it's very hard to get out. I think it's both internal mentality, and also something that's sort of unsaid but known by the Chinese church community.
> SW: How would you get out?
> P: (laughing) Will power. Brute force.
> SW: Are there social consequences or implications for 'getting out'?
> P: Uh, no. But I think…it's just, we don't, like, I personally don't like to disappoint other people. That may be a Chinese thing…saving face, I suppose, this would qualify as. Or maybe not so much…yeah. Like, for example I was asked to do something in the youth group, and I was just…I just didn't want to do it. I am capable of doing it, but I was really tired and it was really last minute and I just didn't want to do it. Initially I said no, and then the person had asked me again if I could do it. So…(pause) it was a little uncomfortable, in that sense (A13-5).

The context for these remarks is critical for understanding how many of my participants (and

other Chinese Canadians I spoke with) integrate with the cultural components of their ethnic

congregations. Namely, many of my participants from this congregation were significantly

involved both in personal attendance and volunteer work in the church. The church's weekly

schedule provides various opportunities for adherents to receive teaching, serve others, and

engage the Christian practices of evangelism and prayer. It was not uncommon for my

participants to be at the church facility between three and five times a week for various functions such as Sunday activities, small group meetings, volunteering with junior and senior high school groups, and street evangelism. This demanding schedule, in many cases, led to participants describing their social network as being dominated by their ethnically homogeneous congregation.

My fieldwork attendance on Sundays gave me ample opportunities to see the strength of these relationships in close proximity. Many of the young adults arrived for church shortly before the service began. Immediately following the service, the entire congregation made its way to the gymnasium for some snacks and time for socializing. The church Sunday school commenced about twenty to thirty minutes later, with adherents of all ages splitting into various corners of the building for classes on a variety of subjects. Once that class was completed, the entire church generally made its way back into the aforementioned lobby area where people said goodbye and lunch plans were made. I went to lunch with my participants regularly, including those times when all three congregations gathered for a community meal prior to a congregational meeting (which I attended twice). After lunch, many of the young adults gathered in the church's gym for spirited sports games, while still others clustered in small groups for socializing or meetings related to church activities that would often last into the early evening. These standard Sunday practices, combining both expected and prescribed involvement along with voluntary recreational activity, illustrate the framework of relationships that shape the religious lives of many participants, relationships that could be perceived as tied to structures of Chinese ethnic identity.

Another young woman, who (along with most of her immediate family) was significantly involved in the congregation, referred to such structures in a disparate way.

> SW: Are there ways in which being connected to Chinese church created a sense of connection to Chinese culture, background, tradition?

P: Mmmm…that's a good question. I'm not too sure if it would contribute to my identity…well, not identity, but what I know as Chinese. But I think that maybe the conservative-ism (said very deliberately) of the Chinese Baptist church [growing up]…that piece of it, might have rubbed off or given me that sense that Chinese people are very reserved. Chinese people don't do this…Chinese people don't do that.

SW: Are you aligning the conservative piece with the 'Chinese' or the 'Baptist' or the 'church'?

P: I think growing up I never knew the difference. I never knew that Baptists were considered conservative. So I think in my mind I would've just seen it as Chinese, rather than Baptist.

SW: Did being in the church help you retain any closeness to Chinese cultural tradition?

P: Hmmm…do I think it was significant? Well, I'm thinking whether or not there was anything significant about it in that sense. Because a lot of the Chinese part of the Chinese church, uh, that played out in their activities or what they did or said was often around the cultural festivities time. So that's how I knew it was a Chinese church, besides there were Chinese people here and they spoke Chinese. I guess the subtleties of what Chinese people do…I might have learned from there, in the interactions between people. In terms of, you know, you don't say this to this person, you say this to that person, if you say this to this person you don't say it in front of that person. Or, you must always, if you see that grandmother, you must ask her if she wants to go to dim sum, even though she will never go with you because her health is so poor she would never eat the stuff at dim sum…or go with you because she can't walk there. You still have to ask. That culture of respect…that culture of, uh…how do you say it, like…not stepping on people's toes is not the right way to say it, but (pause) not offending people is the wrong way to say it…do you get my sense of…? (S13-2)

She went on to clarify that the Cantonese language school ministry that runs in her current church initiates any observance of Chinese holidays or traditional cultural practice. She informed me that "if you aren't in any way shape or form connected to that [ministry], then you are not going to even see that those festivities happen. Or, if you are not asked to assist [i.e. volunteer] with that in any way. Sometimes they will ask other fellowships, but usually they ask the Chinese-speaking fellowships to assist. And aside from that…you won't see it." This explanation clarifies much of what I perceived and observed in the community, and accounts perhaps for the absence of active cultural expression that I noted and then heard reiterated by multiple interviewees. In addition, it offers pertinent insight into the way that my second-generation participants characterize the ethnic components of congregational life.

As with the previous female participant, other interviewees framed their participation in ethnic interactions in direct relationship to members of older generations. This relational framework for ethnic identity illustrates a clear example of Karner's structures of action. One participant typified this practice as follows.

> SW: Does the English congregation create a sense of connection to broader Chinese culture or tradition for you? Do they practice any such aspects?
> P: Uh, I know we celebrate the festivals. Like Chinese New Year festival, and we just had a Mid-Autumn festival. We didn't really celebrate, but we ate moon cake (in her small group)[…] Let me think. I think so. Because in Chinese culture where we have to be polite to people who are older than us, we…um, ya we do that!
> SW: How does that happen at the church? Older people in the English congregation… or interaction with broader community?
> P: Mmmm, I think interaction with the broader community. Like, if I go to a church friend's place… like, if a bunch of us go to a church friend's place, when we see his or her parents we will say hi to them…make sure that we would talk to them. Just, like, respecting and being polite at their place. Ya, I think we do. We're just in general more respectful of people's places…being more considerate and more polite. Which some…I guess, like, some people from western culture, they're not as polite or as respectful. Because we, like, we would call people older than us 'uncle', 'auntie'…like, we never call them by their first name. And I guess it's culture…like, when we enter someone's house we would take off our shoes. We would just…like, be more considerate, I guess. And we try to take care of people too. So if your elderly are holding bags, really heavy stuff, we would offer to carry everything for them. Or cook for them, if they're sick we'll take care of them. I think that's all part of the Chinese culture.
> SW: And that happens at your church?
> P: Yes, definitely (S13-4).

Another male participant described his experience in the English congregation similarly when he said, "Ya, I think…well you usually see all… we always see the same, like, generally the same people. Aunties, uncles. We always eat. There's always lots of cooking of food, and whatnot" (O13-1). A little later I asked him how important his ethnic or cultural identity was to him. He responded,

> I think that's also kind of integrated into the, again… those… it's kind of, like, for me the whole, like, Christian culture and Chinese… my own background culture, is kind of intermingled together. So, (pause)… I guess it's pretty hard to separate the two.
> SW: Are you saying that, for you, what it means to be Chinese or Chinese Canadian and what it means to be Christian, those two things are together? Is that what you mean?

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P: Ya, like… there's a lot of overlap. And I guess I'm starting to see that they're not suppo…not particularly supposed to overlap. Or, there are things that don't (laughing). There are a lot of things that are mutually exclusive.

SW: Can you give me an example?

P: Like, so…like, loving one another. And also being nice to other people and respecting other people…I think the being nice and respecting part of it, it can also come out of the whole Chinese culture. Although, it could go to a point where it's like, you get the culture of just…um, being kind of a Sunday Christian. Like, when you're at church, you're completely normal and you always put up a front. Or, at least from what I've noticed, and for myself as well. I would tend to put up the Chi…um, the-the…I'm trying to…like, the good kid kind of personality when I'm at church. And then all the older aunties and uncles will be like 'Oh ya…how are you doing? Oh, your family is so…oh you're very obedient. Your family is so obedient…', like, 'All the kids are so obedient to your parents.' And, I guess, it sounds good and all, but it's just like…at a certain point it's, like, fake.

SW: Do you mean that, at some point, it's not rooted in religious faith…it's just rooted in trying to be good so people say those things?

P: Ya. And I think a lot of that might also come from the Chinese culture of respect and face and…it's gone wrong, rather than what, I guess, to me is what God intended it to be, which was actually loving one another. Whereas now we've just turned it into a game…in a sense.

This participant alludes to a differentiation between faith and culture that I deal with more specifically in the following chapter. For now, I want to highlight the way in which he places his sense of ethnic self firmly within the confines of external expectations (i.e. structures of action) that he perceives from older Chinese members of his religious community.

This perspective or experience of ethnic identity was repeated by some of those who felt there was no active identity construction performed by their religious community. One young man, who struggled to identify any concrete example of when and where the church made space for Chinese cultural activities or holidays and finally concluded that "nothing formal" was encouraged, discussed it this way.

I think there is something that's…I guess, like, the concept of respecting your elders…I mean I'm not saying that Caucasians don't respect their elders (chuckle), but I think it is a different type of respect. Like, in terms of that type of culture, like, I guess, filial piety almost…I do see that a lot more. Like, you know, when you talk to aunties and uncles you have to be really polite and you have to…(laughing) I often bow my head a little bit (depicting) 'Oh hi auntie and uncle.' It's a habit for me (A13-3).

Another long-time male member of the congregation responded similarly.

> Ya…you still [interact with the older individuals in the other congregations]. Uh, I mean that's how you interact with your real aunts and your real uncles. You would still kinda throw in a couple Chinese words now and again when you greet them. And, you know, we would still have the understanding of what's kind of been drilled into us in terms of respecting your elders. So, definitely there's still that kind of dynamic…that doesn't ever change. But in terms…we don't…only a few of [the second-generation young adults] probably actively seek out speaking with [the first generation] and what not. It's more just in passing (N13-1).

Observing practices of respecting elders was not the only way participants encountered structures of action. For example, one male participant explained to me how he felt their congregation's services were marked by emotional restraint.

> SW: Does the English congregation (at your church) create a sense of connectedness to Chinese culture and tradition in any way for you?
> P: In terms of Chinese culture? Not Chinese culture focused. Even though we're all Asian, but I feel that there is a subtle difference between entering a Chinese congregation and an English congregation. English congregation is more geared towards Canadian-born Chinese. I mean, there are, maybe, like…a handful of non-Chinese people in our church as well. And so, the whole service…there's barely any element of Chinese culture that you would see, versus attending another church that was non-Chinese. Like, the service would all be about the same. Now, the only subtle difference that you may see is the way in which policies are done…the way things are run…everything behind the scenes. Because, in our culture…I guess, Chinese…it's more looked upon as more conservative. And I've attended two Baptist churches. And Chinese and Baptist…they're usually…like, the other extreme is the evangelicals. So, in terms of maybe like singing worship, we'll be more reserved (D13-1).

These prescribed patterns for expression in worship were articulated by another participant, who related to me that,

> P: People usually don't raise their hands. They don't clap. People aren't comfortable expressing their emotions or expressing, uh…it's not like a black church or like other churches where it's more free. Where people dance, people clap.
> SW: Do you feel comfortable at those churches?
> P: I feel less comfortable at my church. Because I feel that people are always looking at me…people are always judging me (A13-1).

Another participant referred to a similar social dynamic. "So for a Chinese church I would probably say, um, it's very conservative. You know, like, a lot of churches like to raise their hands while singing or stuff like that. It might be a good idea to tone down a little bit. (chuckle) Um…depending on the crowd too, right? Like, if it's a younger crowd or if it's an older crowd" (A13-3). One participant discussed with me how this conservativeness could be seen beyond the ritual practices, and also in the structure of community.

> P: Ya, I guess you could say our church has some issues with, um, conflicting views between the English group and the Chinese group. Uh, in the sense that the Chinese group may be a little bit more traditional and the English group not as much.
> SW: Traditional how so?
> P: Ya, it ranges on a broad number of items. The way the service is run…um, whether we should have drums, where the drums should be…which sanctuary we should be using. I don't know (laughing)…there's a whole slew of issues. So, I think there's been some…head-butting there, but usually we try to come to consensus on everything. We try to get everyone on board. That's why our meetings run so long (Ag13-1).

One of the more nuanced discussions of this point emerged as I spoke with a young female member of the congregation. I asked her to explain her description of her church, to which she replied,

> Uhhh, I think when I say Chinese I think…well, I'll talk about it personally. I think there's a lot of cultural linkage to it. Like, um, I think for me uh…going to church is kind of like my association to Chinese people. I think maybe I got that from when I was a child. So I do feel safe there, when I say Chinese. Um, […] I see it as…a rather conservative church. You know, um, some may say it's 'stiff', you know…but just conservative (chuckle).
> SW: Does your current church (the English congregation) create a sense of connection to broader Chinese culture for those that attend?
> P: (Frankly) No…no.
> SW: Why not?
> P: Um…I mean I can only answer that from a comparative standpoint. From my church experience in the [Chinese] church I grew up with as a child. I just…I mean I think the church functions well as a church, like in the sense that we worship together and, you know, on Sundays we go to service and there's fellowship on the days we meet as a small group. But, I think in terms of like functioning as a family (her emphasis), like the ties and um…and I think for me, from the perspective where we didn't have any other relatives in the city growing up, the kind of relationships that you form…I don't think the church is that great at, kind of, fostering that kind of family, or more cross generational

relationships. I think…I feel that with the English congregation it's very confined to more of a limited age group…more on the younger side. And so there isn't as great a mix of the cross-generational interactions, which would help in terms of more of the cultural push (S13-7).

Curiously, her strong negative response to whether or not Chinese culture is a significant factor for those that attend contrasted with her response to further questions. I asked her whether or not she felt there were expectations others had of her in the community, to which she said,

(pause) I feel like I have to answer that question in the context of that church…because it's Chinese. And Chinese people always have a certain expectation as to how you should behave and everything."
SW: So what is the expectation?
P: Well, I mean for Chinese people…like, uh…you have to be very respectful to people. And so I guess you have to be, you have to act quite…or have a certain maturity. But in terms of roles? I don't know what roles. I think in terms of behaviour…you present yourself in a mature sense. Not, like, and now that I'm a mother maybe I need to be a little bit more responsible in that I'm responsible for my children obviously and for teaching them properly.
SW: Are you responsible for their behaviour when they're there?
P: I think there is a…I think in the Chinese community or culture, however your children behave is going to be…that judgment will be laid on the parents. Whether they are good at teaching their kids to be whatever…polite, or are they good, or obedience is a very big thing in Chinese culture. So I think in that sense, like, there's pressure to maybe teach your kids to be obedient. Um, I felt that maybe in the church environment. Or at least I feel the most pressure related to how my kids behave at church than anywhere else.

What these examples offer is a glimpse of how some of my participants interact with their sense of Chinese identity. While it is clear that they do not perceive their congregation as performing overt cultural maintenance, they do articulate that ethnicity is still a crucial, embodied, social cohesive in their congregational lives. Most participants I spoke with are exposed to structures of action that provide stability and haven for identity negotiation, regardless of whether they think ethnic identities are actively encouraged or affirmed in ritual practice. These structures are tied to familial relationships for some, but for most they correspond more generally to the nuances of filial piety that are perceived as stemming from older members of the

broader congregation. These structures provide familiarity for my participants and combine with

activities or practices where they can engage with ethnicity as ways of feeling (through sharing

and cultural food, or occasional engagement with Chinese holidays practices for example). These

feelings of stability and safety, however, are not always welcomed, as some perceive them as

restrictive. This tension is noteworthy and warrants some consideration of whether its presence is

derived simply from my participants being in a multi-generational environment. With this in

mind, I turn to a discussion of Teens Conference (TC).

5.2 Teens Conference (TC)

     I ended up at Teens Conference because, as I made connections in the Chinese Canadian

evangelical community in Toronto and shared my research goals, individuals would inevitably

ask, "Have you been to TC?" Following this participant pathway, I found myself at an expansive,

Chinese mega-church in Toronto's north end early on a mid-week morning in March of 2013.

The spacious lobby was filled with natural light and, like many recently constructed or renovated

Christian buildings (Thiessen and McAlpine 2013), marked by a sense of informality that was

accentuated by its large sitting space reminiscent of a rest area one might see in a suburban mall

complex. The quiet setting was interrupted sharply right as I arrived, as more than five hundred

high schoolers began the first of the day's activities. Students had been placed randomly into

teams of approximately fifteen individuals, given a coloured T-shirt corresponding to their role as

conference participants, and began to create and perfect the boisterous chanting of their team

names and cheers. The ubiquitous yelling, screaming, and dancing continued nearly around the

clock as teams raced to beat each other in games, challenges, or in what appeared to be little more

than scream-offs.

In the afternoon, I followed some conference attendees as they chose workshops that interested them. With nearly twenty options, these workshops covered the gamut of evangelical interest areas and touchpoints, such as investigations into Jesus' historicity, and gender-specific talks discussing pornography and eating disorders. The day culminated in an evening worship gathering which followed a standard evangelical liturgy, beginning with a series of Christian pop-rock songs performed by a team of student volunteers. Participants were encouraged to engage the ritual activity both by their leaders and the emotional and passionate responses of their surrounding peers. A sequence of short dramatic and media vignettes followed the singing, after which the featured conference speaker delivered a sermon and then gave time for crowd response. The response time was quite lengthy and followed the evangelical, revivalist form of an "altar call"[34] that contrasted significantly with normative English-speaking Chinese congregational practice I had observed. During my follow-up research, I heard several previous participants describe their experience in this environment as being highly emotional and "intense."

I would discover that this conference has been running since 1971 and now connects approximately eighty Chinese churches across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and engages 800-1200 junior and senior high school students annually. As this kind of para-church event, TC falls into the broader social phenomena of extra-congregational evangelical gatherings which go by a variety of labels: retreats, rallies, revivals, concerts, festivals, conferences, and a growing number of large-scale gatherings that mirror the characteristics of what sociologists call 'mega-events' (such as the Olympics, the National Football League's SuperBowl, or FIFA championships; see

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[34] Balmer (2004) notes that this term is a misnomer, as evangelical churches do not have physical altars. He defines this ritual practice as "an invitation by the preacher to step toward the pulpit for conversion, baptism, or church membership" (14).

Horne and Manzenreiter 2006). Examples of such gatherings include the Hillsong Conference (Sydney, AUS), Passion Conference (Atlanta, GA), Catalyst (multi-site), Urbana (St. Louis, MO), and Youth Conference - YC (Edmonton, AB).

Conferences exemplify the essence of evangelical ethos in a myriad of ways. Both large scale gatherings and smaller, local events imagine and propagate a vibrant subculture via high levels of intentional socialization and considerable investment of financial and human resources. These efforts culminate in events that frequently employ ritual practices, collective expressions, and organizational structures that are quite similar. These include conservative interpretation and earnest presentation of the Bible, the use and production of evangelical music forms, the leveraging of what Balmer (2006) points to as evangelicalism's propensity for celebrity (by using prominent and popular teachers to attract and inspire participants), offering critique of and training for the socio-religious environment of the congregation through workshops or training-based plenary sessions, as well as emphasis on standard evangelical tenets of proselytizing (defending one's faith) and increasingly, on issues of social engagement, awareness and advocacy.

Foundational to my understanding of TC as a local phenomenon, and site for some of my participants' ethnic identity formation, is a contention that conferences like it are transformative in or to the degree they offer an alternative to everyday religious life and experience. For many of the young evangelicals in my sample, everyday religious life is defined by congregations like the Toronto Chinese Church described above: a grounded, community-oriented site of religious experience that is often strongly correlated with hierarchical structures, familial bonds, repetitive ritual practice, and the maintaining of social equilibrium and status quo. I have outlined already some of the ways this occurs for my participants in their Chinese Canadian community. This

proposed congregation-conference dichotomy does not infer that congregations fail to be

dynamic sites of agency but, rather, is an attempt to understand how and why thousands of

Christian youth and young adults regularly supplement their regular and routine involvement

with the conference experience. In order to better understand TC's proceedings, I want to outline

how performance theory might provide some fruitful insight into why, as an extra-congregational

gathering, this GTA event has become so prominent within the Chinese Christian community.

The rituals employed at TC certainly perform a religious function, but I observed and

heard from interviewees that they allow for an additional, ethnic one as well for many young

Chinese Canadian evangelicals. These religious practices provide an example of how ritual

performance is not just about what happens, but where and with whom. Put another way, context

is as important as performance. Jeffrey Alexander (2006) provides a helpful description of such

ritual practices when he states,

> Rituals are episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication in which the
> direct partners to a social interaction, and those observing it, share a mutual belief in the
> descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication's symbolic contents and accept
> the authenticity of one another's intentions…Ritual effectiveness energizes the
> participants and attaches them to each other, increases their identification with the
> symbolic objects of communication, and intensifies the connection of the participants and
> the symbolic objects with the observing audience (29-30).

I saw repeatedly in my fieldwork how the TC environment appears to energize and attach (as

Alexander describes ritual) the participants with its employment of evangelical ritual forms in the

conference venue, but also how ritual practice in this social context "intensifies the connection"

between active and observing participants allowing for the performance of an ethnic identity for

second-generation, Chinese Canadian conference-goers. To explain this, I consider the insights

offered by performance theorists such as Köpping et al. (2006), who argue that, "the performative

act is…doubly connotated: first as a way of pragmatic doing aimed at achieving an effect on

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reality, and second as the adoption of a social and/or theatrical role," and that a person's "capacity to intentionally perform the social roles and cultural types available to him becomes synonymous with his power to bring socio-cultural reality into being" (17-18).

These notions are critical to an understanding of TC in a couple of ways. First, the employment and performance of evangelical, conference rituals allows TC participants to sense, measure and experience their religious devotion in a dynamic, public environment. This is a vital aspect given my previous chapter's contention that my participants see themselves at odds with the surrounding society on the basis of their religious identity. This is representative of the "effect on reality" component Köpping and others outline. However, when we consider how the experience of TC conferencing differs from the weekly congregational experience of participants in Chinese churches and even violates its norms of behavior and comportment, I believe we observe what could be considered the adoption of a "social and/or theatrical role" via the performance of a distinct, second-generation Chinese expression of Christian devotion.

The work done by cultural sociologists and social psychologists on social movements is also helpful in such cases due to its analysis of crowd phenomena similar to those I observed at this evangelical event. Research on social movements has expanded on earlier sociological theorizing of crowds to consider the political, spontaneous, protest-focused, and sometimes violent expressions of large groups. What is useful about such research is how it provides sociological lenses, however limited, to examine the phenomena of contemporary large groups that classical sociological considerations may not offer.

Theorists of social movements emphasize the often-spontaneous nature of crowds and protests, and the fact that they have temporary social effect.[35] These large collectivities (often

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[35] When outlining what he calls individual and corporate odyssey experiences, social theorist Neil Smelser (2009) refers to their finite duration and impact.

referred to simply as crowds) act "with some degree of organization and continuity, partly outside institutional or organizational channels, for the purpose of challenging extant systems of authority…in the organization, society, culture, or world system in which they are embedded" (Snow and Soule 2010: 6). Scholars of these movements acknowledge that this definition includes a broad swath of social interactions and groups, where this "challenging" can take the form of violent reactions or peaceful political rallies, or indirect contestation. Sociologist Herbert Blumer (1951) famously identified four types of crowds or temporary gatherings that have a common focus and defining interaction: casual, conventional, expressive, and acting. Later scholars have added the "protest" crowd to this list, but their defining of the expressive variety is particularly relevant to my discussion of TC. Rohlinger and Snow (2003) write:

> The expressive crowd seeks to change the "mood, imagery, and the behavior of members themselves…The expressive crowd is one that makes behavior sensible that would normally be regarded as eccentric or immoral. It gives significance to subjective sensations which would otherwise be meaningless or disturbing [from Turner and Killian, 1972, 102-103]." The expressive crowd provides a setting in which individuals may express feelings freely without the regard for normative social behavior (516).

TC, like many other evangelical conferences, offers a clear example of an expressive crowd, where the mood of individuals is impacted and a social environment is created where behaviours are encouraged that are not common or acceptable in congregational practice. By doing this, the conference shapes my participants' structures of feeling, whereby their experiences and the resulting "biographical recollections" (Karner 2007: 35) consolidate in a sense of shared second-generation ethnic identity.

For many of the second-generation participants in my project, congregational involvement is marked by the frequent negotiation of the relationships with their parents (or others of their parents' age) and the authority structures inherent to Chinese immigrant

communities. At the centre of these negotiations are social values derived from a Confucian worldview, which are "revealed through elaborate definitions, regulations, and moral and ethical principles regarding individuals' roles and relationships…[and] a linear hierarchy governing family structure, political structure, and the supernatural world" (Pan et al. 1994: 21). These values can be observed in various immigrant-Chinese social organizations, including churches. Yang (2004) argues that Confucian values, such as "love, filial piety, hard work, thrift, temperance, delayed gratification" are often seen as compatible with Christian beliefs (211). This leads to generational tension in many congregations, a phenomenon Yang describes as "a chronic problem" (2004: 216). Yang also argues that while Confucian patriarchy might not be present in Chinese churches in North America, "there is a problem of 'Confucian seniorarchy.' Gerontocracy, rule by the aged, is an implicit or even explicit rule in the daily operation of the church. Young people are expected to defer to senior people, both their parents and others" (Yang 2004: 218). These are experiences that can be seen in my interviewees' earlier responses.

For many of the individuals I spoke with during my project, their experience of TC as a mono-generational, expressive crowd acts as a key access point into an evangelical venue of socialization and as an initial foray into an expression of religious fervour that is distinct from previous generations more directly impacted by Confucian ideals. One participant compared the impact of TC as an expressive environment with his weekly experience when I asked him what his experience was like at TC. He responded,

> P: I loved it (laughed). Just the presence of God. And the loudness (laughing).
> SW: Why did you enjoy that? Why was that so impacting?
> P: I think mainly because (my church) isn't a very loud church. Having something that different…'cause I'm a very loud person…I love the big and the huge production…maybe not production, but the huge sort of thing…so I'm always an advocate for louder music…louder stuff…even though I'm going to go deaf, which I'm totally okay with. It gave me that chance to shake loose this like, quietness…and sort of

go all-out, which is rare for me. To really let myself go. Express. And then through that…through that, it allows God to work in and become real to me (Mar13-1).

For participants like this, TC employs highly recognizable rituals, but rituals that become significant because of their contrast with normal congregational involvement. For this young man, the contrast was found simply in the volume of the ritual music. Music at TC follows general evangelical forms (e.g. some familiar songs performed by a 'praise band'), but there are forms altered and reframed within the context of an expressive crowd allowing participants to "shake loose" in ways that would certainly be considered beyond the boundaries of appropriate social behaviour in a Chinese congregation. The expressive crowd atmosphere of TC creates what multiple participants framed as "a spiritual high," a catchphrase that was often used to refer to the felt and perceived impact of the conference proceedings. This participant description of heightened religious awareness and engagement parallels the work done by Adam Chau (2008) on the experience of "social heat" in Chinese temples (reminiscent of Durkheim's classical notion of collective effervescence, 2001), where religious participants encounter highly sensory environments and help to create and sustain these. These kinds of description also illustrate that TC gives young Chinese Canadians the opportunity to experience and perform evangelical identities in new ways that are religiously meaningful (because of their high levels of emotional engagement, and the allowance of emotional expression). It also signals that the site is invaluable for many in forming a second-generation, Chinese Canadian Christian expression while being part of an ethnically homogeneous, expressive crowd. The fact that participants have these experiences in an environment that lies outside the purview of ethnic, congregational sociological analysis is significant and warrants further attention.

TC mirrors other evangelical conferences' use of conservative and emotional preaching, use of popular evangelical music forms, the leveraging of prominent and popular teachers to attract participants, the critique of normative experience through workshops, emphasis on proselytizing and apologetics, and advocacy for social engagement. In doing so, it functions as a spontaneous, ethnically homogenous, expressive crowd that impacts the mood and shapes of the behaviour of student attendees. However, an evaluation of the event must also take into account the fact that TC organizers work very hard to construct a social environment that is meaningful for student attendees. I illustrate and explain the content and context of this intentional socialization below in two ways. First, organizers provide key leadership and oversight to the creative ritual practices choreographed for the event. I provide specific examples of practices that parallel broader evangelical conference phenomena (i.e., music performance, preaching) while simultaneously providing a venue in which young Chinese Canadian Christians can evaluate normative standards of expected behaviour and conduct (i.e., structures of action) and reconstruct a religious identity that is independent and reconciled to sources of authority. Secondly, I examine the socialization processes at work in one of the conference workshops as a means of illustrating how TC, while functioning as an expressive crowd in many of its activities, acts as a cultural haven and conduit for some second-generation, Chinese Canadian Christian adherents.

All ritual practices of the conference, with the exception of the plenary sermons, are created and performed by student volunteers. This includes all music, sound and light production, short dramatic presentations (at least one in each plenary), and small group discussions of biblical texts. In the case of music and light production, TC mirrors evangelical mega-conferences with its use of a band comprised of several musicians of mixed genders stretched across the back of a multi-tiered stage and multiple vocalists spot-lit at the front of the stage. This band performs in a

pop-rock style familiar to large-scale evangelical events. Several of the songs used were familiar

to me based on my experience in other evangelical environments, but the group borrowed heavily

from very recent and ritually unfamiliar ritual performances from large evangelical congregations

(e.g., Hillsong, Jesus Culture, River Valley Church);36 the musical arrangements were reproduced

almost to the note in many of the performances. The highly choreographed arrangements were

surprising to me on two counts: first, the fact that they were produced to such a high level of

detail by high school students, and secondly that they contrasted so significantly from what I had

observed in English-speaking, Chinese congregations such as Toronto Chinese Church.

Whereas congregational ritual worship in Chinese congregations often has a more relaxed

quality to the musical arrangement and performance, the conference proceedings were decidedly

more polished and clearly based on an effort to mimic the forms produced by large scale

evangelical churches or events. For those involved in producing ritual music at the event, TC

offers an opportunity to spend several months practicing and honing the arrangements, creating a

carefully orchestrated intricacy to the performances that participants experience as spontaneous,

emotive and exceptional. One participant described the impact of the ritual music by talking

about how other student's emotional responses frightened her, saying:

> Even though I was kinda scared, it made me kinda cheery because I was like "These
> people are my age, but clearly something's going on." Especially during worship… I had
> never experienced worship like TC worship…I don't think I can call it a spiritual
> high…'cause it wasn't really spiritual in a way. It just felt like there was so many people
> were there…so many people were singing…so many people very soooo into it. I mean at
> church, when we sing it's kinda like we stand and we sing like songs and it's like small
> scale…And I'd never experienced that [type of worship] before and I was so amazed
> (May14-2).

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36 Hillsong Church, based in Sydney, Australia, has multiple locations around the world. The church has produced dozens of albums since the mid 1990s, with many of the recordings made during live ritual performances. Jesus Culture is a band based out of a congregation in Redding, CA; they have produced eight albums. River Valley Church is a multi-site congregation located in Minnesota's Twin Cities, and has produced two full-length albums.

She then went on to describe the experience further.

> I don't know what song we were singing (laughing)…I don't know, I guess it was like TC worship being really hyped up and everything. I don't know…it was really weird, but I think I kinda, like, felt it. I don't know how to say it, it just sounds really weird now (laughing). I don't know, I guess I just sort of felt it. I was really, really emotional…for the rest of TC, I went in with an open heart to find out more about this. "Why am I feeling this way? Is it just a one-time thing…a super hyped thing because of everyone being there or would it actually continue?" I left TC that year kinda different.

Another participant described the ritual music similarly.

> My second year going I remember they're doing worship and I remember crying and I was like "Why am I crying?" And I was like "Oh my gosh, this worship's the best. The Holy Spirit's here." And I go back to church, and I'm like "Why isn't our worship as good as TC's worship?!" And I was like, "Aaaaahhhh" [mock scream], like spiritually high. Like every day, "Oh, I just want to worship Jesus." For like a week. And then I was back to normal after that [laughing] (May14-4).

For conference attendees like these, the performance of ritual music borrowed from the broader evangelical subculture and reiterated in the context of an ethnically homogenous group was striking largely because, I would argue, it contrasts so dramatically from their regular congregational experience and even violates, in a very controlled and respectable context, rules about propriety that are strictly enforced in those congregations and at home. The arrangements and the subsequent crowd responses marked by exuberant and demonstrative physical displays of excitement were and are significant for many of the attendees, providing a venue for religious exploration and experimentation.

One of the crucial factors in the band's ability to perform as they do is the highly structured recruitment and training process carried out by the conference organizing committee. Applicants are screened, interviewed and auditioned before becoming one of the approximately 250 volunteers that staff the event annually. At a training event I attended in February of 2014, the conference coordinators mentioned that many solid applicants were "cut," stressing the highly

competitive nature of the application process. All applicants are required to have attended TC previously and this factor, along with the increasing number of individuals wanting to be involved, gives conference organizers a group of highly motivated agents with which to create and perpetuate TC's highly emotional environment. In effect, these individuals act as catalysts for the hyped environment both in that a) their extensive preparation enables ritual performances, and b) many of them have been significantly influenced by their previous experience. They are selected for involvement because of their desire to aid and assist others in having similar experiences. Consequently, the individuals chosen to lead in musical ritual frequently engaged in demonstrative evangelical worship practices (e.g., raising of hands, dancing, jumping, shouting) that contrast starkly from those practices one might observe in the English congregations of any Chinese church, practices that clearly resonated with individuals like those quoted above.

Additionally, I observed examples of TC mirroring broader evangelical conference practices during the ritual preaching performances, one each morning and another in the evening. These ritual imitations adopted social processes unique to the conference's ethno-homogenous expressive crowd. Notably, in the last few years conference organizers have made a more concerted effort to invite local, GTA ministers from Chinese congregations and give them an opportunity to preach during the plenary sessions. This choice illustrates a decision by conference organizers to, at the very least, reinforce the importance of ethnic identity in the event's desired impact on participants. These speakers play a significant role, especially when they mimic broader evangelical preaching practices and tailor them for their second-generation, Chinese Canadian audience.

The importance of their roles is made all the more evident when we account for what scholars of social movements refer to as "framing." Framing is a process in large social

gatherings whereby beliefs or ideas are used to "assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents" (Snow and Benford 1988: 198). Those who study social movements tend to focus on how crowds often consolidate critiques of cultural authorities, institutions, or systems, a key factor in the violence committed by some movements. Framing is seen as one of the means by which a speaker or organization garners support and elicits (re)action from crowd participants. A notable historical example of this might be Martin Luther King Jr.'s use of personal anecdotes (i.e., references to his own children), slave narratives, and national myth in his famous "I have a dream" speech in 1963. However, if we consider the differing types of crowds, and especially the expressive variety already mentioned in relation to TC, we gain perspective on how cultural framing might be observable in group settings beyond those formed in political or social protest. Frames are:

> clear, articulate, focused, and coherent and are more likely to persuade people to join and support the cause… Effective frames are "empirically credible", that is, they are consonant with what their audiences know to be true [and]...are "salient" to their audiences. That is, they call on beliefs that are already strongly held…They should resonate with people's everyday experiences…they should be characterized by "narrative fidelity" or "cultural resonance" (Polletta and Chen 2012: 489).

Using such a definition, we might say that cultural framing is the means by which a speaker or organization connects their message (and desired outcomes) with the lived, normative realities of those in crowd-like gatherings. Using this definition, I would argue that Chinese Canadian preachers at TC developed and used culturally situated narratives that resonated "with [students'] everyday experiences" rooted in ethnic structures of action and ways of seeing, but in a style that contrasted significantly with that used in Chinese congregations. This combination of cultural resonance and cultural contrast is central to how the TC speakers I observed achieved emotional effect on attendees.

Both of the senior youth conferences I attended featured preaching by young males (one Chinese Canadian, another Vietnamese Canadian) serving in English-speaking Chinese congregations in the GTA. Each engaged in several instances of "framing," but my analysis here focuses specifically on the Chinese Canadian speaker, who was in his early 30s. In the morning session I attended, he began his talk by describing his own development as a professional minister. He detailed this process by saying "I didn't take the Asian road," making it clear that he had no other professional or academic credentials other than those for Christian ministry. This he offered both in contrast to the practice of many Chinese ministers who acquire professional or technical training before entering seminary or congregational posts, and as an example of how he was not "one of the four Asian things you should be: doctor, lawyer, engineer, accountant," a statement which drew laughter from the crowd.

Rhetorically, these statements functioned as cultural frames by alluding to commonly-known aspects of Asian culture, and served to legitimize the speaker's subsequent critiques of North American Christianity ("we feed the pleasures and comforts of today") and his pointed exhortations to "get right with God" and to leave the comforts of entitled Christian living by going "to the places most tainted by sin," a reference to the evangelical practice of sending missionaries to areas considered in need of Christian influence. In addition to his use of cultural frames, this young minister's delivery contrasted significantly from Erika Muse's description of preaching in Chinese congregations. Muse's analysis (2005) focuses on how speakers achieved authority and influence while "speaking for God," noting that many speakers adopted a style, even while speaking English, marked by Chinese cultural cues such as limited body movement, little dramatic voice inflection, and the use of emotion "in moderation" (91). This style is one that Muse contends would be intended for older audiences, and is one that I saw reflected in almost

all of the preaching I witnessed in Chinese Christian communities I visited in Toronto, most of which are heavily influenced by Cantonese cultural history and experience.

The young Chinese Canadian minister at TC diverted from such a style by pacing the platform throughout his sermon, using a very strong and direct tone throughout, and actually yelling at one point. His message asserted that a sincere display of religious fervour would be to admit "every goal for myself has to be denied…the things I want to do." He then performed a type of rhetorical dialogue by posing an imagined question the young Chinese Canadian audience might be asking themselves in response to his assertion. "But God, don't you know I'm Asian?!" he passionately intoned. He went on to state very succinctly and with an air of confrontation: "God may not want you to be what your parents want you to be!" His main point was that the accounts of the Christian scriptures show Jesus Christ modelling a life lived among the poor, the dispossessed and disenfranchised. He referred to this as "the costly commission of Christ," a commission that could result in difficulty and opposition if accepted by attendees. He placed this difficult challenge firmly within the prominent cultural frame of familial relationships for his second-generation, Chinese Canadian audience by stating, "Your family may not understand. They may hate you."

His message then focused on a series of critiques, in which he pointedly unpacked his perception that many Christian communities, including its Chinese representatives, were not valid representations of the Christian message. This portion culminated in him yelling at the apparent irony of the ichthus symbol (the symbol of a fish representing Christ), which he noted was a symbol used by early generations of Christian adherents and martyrs to communicate identity in the midst of Roman persecution being displayed prominently on the BMW sedans found in Chinese church parking lots. I noted that this style was more reminiscent of prominent

evangelical conference speakers such as Mark Driscoll, David Platt, and James MacDonald than those found in typical Chinese Canadian congregations.37 After his passionate speech, he "gave time" for attendees to respond by giving them some "personal time with God;" this was accomplished by creating a few moments of corporate, silent observance, and then inviting the worship band to play a song. After about five minutes of singing, students were asked to sit down and the meeting was closed with a couple of announcements about the upcoming activities.

The speaker adopted his emotional and expressive style again later that night during the conference's culminating service. In this message, he focused on a passage in which the following words are attributed to Jesus: "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." It is at this point that he used forms of cultural framing as a means of galvanizing a response from his audience. He claimed that "Many [Chinese] parents highlight the verse 'Honour your father and mother'", but that the aforementioned verse from the gospel of Luke "is a verse you need to highlight." He repeated his theme from the morning that Christians must "die to the life we want. And, we die to the life that other people want for us," an obvious reference to the ethnic structures of action adherents might encounter with Chinese parental expectations. His message finished with an extended commentary on how "Jesus isn't calling us to Chinese, comfortable Christianity;" as part of this critique he asked for a show of hands of who had been to Disneyworld in Florida, and well over fifty percent of the room raised their hands. Referencing the biblical passages he had

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37 Schwenk (2015) recently argued that Driscoll's rhetoric and performative technique evokes emotion, employing strong indignation as a device (63-66). He also highlights the frequent use of reflective language in the hopes that strong assertion will result in behavioural change (I74). While these claims may be preliminary, their correspondence to other evangelical preaching performances is notable. Below are some brief video samples offered as examples. Mark Driscoll (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkaeAkJO0w8; accessed May 12, 2015); David Platt (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9ZaXYkaDP4; accessed May 12, 2015); James MacDonald (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YLtZ1BDKKg; accessed May 12, 2015).

been discussing, he asked attendees to consider how worthless such pursuits and activities are in light of "what Jesus has done," and then invited another time of response.

Months of preparation and planning on the part of organizers have this moment in mind. Unlike the morning session which saw an abbreviated ritual response performed, the evening response went on for close to thirty minutes with the youth band's singing[38] being interrupted periodically by the speaker's return to the platform to repeat his invitation (altar call) to come to the front as an act of response. Many conference attendees did respond, to the degree that the space in front of the platform and the aisles became nearly impassable as youth huddled together in small groups and the conference's leaders spent time talking to and counseling individuals. At one point the speaker spoke over the din of those singing and praying, "I know it's going to get crammed in here," and then encouraged people to pray at the back of the meeting space as an alternative.

Many conference attendees describe this response time as being one of the notable trademarks or ritual practices of TC. One participant, who I cited earlier, described it vividly,

> All the aisles were filled with people to the point where people would just kneel where they were. I was just, like, sooooo scared. I was like 'Oh my goodness, what's happening?!' I was so confused. It wasn't like that was the biggest thing…'cause I was 'Wow, so intense!' (May14-2)

Another respondent referred to it as "…very spiritually impactful. It was my first time being at any sort of revival thing…My first time getting a spiritual high, in that sense" (May14-4). The influence of the conference preaching via the use of cultural framing can be seen in these references, as well as in the responses catalogued and highlighted by conference organizers in a promotional video filmed at and edited after the conference. In the video, selected conference

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[38] One of the songs performed and sung by the audience was a contemporary song entitled "I have decided", an appropriate (if not unintentional) homage to the hymn used frequently by Billy Graham during large crusades in the 1950s and 1960s.

attendees appear to have been asked to reflect on ways the conference engaged them personally.

Two of the five students featured in the short film speak directly to how the conference has had a

direct impact on their relationship with their parents. The first, a young female, discusses this

impact as follows:

> So, I come from a non-religious family. And both my parents have absolutely no affections for Christ…There's always a desire in my heart to try to please my parents. But Christ tells us to deny ourselves, and that means denying pleasing my parents. Yes, I love them but…you know, for Christ you have to do things that are uncomfortable and dangerous. And yes I'm struggling with it. Um, but my way of denying myself is, ya, just striving and obeying Christ no matter what my parents think.

The second student, a young male, describes a slightly different response:

> I came from a Christian family that was built a lot on going to church on Sunday and learning through that. I learned a lot from Sunday Schools, but I didn't really understand it. But my parents they always encouraged me to learn these things. And it got so repetitive that I got really annoyed with them. I always argued with them, I always yelled at them. And it was God's calling to me [at TC]…to tell me to reconcile with them and not always ignore them and do what I wanted to do like play games or socialize. It was the cost that I had to give up what I wanted to do to follow God's will which was to apologize to my parents, to make up with them…and truly follow him.

In both instances, these students illustrate how the preacher's use of culturally resonant frames

familiar and tailored to young Chinese Canadians within the context of a stimulating evangelical

ritual environment resulted in personalized reactions and responses. These examples demonstrate

how TC's mimicking of evangelical religious forms (from beyond the Chinese Canadian

community) results in the annual forming of an expressive crowd. They also offer insight into

how this site that lies outside the parameters of congregational analyses provides a venue by

which the specific experiences of Chinese Canadian evangelicals are addressed and reformulated

in a highly emotive religious atmosphere. While this experience is perceived by many

participants as being a wildly spontaneous and freeing environment that contrasts with their

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everyday religious norms, it is, in fact, part of a larger effort by conference organizers to shape the life choices of attending youth. It is to this socialization process that I now turn.

Much like larger evangelical conferences, TC offers informative and instructional workshops during portions of the event aimed at aiding participants in their everyday lives and regular congregational experiences. These workshops cover a wide variety of topics, and students choose which ones they plan to attend before the conference begins. After lunch one afternoon, I found my way downstairs into the expansive network of classrooms located in the church basement, and into a session entitled "Who's Ready for University?" with about twenty participants. I chose this particular session because it was run by Ambassadors for Christ (AFC), the same para-church organization that helps provide important oversight and administration to the conference. Founded by a former missionary to China to reach international students in the 1970s in Canada, Ambassadors for Christ now provides leadership for a myriad of activities, events, and groups annually. It is also the organization that serves hundreds of international and Chinese Canadian students by organizing and supporting Chinese Christian Fellowships (CCF) across Canada. The session was led by a male AFC staff member in his late thirties-early forties; he was assisted by two Chinese Canadian university students from the GTA who had been involved with CCF groups.

Attendees filed in and found a seat on the floor; the chairs had been stacked at the side of the room to allow for the planned activities. After a few opening comments and introductions, the leaders asked a series of questions in which more than half the students indicated that they intended to study engineering and leave home to do so. These responses cannot be seen as being unique to this Chinese Canadian cohort, as one might expect any random grouping of Canadian high school students to express a desire for more independence and autonomy. However, the

response of the staff leader to these student disclosures provided a clear example of the broader

socialization process at work under the auspices of the conference.

Participants were asked to sit down for what ended up being a brief talk and informal

question and answer period. The AFC staff leader engaged in a simple form of cultural framing

when he positioned his talk by stating "As an Asian, it's [going to university] the thing to do."

The staff worker appeared to be appealing to the students' "common stock of knowledge"

(Berger and Luckmann 1967: 85), or their knowledge and experience of expectations for higher

education within Asian communities. He then focused in on the students' earlier

acknowledgement of seeking independence by asserting that "the big question of independence is

'Who am I?'" In answer to this hypothetical question he argued that, at university, the students

present in that workshop would have to grapple with how to make free choices "apart from duty,

responsibility, and expectation." This short list appeared to make an allusion to the lived reality

of student attendees, a reality shaped by the considerable influence of their parents within the

context of Chinese Canadian homes marked by Confucian values. In response to the implied

challenge such a question might pose for students, the AFC leader then gave his two student

helpers an opportunity to give brief testimonials from their experience at GTA university

campuses.

One of the student helpers, after suggesting that university life could be difficult at times,

challenged the workshop attendees to consider that "when God calls us, he calls us to

community." This emboldened challenge was communicated as a kind of moral imperative

whereby students should understand that engaging with a Christian community once on campus

would help in the maintaining of their faith perspective and as a suggestion that the CCF groups

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about to be promoted might be a suitable (if not preferable) option. "CCF is a great way to make new friends" once on campus; the other student chimed in affirmatively.

After these brief testimonials and some time for student questions, the AFC leader joked that we had reached "the most interesting part of this workshop." He proceeded to give each student a small promotional card containing the details for two AFC-sponsored events later in the year. One of these was a spring conference held north of Toronto each Victoria Day weekend for high school seniors and university fellowship members. The second of the two events mentioned was the annual August gathering called Frosh Connexion (discussed below). For the AFC organizers, the hope is to build a connection with students at that event. That connection is intended to be a conduit into the practices of the various on-campus fellowships, giving potential attendees a chance to connect and feel comfortable with other members of their freshman cohort in the hopes that this better improves the chances that they will join more permanently once on campus.

Consequently, the workshop held at Teens Conference (and its recruitment for such events) most certainly serves as an example of a broader socialization strategy employed by AFC leaders to reach and connect with young Chinese Canadians outside the congregation. This strategy utilizes the ethnically homogenous TC gathering as a primary site for recruitment, while also employing effective cultural frames. The intentional socialization efforts made by organizers during the conference workshop help to furnish a generational conduit by which new members of the Chinese Canadian second generation can move from the ethnically bounded communities of their youth into the ethno-religious communities of young adulthood.

I have illustrated that TC, in addition to reproducing prominent evangelical ritual forms, is a site of socialization for an emerging, second-generation Chinese Canadian cohort. The

significance of the conference derives from the ethnic homogeneity of the event, and the combination of both its spontaneous and intentionally planned elements, much like the practice of the UTCCF group discussed in the following section. This influence was expressed aptly by another participant.

> [Being at TC] was the first time for me, being integrated into such a large Chinese Christian young kids, teens getting together. All I knew was church, right? This was the first time where I got to know a bunch of people…For me, being so involved in Western culture for so long it was a very wide awakening when I realized…even some of the team cheers were done partially in Chinese, right? It gives you a very strong sense of identity… a feeling like "Hey I understand that! I get their inside jokes." A lot of these things make you feel a sense of belonging. So in terms of Chinese culture, for me it was reconnecting with the Chinese culture that they had, and that's what I deemed as Chinese Canadian culture…you have to add the Canadian in it for sure. But it gave me a connection to that for sure. 'Cause everyone there…pretty much 99 percent are Chinese Canadian (May14-4).

This description exemplifies why TC is a valuable example of avid and continuing religious adherence among some Canadian youth. Several examples provided above highlight the contrast between the expressive crowd found at this evangelical conference and the gatherings in Chinese Canadian congregations. For young Chinese Canadian evangelicals whose congregational experience is often marked by global, transnational, transferred, immigrant Christianity (i.e. multiple language groupings), TC should be considered as a site of localized assertion, involving the creation and performance of a Toronto-based, second-generation, Chinese Canadian Christianity. The final participant's brief allusion to his experience of this contrast serves as further encouragement for scholars of religion to incorporate such sites into their analyses so as to account for the varied groups utilized by some youth in identity formation. This brings me to my discussion of a network of university ministries, the Chinese Christian Fellowship (CCF).

5.3 University of Toronto Chinese Christian Fellowship (UTCCF)

I became aware of the network of university groups known as Chinese Christian Fellowships, and their parent organization, Ambassadors for Christ, early on in my fieldwork. I originally planned to spend time in a multi-ethnic fellowship, but as I began to speak with more young adults who had CCF experience and understood the essential role such groups play in the socialization of many second-generation Chinese Canadians from the GTA, I altered my focus group. My understanding of how Ambassadors for Christ functions as a crucial intermediary for many Chinese Canadian evangelicals between their high school years and their early thirties was heightened when I attended Teens Conference, one of the flagship events for Chinese evangelicals in the GTA. This event plays a vital role in exposing high schoolers to the network of fellowships they can access during their university careers, and AFC actively recruits at this event.

As part of the recruitment process for university fellowships, AFC runs an annual event called Frosh Connexion. I attended this event on an untypically cool, blustery evening in August of 2013 as I prepared to do fieldwork with the University of Toronto fellowship. We began with an informal BBQ outside the large suburban Chinese church facility and then moved inside to the main sanctuary for an hour-long program that promoted and extolled the benefits of joining a university fellowship. The final portion of the evening saw everyone split into smaller groups designated by one of the thirteen Ontario and Quebec institutions represented. As I stood outside connecting with leaders and meeting students, I shared a brief conversation with a Chinese Canadian male in his late thirties-early forties who was serving as a youth ministry coordinator for an evangelical denomination. He was attending to get a sense of how AFC ran and structured their program, as he was considering starting a similar event. He alluded to the fact that many

churches are somewhat disconnected from much of what AFC does, and told me with some emphasis, "These are our kids." He was not maligning the organization in my estimation, but referencing instead the role played by AFC in the broader, local Chinese evangelical subculture: going so far as to say that "everyone [here] has a TC [Teens Conference] story."

All around us people from various churches or university campuses appeared to be connecting after some extended absence. Many embraced enthusiastically and expressed boisterous excitement over the fact that each was attending that evening. Some appeared to be current university students connecting with alumni from their respective schools, while others were high school attendees meeting up with acquaintances from their school or church. As a researcher, I found the environment far more fluid and open than that of the congregation I had entered just a few months earlier, with individuals of varying ages and genders being willing to engage and converse. I met a couple of students who would later become interview participants, and I also made contact with the UTCCF Chairperson for the upcoming year. He spoke with me briefly about how his fellowship provides stability to university students during a time of fluidity and change in their lives. "[They are] away from home, but have a home" at CCF he claimed as we entered the church auditorium for the planned program.

The program, much like Teens Conference, exhibited a charged and celebratory atmosphere akin to a pep rally, with participants breaking into cheers at random intervals, especially at references to their alma maters. Most of the proceedings followed a typical evangelical liturgy, with a small group of singers and musicians leading some singing, two young men performing a spoken-word skit, and a young, Chinese Canadian male giving a 15-20 minute sermon. The singers led a series of contemporary, pop-rock evangelical songs familiar to many congregations. The spoken word exhortation, performed by two young males (one sporting his

hat turned backwards), was unexpectedly theological; it emphasized the need to "consider eternity," invoking commonly-held evangelical doctrines of Jesus Christ's atonement for human wrong, and finally called attendees to a personal relationship with Jesus. This emphasis matched that of the main speaker, a Chinese Canadian male graduate student from an Ontario university, who concluded with what he called an "invitation" and a question. "Do you know God?" he asked. "You have four years to know God," he continued, in an obvious reference to how the university fellowships being promoted that night could provide the necessary structure and assistance in this process.

In addition to following standard evangelical forms, this event also addressed the identity and experiences of its ethnically homogeneous audience. I observed this in the speaker's obvious reference to the familial ethnic experiences of most attendees when he passionately intoned, "[at university] we aren't riding on the coattails of our parents' faith anymore." After he finished speaking, there was a reference made to an upcoming prayer event where participants would be encouraged to pray for their schools because "our campuses are a mission field." His speech illustrated a common practice I saw repeated in the Chinese Canadian young adult events I frequented, where speakers would discuss common evangelical motifs within a framework of ethno-cultural reference points. These reference points deliberately drew on the shared ethnic identity of the participants by referring to structures they might find familiar and by invoking and problematizing ethnic ways of seeing. Once he finished speaking, another Chinese Canadian male pastor came forward to give final remarks, referring to the "many" youths he knows "that have been impacted by AFC." Attendees were then released to break off into their future university fellowship groups.

I found my way into a large, basement classroom with between thirty and forty young Chinese Canadian participants, with an even gender distribution. We began by going around and introducing ourselves, and then proceeded to play a couple of ice breaker games. I was struck again by how easy it was to connect and converse with individuals in this environment, with many young adults expressing curiosity both at my presence in the group (as a male Caucasian in his thirties) and my research interests once I explained why I was there. The atmosphere was loud and frenzied and frequently marked by boisterous and contagious laughter. After the ice breakers, the incoming Chair for the English fellowship (who I had met earlier) got up and stated that three different fellowships were actually represented in the room: English, Cantonese, and Mandarin chapters of the University of Toronto CCF. Each of the other two fellowships had someone stand up and describe their group briefly, with most of the alumni and participants present being connected with the English-speaking fellowship.

The English-speaking Chair spoke for a few minutes about how, at CCF, "we'll offer you a family." He made reference to the sense of community created by the group, and then emphasized that the fellowship at the University of Toronto was going to be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary during the upcoming year. He affirmed the ethnic distinctiveness of the group, saying "I appreciate and respect our Chinese heritage." He clarified somewhat when he described how the English fellowship dealt primarily with second-generation Chinese Canadians, alluding to cultural markers (such as "parents, and the importance of marks") shared by those present, which elicited acknowledging laughter throughout the group. What struck me about this abbreviated presentation and promotion for the upcoming year was its description of a delicately positioned social group. Each fellowship replaces its entire population every four to six years, making the demands for deliberate socialization all the more pressing. The comments about the

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five-decade long history of the group reminded me that I was observing a dynamic social environment clearly performing ethnic identity construction, whether or not I could fully understand it or if the participants felt they were actively doing so or not.

Just a couple of weeks later, I found my way to the Multi-Faith Centre located on the west side of the University of Toronto St. George campus for the UTCCF annual launch gathering. The Centre is a three-story building that provides a variety of classrooms, halls, as well as prayer and meeting spaces for a host of faith-based student groups. At the time of my research, UTCCF had been using space there for approximately eight years. I arrived about an hour before the event began and found my way to the second-floor hall that would be used for the evening's activities. Much of the fellowship's organizing committee and volunteer core were bustling around making final preparations: food and snacks being set out, the registration table and technology being set up with name tags and complimentary candy set out for each attendee. There was a palpable energy in the room, with many of those who filtered in receiving hugs, and selfies being taken as members reconnected after the summer break. Despite the obvious preparation involved in getting ready for the more than one hundred and fifty attendees, there was a sense of informality about the gathering—marked especially by its starting late on account of what one leader called, with a chuckle, "Asian time."

The format of the launch was very similar to that of Frosh Connexion, in that three familiar evangelical songs were played by the leadership team, followed by a couple of ice-breaker games and a brief speech from the Chair about the focus and emphases of the English-speaking fellowship for the upcoming year. The Chair said that for some attendees this was their first experience away from home, and, consequently, began to discuss what CCF might offer. He had three simple points: that CCF offered a sense of "family," that the group provided a site and

community for worship during the university experience, and that the community hoped to "prepare [each student] for life after university." These references were mirrored the following week during the first official gathering of the fellowship in their more regular home in the Centre's large, first floor lecture hall. In articulating his vision for the year, the Chair cast his comments in light of the group celebrating its fiftieth anniversary: establishing an imaginary lineage between earlier Chinese Canadian students and those in the room that night. He then, as a means of connecting his vision with his student audience, referred to the pressures faced by many, including "marks," "parents' approval," and the fact that there is "money to be made," prompting smiles and nods from the audience. The audience response was decidedly more demonstrative when he referred to the "sheltered lives" enjoyed by many in attendance, throwing in a specific reference to "living in Markham" (a suburb community north of Toronto) which drew audible laughter from many students. He referred to the university experience as a "bubble-popper" for those living outside the "Chinese Canadian bubble" for the first time. Having made a case for the disorientation caused by university life, he claimed that their desire as a leadership team was to "make CCF comfortable," familiar, and inviting (i.e. like a family) while simultaneously challenging attendees and making them "uncomfortable" in order to shape their religious lives.

The primary means by which I observed the fellowship attempting to accomplish these objectives was through its fostering of a social network via its schedule and activities. Much like the Toronto Chinese Church, I saw little to no emphasis placed on overt Chinese practices or festivals during my fieldwork. The clearest example of this active omission came when the fellowship planned an outreach event in downtown Toronto on Chinese New Year, in which approximately thirty of the members (and most of its leaders) met to do some outdoor skating

while handing out hot chocolate (with cups that had been decorated with inspirational sayings) to other patrons. Apart from a New Year's dinner organized by and for the frosh members of the group, I did not encounter any further cultural engagement in the fellowship's calendar of events. The pivotal function of the social network created by the fellowship was that it offered members an opportunity to socialize, pray, or worship with other members nearly every day. In addition to seeing one another during lecture or lab hours (as some attested), regular fellowship attendees were able to take advantage of frequent opportunities to socialize within the ethnically homogenous network facilitated by events and ritual activities.

The fellowship's ritual practices facilitated that expression and interaction during its regular gatherings, drawing ethnic structures of action and ways of seeing into critical review during times of theological reflection. I saw this modeled consistently during the mini sermons offered during retreats and Friday meetings. Speakers regularly placed their culturally defined familial experience in contrast to the spiritual or theological concepts being discussed, in similar fashion to the Chair's aforementioned speech at the beginning of year where he placed the pressure of parental expectations in contrast to the acceptance and love that the fellowship hoped to provide. One instance of this came during the fellowship's fall retreat north of Toronto where one of the male student speakers spoke at length about his parents' fractured relationship and the pain that caused him. He disclosed that their conflict affected his performance at school, where he "didn't do well […] I felt stupid" [Field notes, October 12/13]. He went on to describe how it was only after he came to believe that God cared about him that things changed, and he finished the story enthusiastically by saying that once he figured out he was "loved that much, then GPA didn't matter," which drew quiet acknowledging laughter from attendees. Another example of this occurred the following week at the Friday gathering. I arrived a few minutes late to see the

front wall of the meeting hall covered in yellow post-it notes. Students had been encouraged to write down their fears on a post-it note, and then bring it to the front and hang it with the others. The female speaker that night employed the key evangelical tenet of personal relationship with God as she spoke about how a connection with God "helps us to do all things and gives us confidence" [Field Notes: October 18/13]. She then shared personally about her distant relationship with her Chinese father, and how that relationship had contributed to feelings of insecurity and fear. This personal anecdote served as a connection point, situated within the recognizable context of Chinese familial pressures, to her subsequent statements. She assured those in attendance that, in the face of all their individual fears, "we have each other…brothers and sisters." "We are a fellowship," she asserted, and "you are not alone." This emotional address presented as a direct performance of what the Chair presented as the intention of the fellowship in his initial address. It suggested that this gathering of students could address the shared painful experiences of familial life, clearly drawing on ethnic structures of action and ways of feeling that would be familiar for participants.

It also offered an alternative view on ethnic ways of seeing "family" and familial relationship, and this became clear as the speaker invited attendees to participate in a closing activity. Students were invited to come to the front of the lecture hall and asked to read the post-it notes written by their peers. They were then encouraged to, after an admonition to "not be superficial…be prayerful, and be quiet," take another post-it and write a message of encouragement and affirmation to several of their peers. This unique and interactive ritual practice was clearly not comfortable for some students initially, as muffled giggling and whispering could be heard as students left their seats and tentatively made their way to the front. Within a few moments, the majority of attendees were engaged, with many taking time and care

to write personal notes, and making sure that each original post was addressed. As students

participated, some leaders quietly sang a series of evangelical worship songs. The lyrics of these

songs intentionally placed the interactive participation of those present within a framework of

spiritual renewal and discovery. One of these, written by popular Christian band Starfield,

intoned

> I need to just admit my faith is paper thin. I'm feeling so burned out on religion. I say an empty prayer. I sing a tired song. I need to just admit that the passion's gone. And I want to get it back. You told me look for You and I will find. So I'm here like I'm searching for the first time. Revive me, Jesus. Make this cold heart start to move. Help me rediscover You.

Another, written by Christian recording artist Matt Maher, invoked similar evangelical theology.

> Let no one caught in sin remain
> Inside the lie of inward shame
> We fix our eyes upon the cross
> And run to him who showed great love
> And bled for us
> Freely you bled, for us
>
> Christ is risen from the dead
> Trampling over death by death
> Come awake, come awake!
> Come and rise up from the grave!
>
> Christ is risen from the dead
> We are one with him again
> Come awake, come awake!
> Come and rise up from the grave!

Some fellowship members sang passionately and raised their hands in typical evangelical fashion

as the band played these songs. As students began to return to their seats, the female leader closed

the meeting by inviting students to come and read the messages written by others; "I hope you

have received encouragement from your brothers and sisters, and courage to face your fears." She

then began to say an unrehearsed prayer, becoming openly emotional as she referenced "the

stress, the workload, the fears of disappointment…and failure, the loneliness and rejection" that her fellow students might be experiencing.

The fellowship's lack of formality and willingness to design and facilitate ritual practices that allowed for more freedom of expression and involvement than experienced in Chinese congregations was obviously meaningful for many second-generation young adults. I saw several students who responded to the activity with open emotion (e.g. crying, embracing fellow students), while many more were quietly reverent and respectful. It was very apparent that the speaker's intentional use of familial language to frame her fears and, in contrast, the power of the fellowship's collective practice connected with second-generation participants. It is significant that this engagement of students' experiences of Chinese Canadian identity was embedded firmly within a ritually flexible, evangelical Christian atmosphere asserting that personal transformation, renewal, and discovery are possible. In this way, the regular ritual gatherings of this Chinese Canadian social network appeared to draw on shared ethnic identities that were valuable to fellowship members.

The importance of the fellowship's social network in fostering a haven for ethnic identity formation can be seen beyond the scope of its public gatherings. It is worth noting that several members of the fellowship lived together in shared student houses. This living arrangement created several connections to aspects of ethnic identity. For example, in the case of one young male leader in the fellowship, living in a common house placed him in direct relationship with networks of power and authority that stemmed from his local Chinese church. I asked him how he got involved with CCF when he arrived at university, and he replied,

> P: I was, uh, expected to go.
> SW: By whom?
> P: My pastor. I'll say it again, we're expected to take up leadership in our church. And one of the things he told us was 'You go to CCF and you take things from them and you

bring them back.'" […]I had to do it, essentially, considering I lived in a church house. So, a house that was filled with people from (my church), and they'd keep an eye on us (laughing). So it was a pretty…pretty, like…I didn't have a choice in the beginning. I was expected to go, so I had to go. And I didn't like it because I was expected to go (S13-5).

For this young man, participation in the fellowship and living in a common house with other second-generation Chinese Canadian students was, at least initially, an ongoing interaction with the structures of action derived from his relationship with a Chinese congregation. For others, living in a common house provided an access point for young adults to interact with Chinese ways of feeling. One young male spoke to me about his experience in a common house while we discussed his sense of attachment to Chinese culture and identity. He had made it clear, as I referenced earlier, that any feelings of active cultural engagement tended to arise when he was with his family, or in "a very Asian setting […] Those would be more ports to specifically Chinese cultural behaviours" (F14-7). I asked him if he engaged in such "behaviours" intentionally because of their ethnic nature, and he responded,

> P: Oh. No. I mean, ya, I can certainly describe certain facets as being considerably more culturally Chinese, but it's not as if I engage them specifically for that reason.
> SW: Certain facets…what are you thinking of when you say that?
> P: So, interaction with some of my housemates might take on a particular…if I observe it from a more outsider perspective, I would understand that my western roommates would not behave like this. But it is a very Chinese thing to do.
> SW: What would be an example of that?
> P: Even things like types of food you buy, or kinds of dishes you cook. Different ways of keeping the house (laughing).

For others, shared living with other Chinese Canadian young adults was simply part of an overall sense of affinity with the fellowship. One young male who lived in a common house described for me that, in his first year,

> I got more connected to this group of people… 'cause, like, their background is somewhat [similar] to mine. Ya…in terms of the environment we grew up [in], and the experience when we first came to Canada as well. Maybe like the…subject that we are studying as well, like, all these [things]. It made me feel in a more connected relationship with these

people, so I was, um, more involved in the fellowship. Especially during last year (O13-2).

For some young adults involved with the university fellowship, the strong attachments formed with other attendees inspired the use of familial language to describe the group. One male attendee described it this way.

> If I were to tell somebody…who I wanted to invite to CCF, I would say we're a bunch of Christians, we're pretty excited about this gospel and we just hang out on Friday and study the Bible. And you know, sometimes it is good to have a community like that…and to some people, you know, it becomes a family and they become dependent on each other and there's a lot of support and encouragement. And of course, if you want to come to find out for yourself…find out about religion, about faith, about where you stand in life, I think it's a good place (F14-12).

Another used similar terminology when he told me,

> Um…CCF to me is a place of solace. It's a…you know, CCF is my family. It been able to really give me comfort and a place where I can be, you know, away from work, away from school work, academics, and then just be in the presence of brothers and sisters that encourage me, uplift me. And I find that sometimes, it's like, everyone needs a social life, so it's kinda like a recharging station, in a sense. But then I think I try my best to live out my spiritual life in all aspects of my life. Whether it be my classes, whether it be with friends…anything (F14-9).

A female participant echoed this when I asked her what the most important feature of the fellowship was for her, and why she attended.

> P: (pause) I was going to say 'family'…and it sounds so cliché (laughing).
> SW: Is that your final answer?
> P: Ya, it actually is though. Because, like, I never had a group of people who invested in my life…invested their time, like…poured into my life before I gave anything back. And I don't… like, I think it almost goes beyond friendship, because I've always said the friendship is very reciprocal. Which is good…but in my life, the love I've kinda experienced that is not always reciprocal, it's like family love. So I guess that's the only way I can describe CCF (May14-2).

In some cases, these descriptions of familial closeness were tied to perceptions of the fellowship's ethnic distinctiveness. When I asked the young female (May14-2) just cited if CCF created a sense of connection to Chinese culture and shared heritage for her, she replied,

""Um…(pause) ya I think for sure. At first when you asked me, I was like 'No, I think it's just a church thing.' But then I also realized it's because all my life a lot of the Christian people I've grown up around are Chinese." One of the young males responded by referring to how the fellowship connects him to the broad, extensive social network of Chinese Canadian evangelicals.

> SW: Does CCF create a connection to broader Chinese culture/tradition in any way?
> P: Um, in a small sense yes. Because you're within…um, we have some people from UTCCF who don't go to UofT. And usually for…actually for me I don't have time to go to other universities and other places to get to know other people. With these people coming in and occasionally visiting, you get to open up the window and you get to see…I mean we have different people, even during our retreat we have people from Queens coming, right? So I have friends also going to Queens, and I'm like 'Hey, do you know him, do you know her?' And they're like 'Ya!' And you start to build up and see who else you know and stuff like that. And it's also, 'cause CCF is…you know there's either a CCF or an ACF [Asian Christian Fellowship] at every single university…or most of them…within this area you get to know, um, friends who you probably met before…your acquaintances… and you're like, 'Hey you go to CCF too!' and they're like 'Ya, in Waterloo.' 'oh, that's cool!' They're like, 'What do you guys do there?' And then from there you guys see your mutual friends or other people and when you come back and everyone's back from break and whatnot you get to interact with them…you get to spend time with them. And, you know, it's just that whole bigger connections with them. You know, it's small in the sense that it's not always happening but it happens occasionally (F14-9).

These affirmations of the importance of ethnically distinctive fellowships were not uniform, however. The young male respondent I cited earlier did say that the fellowship provided a kind of familial environment, but went on to describe how this was not based on a sense of mono-ethnic solidarity. Describing the fellowship, he said:

> And you know, we don't really care about ethnicity whatsoever. And I think more or less it would be on that line…if I were to invite a friend I would say 'oh, there's food', and it always works. Or, there will be, like, card games or board games afterwards. Or go drink…well, not drink. But like drink bubble teas or non-alcoholic beverages afterward. Something like that. But if you want to ask me honestly about what CCF is like, I would say what I said above…it's true. But, as with everything that you see on an advertisement, it's sometimes an over-portrayal of the reality of things. Of course, some people…the main point is some people do find CCF as a home. Some people do find CCF as a place of encouragement, et cetera et cetera. Obviously there are people in the fellowship who are

not all that socially adaptable, I would say. Of course there is cliques, right? I think it's just human nature that we tend to go with the people that we like to hang out with. And we…it's a much of an effort to step out your zone and to go hang out with somebody. And from that respect, I've known people who went to CCF and do not find CCF as home. This type of people, the ones I know of are mainly people who came to Canada a bit later. So, if you're a second…if you're second generation Chinese…so if you're born in Canada or if you came when you were three, then most of the time there is not too much effort for you to be in the group. On the other hand, if your English is not so great and you come here in the hope that you might make friends, learn something about Christianity, and improve your English…so of them will do well. But not everyone. Because I think there is, even for the Chinese community, there is a bit of a culture gap, if I may put it, between people who are born in Canada and people that came here when they were like 2 or 3 as opposed to people who just came to Canada for university…or if they came in late high school for university. There's a gap…there's a big gap. And some people adapted well, but some people are having difficulty adapting. So in view of that, CCF…it's great for as a home, as this cultural hub, for a second generation Chinese Christian, but if you're pretty new to Canada the English CCF…I wouldn't say, I could be wrong…but there is evidence suggesting that it might not be the best Christian group that, you know, people look for (F14-12).

I asked him if his involvement with the fellowship had helped him sense a connection to Chinese culture or ethnic identity in any way. He chuckled and continued.

P: Well, a little bit. But I think, uh, people in UTCCF or people in English section of CCF are…they're pretty white-washed. I mean, if you want to talk about, like, the Chinese identity or Chinese tradition in that respect, I would have much better…or it would much more beneficial to understand these things if I were to hang out with my friends who just came from mainland.
SW: And you don't get that when you're part of the English ministry of CCF?
P: Not to the same extent. I mean it's a little bit like…I mean, compared to the general public, it's [UTCCF] pretty Asian. So, if you'd allow me to say it's a spectrum. On this end, it's like people that just came from mainland. Obviously (pause) they're like, really culturally identified as mainland Chinese people. At the other end of the spectrum is like the general public in Canada, which is really diverse. And CCF is, like, maybe somewhere in the middle…maybe a little to the right [towards the general population]. That's what I think…(voice trailed off).

This downplaying of the fellowship's role in fostering or enhancing a sense of ethnic attachment was repeated by a couple of other participants as well. One told me that the fellowship did not really help him connect with broader Chinese culture or practice "'cause most of my friends are Chinese. So I wouldn't say that UTCCF is a source of that. Um, I would say a stronger source of

that would just be my relationship with my family here and in China" (F14-11). Another

responded to the same question in similar fashion.

> Mmmmmm (pause), I think I'm still going to say no because…well, hopefully it's because at CCF that we recognize that it's…Chinese Christian Fellowship is not for Chinese people. So then, I hope they do a pretty good job of not trying to really, um, be too outspoken about, I guess, Chinese ethnic identities. But I think there's still times when people will break out in Cantonese or Mandarin because…it's just like, like there will be inside jokes or slang or things they're comfortable with. Not realizing there's other ethnicities in our fellowship who just might…completely not understanding these jokes. But I think as a fellowship whole, I think, um, the ethnic identity is not very important. (quickly adding) But I think it does draw people together in the sense that it brings them more comfort. Especially because we have so many international students, and all the people from Hong Kong especially who have come here feeling much more comfortable with other Cantonese-speaking people who can relate to their life back in Hong Kong, or whatever. But I don't think CCF as a group emphasizes Chinese identity (May14-4).

A few other participants shed light on this marginalization of ethnic identity performances

by referring to it as happening in an unintentional or occasional way. In response to my question

of whether the fellowship connects him to his Chinese heritage and ethnic identity, one male

participant spoke frankly.

> P: Um…other than the occasional "I'll have this new dish…or this dish" that I say in Chinese, that's really the only connection I have I feel.
> SW: That's a really good example. And you'll use Cantonese terminology?
> P: Yes, but more so because I don't know how else to say [it]. It makes more sense in Cantonese.
> SW: But that is not an intentional move to try and create that sense of connection?
> P: Right… it's just something that happens. Even with other races it just sort of happens. We'll try saying it in Chinese and then we'll sort of try to explain it. At least that's what I try to do (chuckling) (Mr14-3).

I received a similar answer from one of the fellowship's female leaders when I asked her if there

were aspects of the fellowship that she might identity as being Chinese, or if she considered them

valuable because they are part of her ethnic identity.

> P: (quietly) Interesting. (pause) I feel like I don't really see anything specifically. Ya, I don't really…maybe it's there but I don't catch it because it's so ingrained (laughing). I feel…actually…there's a part of me that also feels a little bit of disconnect. So on one hand I feel connected with people in UTCCF because they're CBCs [Canadian-born

Chinese]. Most of them grew up here, or like, they all speak English really well…those kind of connections. But there's also the aspect that most of them are Canto, so when they sometimes say things in Cantonese I do feel like…like, now there's more and more people that are Mandarin slowly going into UTCCF, but I think the majority are still Canto and they're mostly from Hong Kong. So when they talk about stuff from Hong Kong there is a bit of a disconnect.
SW: Is that hard? Does it create barriers/cliques in the community?
P: Mmmmm, I don't think it's difficult, but I do find it much easier to connect with Mandarin CBCs. (chuckle) You can right away know the difference. Or feel the difference.
SW: How do you feel a difference?
P: I don't know! Ugh! It's so hard to pinpoint (May14-3).

This participant articulates very well some of the internal diversity present in the English-speaking, "Chinese" fellowship. The group appears to draw on shared ethnic identities in the construction of its ritual practices, as I discussed earlier. However, for some young adults, like this participant, this is not necessarily perceived as such. She found it difficult to conceptualize and articulate the boundaries and mechanisms of her own Chinese Canadian identity, but when attempting to she did so by pointing to the unintentional nature of these negotiations. Most of the participants of the fellowship I spoke with either denied any deliberate or conscious practice in the group's ethnic performances, or they downplayed the saliency of them. These sentiments were restated by another community member when I asked him if the fellowship created a sense of connection to Chinese culture or identity.

P: Not intentionally. I think it happens unintentionally because of how a lot of the members were brought up. So, like, I think the majority of members are either first or generation Chinese are raised up in a Cantonese from Hong Kong. Or international from Hong Kong. And with that they bring in whatever they're brought up with. And a lot of them have attended church in Hong Kong and attended church in that capacity, right? So, what they bring in is what they know, and it might not necessarily be what they want to bring in…but it's because they grew up like that."
SW: Can you give me an example of that happening? What are they bringing in?
P: Oh, um, like…the, the…hierarchy thing. The hierarchy thing…I think those…the hierarchy thing and the…(pause) I don't know…do you know what I mean when I say `face factor?'
SW: Do you mean, like, shame…respectability…protecting one's reputation and the reputations of those one cares about?

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P: Yes! Exactly (F14-10).

He went on to assert how this importing of Chinese culture manifests in the fellowship.

> P: Ya. And I think…it's the…like, leadership. Right? Most people look towards third years or four year when they begin to serve as committee. And I don't think there's (chuckle) a law or, like, there are no rules for that to happen. But, um, I guess for some reason that idea gets put into people's heads. It's like, if they're in first year then they shouldn't serve, or they shouldn't be on committee next year. Or…because they don't know enough or they're not capable.
> SW: Is that ever said to people?
> P: Ya!
> SW: Have you said that…or heard that said… 'You're too young'?
> P: Well, maybe not in direct terms, like, 'You're too young'. But, it's like…through personal experiences… 'I thought about running in first year, and I don't think it's a good idea.' Something like that.
> SW: 'Maybe you want to wait til second year? 'People would be encouraged to wait? [I then referenced the ongoing election process for the incoming leadership committee]
> P: Ya. And…I've only heard of this from the first years…that they would bring this up. Like, 'I talked about it with somebody, and they dismissed it otherwise'. So, like, that in my opinion is a sort of Chinese culture that has been brought in unintentionally. But that remains, because year after year it's like…it just gets passed down, right? So all the first years right now are being fed that…this information from three years ago.

One participant explained his perspective on how the fellowship fosters a sense of connection to Chinese identity by referring to the dynamics of his Chinese congregation and its integration in the Chinese evangelical community in the GTA.

> I think [the church has] become…almost there's become a concept of just having the social connections. Like, a lot my friends, even the non-Christian ones, they all have their…um, what they call aunties and uncles. The family and friends…the connections that they know, right? From personal experience I found it to be, like, those Chinese connections, at least in Toronto, seem to be a lot broader than the other races that I know of. I know a few of my friends from other ethnic groups, they know other people…but it's never been quite as strong, right? […] Like, for Chinese Canadian people, like, you can say 'Oh, do you know this person?' and they'll say 'Hey, ya I know that person.' 'Cause people know each other from random things here or there. I say that even in the congregation, it expands that significantly right? Just saying, like, 'Oh I know so-and-so from so many different places', right? If I go to another church and I mention a prominent figure in my church, right? Then they would say, 'Oh ya, I know that person.' Then we could start talking (May14-1).

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He gave another example of this network when he described how, when interviewing to be on the volunteer staff for Teens Conference, he "mentioned some figures in my church. And they [the interviewers] recognized them and said 'Oh ya. I know who you're talking about.'" He then applied this conception of a social network to the fellowship.

> It [fellowship] gives you connections to different people...But more so, because it's at university, at least for myself where at Ryerson there's a significantly lower population of Chinese people…still quite a few, but it's significantly less. Less than UofT. So this gives me an opportunity to be able to meet with a lot of Chinese people, Chinese Christians specifically, that I feel very comfortable with.

Another student shared with me that the fellowship's connection to Chinese identity was unintentional at times,

> 'cause what I feel is normal it's just because it's what I'm used to, and what I've grown up around. I understand that social norms aren't normal, it's just what you learn and stuff. So then, ya, I think there is. 'Cause a lot of it…there's a lot of social aspects too, right? Where sometimes, um, we joke around and, like, one or two Chinese characters get thrown into the conversation or something. And sometimes I'll explain to [a non-Chinese fellowship member] what's happening and stuff. So I feel that there is still too…and I feel that for the majority, um, approach to Christianity…people are like me demographically pretty similar (May14-2).

She described how, for example, she had celebrated Chinese New Year with the first year cohort ministry run by the fellowship earlier that year: "more of a social thing." I had a couple of other first year participants refer to this event as well, which was the only explicitly ethno-cultural event promoted and run by the group. As we discussed the possible ways in which the fellowship connected her with a sense of Chinese identity, she too referred to her uptown Chinese church that she deemed "really similar" to the fellowship in terms of how it functions. "Like, it's student led for the most part…playing the instruments and singing. And we sing pretty much the same-ish songs. And then I feel like the approach to things are very similar." When I asked her if both created or maintained a sense of family (which she had already alluded to) her answer referred to

the structure of action that the fellowship helps her to see, specifically mentioning the perceived

opinions of adults.

> Ya, but because CCF is mostly all students, I'm a little more at ease compared to, like…because sometimes, especially with Christian adults sometimes (laughing), I don't know exactly how conservative they are. I don't know if that's an Asian culture thing, or being a Christian thing too. But I feel sometimes they're a little bit more conservative or little bit more, I don't want to say judgmental but…

I asked her what she meant by conservative, but she said she could not define what she meant

because she did not know them. However, she made it clear that interactions with Asian adults in

various social settings sparked these kinds of internal reflections, saying "I don't know if it's…or

if I'm just like that around Christians…even with non-Christians, even just other Asian parents

too sometimes I'm like 'Are they judging me? Are they judging me based on what I'm

studying…what I'm doing…what I believe in?'"

Most participants I spoke with at the fellowship did not articulate a strong sense of ethnic

identity formation taking place during the weekly activities of the group. Most downplayed the

impact of the group's religious and social environments to shape and increase their sense of

connection to ethnic identity, despite what I observed in ritual practices such as those I described

earlier. However, because I also asked each of them questions related to their congregational

involvement, inevitably they placed their experience of UTCCF within the context of the larger,

Chinese Canadian evangelical community. One student, whose assertion that the fellowship

provided familial support for him, discussed where and how he senses a connection to his

Chinese heritage.

> I think there's a few places that come to mind. First one is my home. Because especially Chinese parents, Chinese family….um, I mean, we often do traditional things like New Year we always celebrate. Mid Autumn festival…um, we would even go on trips back to China and whatnot. So that's one place where I definitely feel my heritage is coming in. Another place would be church, because church, you know, you're interacting with predominantly Chinese people, who would laugh at jokes that would be funny to Chinese

people. Because it's like stereotypes and whatever…so it's the same things. Talking Chinese, which is cool. And another one would be CCF, because CCF is majority Chinese people. We have the same interests…we watch anime, we love Chinese food and whatnot…and everyone's Chinese so it's funny; 'Oh, my mom's so mad that I'm not getting this mark', or something like that right? (laughing) And [CCF] is another place where I can feel comfortable about my heritage and my culture. It's a place where I can truly, um, you know, let it out, right? I don't have to pretend I'm a whitewashed person just because I grew up in Canada. No! It's a place where I can, you know, be comfortable with certain aspects of my culture. Sometimes when you're with other people, particularly non-Chinese people, they wouldn't understand the same jokes. They're like, 'Oh, my parents don't do that.' Or, 'Oh, I don't eat that food, so let's go to McDonald's' (F14-9).

This participant illustrates how all three of Karner's operative functions of ethnic identity are present for some young Chinese Canadians. Religious communities and organizations, including CCF, tie young adults to structures of action that are familiar. By providing them with roommates and fellow students with shared ethnic heritage, the fellowship also offers ample opportunities for them to engage in activities that parallel ways of feeling known to them from their familial experiences. Against these the fellowship is also uniquely situated to expand attendees' ways of seeing by expanding their sense of family to include their fellow students and giving them ample opportunity and freedom (without generational oversight). Thus, this is a crucial socio-religious environment given that young adults most often encounter it as they leave their nuclear family for the first time, embarking on a tumultuous path of identity formation during university. This parallels Karner's observation that a person's significant experiences and biographical memories can have a reflexive quality whereby they lead to an assertion of feelings (i.e. structures of feeling) over and against a sense of lost or lessening identity (2007: 35). The proliferation and growth of these ministries over the past twenty-five years indicates that they provide a significant and stabilizing environment for Chinese Canadian young adults to negotiate their emerging sense of feeling that they are both Christian and Chinese.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the ways in which my participants engage with their ethnic identities. It observes that some Chinese Canadian young adults do not see their religious communities as asserting a strong ethnic identity or demanding individual engagement with certain aspects of Chinese culture. While this observation does provide valuable corrective against the blind assumption that participation in a English-speaking Chinese Canadian evangelical community informs personal identity via overt cultural engagement, the body of the chapter illustrates how many young adults are in fact shaped by ethnic forces even if they downplay or deny the effects of these. Using Karner's markers, a consideration of three Chinese Canadian evangelical communities provides a snapshot as to how many second-generation young adults continue to maintain connection to Chinese ethnic identity and how they problematize and reconstruct their personal identity by participating in communities that offer flexibility and freedom along with relative ethnic homogeneity. Finally, I have attempted to address the research gaps left by previous researchers of second-generation, Asian American evangelicals by illustrating that a methodological restriction to congregational analyses may both fail to account quantitatively for key religious environments among contemporary youth and neglect the qualitative value of multiple sites that are engaged and embraced by some young adherents in the negotiation of their ethnic and religious identities.

I now turn my attention to the efforts made by my participants to differentiate themselves as a generational cohort, in direct contrast to their parents.

6. Second Generation Issues

The previous chapter has shown how my participants view themselves both as Christian Canadians and as members of a large and vibrant ethnic community. In this chapter, I turn my attention specifically to three areas or issues engaged by my participants because of their identity as second-generation immigrants: Chinese language acquisition, endogamy, and the definition of religion and culture. Each of these themes emerged through the interviewing process and speaks to a widely shared experience in my sample. My contention is that, in each thematic area, my participants distinguish themselves from the generation before them. This separation is embodied and consolidated in second-generation Chinese Canadian experience in the religious communities I studied.

My participants benefit from stronger social ties with those who share their experiences in Chinese language schools. The fact these experiences were sometimes negative and did not result in successful language acquisition does not restrict their ability to contribute to shared ethnic identity. Sometimes it was the shared negative experience and failure to learn much Chinese that united Chinese Canadian young adults. In addition to this, my participants' involvement in ethnically bounded religious environments serves the dual function of making it easier to find a mate who shares their desire for continued ethnic association while also making it easier to find a mate with shared religious commitments. The young Chinese Canadians I spoke with contrasted their romantic interests and practices with those of the previous generations, who they described as being discriminatory and even racist. Finally, my young participants distinguished their forms of religious belief from their parents by attempting to distinguish the religious teaching and practice they have encountered outside Chinese Canadian institutions from theology and practices influenced by Chinese culture. In each case, the English-speaking religious environments I

studied provide the venue where these issues are negotiated and where young Canadians form their identity.

6.1 Chinese language

For many second-generation individuals, a crucial aspect of their ethnic experience and expression is that of heritage-language exposure and acquisition. There is a significant body of research that points to the importance of language retention in the negotiation and formation of ethnic identity (Breton 1964; Cheung 1981; Isajiw and Makabe 1982; Lan 1992; Van Dijk 1998; Chumak-Horbatsch 1999; Kalbach and Kalbach 1999; Schrauf 1999; Jedwab 2000; Schmid 2002; Safran and Laponce 2005; Pauwels 2016; Simon 2018), with a key variable being "quite simply, the opportunities one encounters in daily life wherein they can use their heritage language" (Chow 2001: 7). This is not to say, however, that there is a direct correlation between heritage language exposure and fluency with perceived and espoused ethnic attachment. In fact, as Mah contends, "the essential element of ethnicity is not heritage language ability" (2005: 34), but, rather, a broad spectrum of social venues, practices, and experiences including family, community practices, rituals, and customs.

The more pressing point in this section is that my participants are differentiated from their parents and from each other on the basis of heritage language usage. Of my fifty-one participants, six claimed to not speak any Chinese dialect at all, nineteen claimed to have "conversational"[39] competency, twenty-one claimed fluency in at least one dialect, while five claimed fluency in multiple dialects. This range of language proficiencies is indicative both of the experience of young Chinese Canadians who live in a culture that "encourages and values the retention of a strong sense of ethnic identity" (Costigan et al. 2009: 262) and of those whose "participation in

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[39] Or used similar language, usually implying limited ability. These responses were untested and based on self-disclosure, so both ends of the spectrum should be viewed with some level of skepticism.

Canadian society and a strong ethnic identity may more readily coexist when one has lived in Canada from a young age or when one lives in a geographic area with a large Chinese community that supports ethnic identity development and retention" (Costigan et al. 2009: 267). The Greater Toronto Area provides environmental conditions conducive to Chinese language acquisition and maintenance for my participants because their homes, schools, and other social gatherings "promote and encourage students' feelings of pride and belonging" in aspects of Chinese culture (Comanaru & Noels 2009: 136). However, as my sample shows, these favourable conditions and the language acquisition and retention they allow for are not essential for my participants' sense of connection to ethnic communities and identity.

All but two of my participants were exposed to a Chinese dialect in their childhood by family members. The significant role played by domestic environments in language development cannot be overstated, and this correlates to my participants' admission that their homes were the key site of ethnic identity formation and reinforcement. However, as Li argues, language acquisition requires an awareness of how homes, schools, and (by extension) other social groups all participate in socializing a child in "cultural values and belief" (2006: 358). Consequently, throughout my fieldwork I paid attention to forms of Chinese language learning and usage that were proximate to the English-speaking sites I was visiting, and I spoke with individuals about whether they had attended a Chinese language school as a child.

Inquiring about participant experience in these sites was part of my effort to account for the broader social context in which young Chinese Canadians are exposed to cultural content. In my interview sample, sixty-five percent of responding participants[40] attended Chinese school: almost all of them in the GTA. The programs they were exposed to include those run by their

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[40] Thirty-three out of fifty-one, with three interviews yielding no response due to time constraints.

churches on weekends, those run by private companies, and those hosted in Toronto District School Board facilities. Despite this program diversity, responses to the question of whether they enjoyed these classes was nearly unanimous. Some described their experience broadly, like one participant who said, "I didn't do very well at it…I remember not liking it," while another vented, "I despised it. I despised it like no other." Others discussed their frustration with the language classes because of their ineffectiveness. "Yeah, it was useless. I can't read menus," one person told me as they laughed. Another young participant said "I hated it. I found no…there was no point for me back then. I would forget everything. Like, they would make you memorize everything…like, all the words every single week…and do dictation tests. And then I'd forget. So, it's like, 'What's the point…if I still can't read or understand or remember anything?' Even to this day I don't remember." This sentiment was echoed by another former student who said, "So, I've attended ten years of Chinese school. And I still can't properly read and write." A few blamed the organizers and teachers directly, like one student who said, "It was a horrible experience going through it, at the time. 'Cause at the time, I had no interest (laughing). So going through it sucked. But at the same time, they didn't teach Chinese very well either." Another participant couldn't hide their disgust as they remembered, "I hated [the class]. And most people hated them too. I mean, the teachers there were very strict and, um, it just was not fun. Ever."

These negative experiences correlate to the lack of Chinese literacy in my sample and illustrate how my participants see language instruction as an ill-fated attempt by their parents to transfer aspects of Chinese identity to them. However, research has shown (Chow 2001; Xiao 1998) that even though ethnic language schools may not always succeed at teaching writing and reading skills, such programs raise students' awareness of Chinese ethnicity and culture. I saw

several examples of this. One young female described how she did not enjoy Chinese school at all, but then explained further.

> I think once again, it really tied into that whole 1997…and I grew up, like I said with all second-generation Canadians…Chinese Canadians. So there was really no need to speak Chinese. I just spoke English to my friends all the time, even though, like I said, 80 percent of my classmates were Chinese in background. And they all went to Chinese school also. But I think when I got to grade six, we had like five people who came straight from Hong Kong because they left for that reason, and then I realized they didn't speak a lick of English. (chuckle) And they had no idea what was going on, and so I think for the first time I realized that Chinese was useful (interrogative). And I could actually…I actually had to talk to somebody in Chinese, and they actually needed to understand me so that they could get along and understand things at school (A13-2).

For this woman, this language exposure was a key contributor to her continuing with language classes and ultimately increasing her reading competency. She claimed:

> I think it was really because I saw value in speaking with people, and then that was the year that I transitioned into Chinese congregation, so then reading the Bible in Chinese! Like, this is a Chinese-English Bible, but there's these characters that take up half my Bible. I might as well start looking at them (chuckle)… But, ya…I probably only valued it for the last four of those twelve years [of language instruction]. But then that's probably when my Chinese actually grew the most. So the first eight years was like…beginner. Just like…remember just for my test and that's it. And then afterwards, really understanding the need and connection to it.

This activation of language usage and, by association, ethnic markers occurred in spite of the participant's opinion that language classes were a waste of time.

Similarly, another female respondent discussed how she was permitted to quit Chinese school because "I don't have a gift for languages, so it was just rote memory," and "my parents saw that I hated it" (S13-2). When I asked her if her language acquisition was important for her parents, she described her own feelings about how important Chinese language is by stating first that all of her grandparents were deceased and that she had only seen them once during a childhood trip to China. She continued,

> So, I always wanted to be able to communicate with my grandparents, and I know that they didn't speak English at all. So I see my peers in church who have grandparents and

my peers are not able to communicate with them. The most that they'd do is a simple 'Hi-Bye' phrase, 'Yes, mom's over there', and that's about it. And when you try…when I ask them you know, 'What else do you do with your grandparents?' They say 'Nothing, 'cause I can't say anything.' And it just makes me sad to know that these people are your family and they are so rich in stories and…and whatever knowledge or wisdom that they might be able to impart and we can't communicate with them. So that's where that importance comes from.

Her account illustrates how language training may not have fostered full-fledged language competency,[41] and yet has contributed to her negotiation of a Chinese Canadian identity. A more striking example of this can be seen in the account of a young male who shared with me about how, in seventh grade, his family moved to a smaller community just north of Toronto. He felt marginalized in that community and began to connect with others with a shared minority ethnicity status. He claimed that the feelings of marginalization and his connection with others with a shared migration narrative

> made me develop this sense of, looking back it's just stupid, you know, it's like, Asian supremacy. I looked around and I was like 'You know what? Asians are probably the best people out there. They're the smartest ones. They're nicer…they're cooler.' That's what I thought. And every opportunity I'd get outside of school I would find, just, Asian people to hang out with because I thought they were so awesome. Like, Chinese school on Friday nights was, like, my hangout! I loved Chinese school, just 'cause I could, you know, be with people that I got along with. Right? And I think it's funny because I also looked up to a lot of ESL kids because, to me, they were the real Chinese people. Like, they were the ones that, you know, kept the Hong Kong culture…the Chinese culture. Even, like, the people of Chinese descent who were born here they didn't seem authentic to me because I thought they were just white people in yellow skin. That's one way you would put it…to not be politically correct (laughing). And I didn't really like that because it wasn't authentic. So for a period there I did my best to emulate what an ESL student would be like.

When asked what that would look like, this respondent said:

> Just the way they dress…just the way they talk. Like, I'd blurt out random Cantonese in the middle of nowhere even if there were other Caucasians around who wouldn't understand what I was saying. I didn't care. I'd just…start speaking Cantonese because I thought language was something to be prideful about. The way they dressed…the way they thought, especially about marks (laughing). I was very, very stringent about marks.

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41 She claimed to be competent in conversational Cantonese, but that she had very limited reading skills, i.e. she could only read half a Chinese menu "if I can guess it."

In terms of subject choice, I was also really invested in my mind about math and science as a lot of Chinese kids and Chinese parents are stereotypically invested in (F14-5).

As we continued to converse, he shared with me that "By grade 8 [at Chinese language school] I was getting, like, zero on my exams (laughing). But I went anyway just 'cause I tried to learn. I really did." His claims mirror those of another young woman who, after eight years of Chinese school, claims that "When I speak Chinese now, I have a really strong English accent," which she correlated with early years of high school when "I kind of didn't want to associate myself with being really Asian. And so then I kind of refused to (laughing) speak Chinese, like…even to my parents" (May14-2). What these examples illustrate is the way in which how many of my participants had the social resources of language schools (some of them organized by their Chinese Canadian congregations), and how these schools activate ethnic awareness for some without producing linguistic capability.

One of the curious ways several participants appeared to be negotiating their ethnic awareness was in their expressions of regret over not being able to acquire Chinese language competency. As one young woman told me her own story of language learning, she reiterated that "when I talk to my own peers who I grew up with as children who went to Chinese school and they don't know [a dialect]…it didn't work, they all say to me 'I wish I'd tried harder in Chinese school so I could actually speak Chinese and read Chinese…but now it's too late' kind of thing" (Ag13-2). This account was reiterated by others. One woman talked to me about how she hated Chinese school to the degree that she cried every week before going. In university she took a Chinese language class and then said to her mother "'Why did you let me stop?' And my mom's like 'Don't even give me this!'" (S13-3). She described her current effort to maintain conversational proficiency in contrast to her earlier frustration with language school and justified these by saying "China's going to be the next superpower, even though I don't want to admit

that. I think it's a nice skill." One male participant talked about learning "how to read, write, and listen to Chinese when I was in the Philippines. But that was in elementary school, but I have not used it in a long time. I wish I had…I had all the basic knowledge" (Jan14-3). Another echoed this sentiment when he said "I partially regret [the language classes] now…Because I don't know Chinese (chuckle). In part, in part. I don't regret too much…it's a good skill to have. I mean, if it's more or less for free…or it's pretty cheap, as a kid you might as well learn" (N13-4).

These kinds of comments can be explained by considering the work of social psychologists. Roese and Summerville (2005) contend that people have regret especially in those situations which they feel they can remedy: the underlying assertion being that this "opportunity principle" creates less cognitive dissonance than those situations in which a person feels no difference or improvement can be made. However, Beike et al. argue that this principle is misguided, stating instead that regret is the "most intense when people perceive limited opportunities to remedy undesired outcomes but cannot suspend their ruminations about how these outcomes could (and should) have been better" (2009: 389). With this definition, Beike et al. describe the experience of my participants who live their lives in and around the strong social capital of the Chinese evangelical community in the GTA. For many of them, the exposure to language instruction combines with the varied ways in which they were unable to form strong competencies to form a sense of regret: a feeling that is enhanced and reinforced as they participate in vibrant ethno-religious communities.

This kind of identity negotiation can be heard especially in the description of two participants. The first, a male student, talked about despising language school. He continued,

> …it was just difficult for me considering I always felt a certain disconnect with my own ethnic identity. And I didn't care about it (chuckle), until I had come more into contact with Chinese people…'cause it was much more prevalent because I was seeing Chinese people who would speak Chinese, who are my age. And I think that was a tipping point

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for me, in just going 'well, I kinda want to learn Cantonese, but at the same time it's just not my interest' per se. It's more for, uh…a sort of shame almost.

When asked if he is aware of how important ethnicity and culture are to his sense of identity, he responded,

It's a really interesting question, because for me…like, I cannot deny that I'm a product of being Chinese. That's, um, that's inescapable in a sense. I mean, my environment has shaped who I am, right? Like, I cannot deny that causality…and, you know, where my parents have come through for immigration and what not. So I am Chinese ethnically. Do I identify on a daily basis that I'm Chinese? Yes. But do I identify as traditional Chinese is the question, I think, at hand. Because traditionally if we look at cultural Chinese males my age I would be in Life Sci (laughing). But I'm not, right? But then, does that make me any less Chinese than anyone else? And I think for me that has been the question…of asking 'what is Chinese', and even in my state of, you know…I would say, deviance from (chuckle) the Chinese norms, do I still consider myself Chinese? And I think yes, but I think in a different way than what Chinese has been defined as.
SW: So in what ways?
P: Um, well the thing is…I do think I should still learn Chinese considering the fact that I…it's an important part of my heritage. Um, it's my history as well. And I think to just throw that away is hard for me. Like, even though I might not agree with a lot of my norms from the Chinese culture…what that means, but I think it's very poor for me and my own children and, you know, for…I would say, the future in a sense if I were just to give up on a part of my identity as ethnically being Chinese. And even though I don't agree with a lot of what being Chinese means (chuckle) I think it's still a part of me considering, like…who I am has been developed around this idea of Chinese (S13-5).

Similarly, a female participant discussed her experience in and around language schools.

I realized how I was kind of an outsider because I couldn't speak the language, or um, just the way that I was raised was different than most other Chinese kids. So even at that young age I developed a very hardened heart towards it, and yeah, at one point it made me really want to reject my identity as being Chinese. I didn't want to go to Chinese school because, I was like 'The kids are mean. I don't want to learn this stupid language…it doesn't matter.' But I realized, you know, now that I'm older part of me does regret not fully picking up the language. And part of me realizes that God created me to be Chinese for a reason. He didn't create me to be black as I always wanted to be…He didn't create me as white as I wanted to be. But he made me to be Chinese. And there is a reason…there is a purpose for me to be Chinese and I'm embracing that part of being…of my earthly identity (F13-3).

This participant's invoking of religious imagery as a means of justification offers a compelling

illustration of how this kind of identity regret impacts the lives of some young Chinese

Canadians: to the degree that their religious values are utilized to address the dissonance they

sense on account of not being linguistically competent. I saw this type of negotiation emerge in several other conversations where young adults discussed how they might attempt to socialize their own children in Chinese culture and language.

The aforementioned young woman who discussed the importance of language by referring to her own deceased grandparents engaged this topic with me. I asked her whether or not she planned on teaching her children Cantonese; she responded, "I've got to marry someone who can teach them for me (laughing). Well, conversationally I would definitely teach them, 'cause I don't have the competency to teach otherwise" (S13-2). When I asked if that meant she would send them to one of the language schools she despised so much she replied "Yes. As horrid as it sounds, absolutely (laughing)." Her comments regarding endogamy will be addressed in the following section, but my present interest is in her awareness of the irony that she would expose her children to a process she despised so thoroughly.

Her comments mirror those of a married mother of two I interviewed. She told me about her language school experience, which continued until she graduated out of the program run by her church. She claimed that she would have been done studying anyways.

> I was, I think, almost twelve. But I think also too, as a Canadian born-Chinese, at least from my perspective of myself, I wouldn't have expected myself to be fluent. Like, I wouldn't be able to speak, or read or write like someone who was born in Hong Kong. It was something that I used at home only, and so reading and writing…there wasn't a lot of application to it. So I wouldn't really have needed it (S13-7).

She also discussed her belief that the social environment is crucial to language acquisition, a conviction that stemmed from her experience of her parents leaving the city when she was a young adult. "So, when I was living with my parents we spoke a lot of Cantonese. But when they moved away, I did not speak Cantonese consistently. So I feel like I've lost a lot of it." This awareness of the social aspect of language learning fuels the fact that their son was enrolled in a

Chinese school program run by the Mon Sheong Foundation.[42] This enrollment was based upon

their desire to see him learn a Chinese dialect. She said,

> So we tried really hard to speak Cantonese to him, and I felt like I almost had to kinda re-learn it a bit. But, you know, it's come back and so I guess when he was younger it was a lot easier to speak Cantonese to him and we would, even between my husband and I, we would try to speak Cantonese, but our relationship's mainly in English. But as my son got older and his level of comprehension for different things grew, my limited Chinese just didn't seem adequate when it came to explaining things. So, we use both now (smiling). And since he's in school now he loves to only speak in English, so…um, it's a lot more English.

As she continued, I could perceive the regret in her voice as she said,

> I mean, we had hopes for him to learn Mandarin, which I know very little of.
> My husband knows a little bit more, but very little. Uh, so we tried that with him. But we just felt that we couldn't support him at home, so we had to switch him to Cantonese 'cause it's something that I could support him for a few years at least before his homework becomes foreign to me (laughing). Like, I said, working knowledge, and grade two level Cantonese (laughing).

I received a similar response from a young male participant expecting his first child. I asked him

how important it was for him and his partner to remain connected to Chinese culture and, by

extension, for his children to do so. He replied,

> For sure, we definitely want them to know Chinese. Probably better than I know it…although I know theoretically, no…in reality they won't know Chinese much better than I do. But obviously I think we want them to be able to converse and stuff. You know, to be able to go to a restaurant and, again, read the menu. At least know what to order (chuckle). You know…that kind of thing. And then, at least be able to address their grandparents and things like that. So we definitely want them to know Chinese…so we'll probably do a lot of the stuff that our parents did in that sense. You know…I don't know if Chinese school's the most effective way to do it, but…you know, some kind of way to learn Chinese. The language, at least, for sure (N13-2).

When I reiterated my question as to what this would look like, he responded, "Read and write to

a certain level, right? Probably…we'd expect them to probably be better than me, although I

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42 Mon Sheong (www.monsheong.org) is a charitable organization that began in the mid 1960s under the influence of Rev. Ronald Con, who was the minister at Toronto Chinese Presbyterian Church. Today it boasts a wide array of care facilities and programs for the elderly, as well as Chinese cultural initiatives such as language schools.

know realistically…it probably won't happen." I asked how that could that happen, and he spoke up, "(sheepishly) Probably Chinese school (laughing). The same way it's always been for the past hundreds of years."

Most of my participants differ from their parents because of the immigration process and not having the same structures of familial life and social immersion to reinforce language learning. While my sample showed a significant percentage of Chinese Canadian young adults have been exposed to Chinese language training, few of them claimed that these education opportunities contributed positively to their current competency. However, the aforementioned examples illustrate how exposure to language schools reinforced forms of ethnic identity because it forced them to engage with Karner's structures of action, structures often reinforced in the religious communities they participate in. The structure of Chinese language acquisition proves to be a resource of ethnic identity formation regardless of whether or not their experience results in full-fledged participation. A lack of language competency still allows some in my sample to hold an ethnic identity, but by negation because they feel disconnected from a heritage that they value. They do not know German either, for instance, but that skill gap is irrelevant to their sense of self; in this way, for some the absence of Chinese-language knowledge is an important marker of their identity as Chinese Canadians, emphasized and made all the more obvious through their involvement in the English-speaking religious environments I studied. For many, the experience of language schools serves as a vehicle of ethnic identity formation more than actually learning the language because they share this experience with other second-generation Chinese Canadians.

Put another way, the issue of Chinese language acquisition serves as a double-edged sword in terms of the formation of ethnic identity. In one sense, the failure to learn a Chinese dialect proficiently makes them feel cut off or distanced from their heritage. On the other hand,

the felt absence of Chinese-language proficiency appears to reinforce a second-generation form of Chinese Canadian ethnic identity. The respondents say that they feel less Chinese because they have not mastered the language of their parents. However, lamenting the absence of Chinese-language proficiency is an acting out of their Chinese Canadian identity. They feel that they should know Chinese and that feeling of failing to live up to this obligation informs their identity as second-generation members of the community. Moreover, the language school experience serves as an opportunity for ethnic identity because it unites many second-generation Chinese Canadians with a common experience ("Ugh! You went to Chinese-language school too?") while isolating them from the assimilative forces of youth pop culture (e.g. sports teams, media) that they would have otherwise experienced on Saturday mornings spent learning Chinese.

That some of my participants are willing to enroll their own children in language school programs in spite of their own negative and unproductive experiences may be an indicator of how ethnicity is expressed in everyday life without successful language acquisition. In addition to this, it is important to acknowledge the role played by the second-generation religious environments outlined in this project. These social settings allow young adults with these experiences to maintain connection to their shared heritage. They do so without using Chinese language in most cases, in contrast to the previous generations of Chinese Canadians who pioneered these communities. However, even without the use of Chinese language, these environments still provide a social context in which the occasional cultural reference or Cantonese term allow for ethnic solidarity and a sense of collective identity. These ministries and congregations collect a growing number of individuals with a shared experience of not learning Chinese language, which also serves as a marker of ethnic identity. With this in mind, we now turn our attention to how my participants engage with the practice of endogamy.

6.2 Endogamy

The practice of intermarriage is frequently used as a lens for understanding the degree of acceptance between ethnic groups, and the shifting boundaries of those groups as children from mixed marriages negotiate the salience and definition of their ethnic identities (Kalmijn and Tubergen 2010: 459). As a result, I spoke with my participants about their romantic relationships and aspirations, paying attention to their impressions while also asking them to reflect on the pressures they feel from their families.

Milan et al. (using 2006 census data) found that Chinese Canadians, as the largest ethnic minority, have an in-group pairing percentage of 82.6 percent: second only to South Asians, 87.3 percent (2010: 71). They also found that over one-half of those born in Canada in couples were in mixed unions (Milan et al. 2010: 73), similar to findings based on the Ethnic Diversity Study (and the 2001 census) that saw second-generation Chinese Canadians practicing around 51 percent exogamy (Lu 2011: 12). Despite this trend, multiple studies have argued that the size and concentration of Canada's Asian populations work against widespread intermarriage. Asian Canadians made up 10 percent of the total population in 2003, but nearly 80 percent of the total were either Chinese or South Asian (Lee and Boyd 2008: 313). The concentration of these groups in the urban areas of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal has been noted as a key sociological factor for interpreting nationwide intermarriage statistics (Lu 2011), while other studies have argued plainly that "the larger the group in a state, the more likely it is that the person marries within the group" (Kalmijn & Tubergen 2010: 477), or that "when the size of the ethnic group increases, the likelihood of crossing ethnic boundaries decreases because there is a pool of potential partners to choose from within the ethnic group" (Okamoto 2007: 1407). My participants reflected this social reality in disclosing their romantic interests, in their deviation

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from familial expectations, and in their reifying and valourizing of endogamy as a means to maintaining familial approval.

Most of my participants, when discussing their romantic interests and past relationships, disclosed that they were often attracted to co-ethnics. They often described this attraction as natural and intrinsic, like one twenty-five-year-old male who said "naturally I feel more inclined toward Chinese. Or maybe like Asian…maybe Korean, Japanese. Korean and Japanese are pretty hot too (laughing)" (A13-3). Some couched their response with the caveat that, despite their preference, exogamy was still an option. For example, one eighteen-year-old male relayed "I mean personally, right, I think [Chinese are] attractive. But at the same time, it's like if I met somebody that fit…that fit me and she wasn't, there's no problem with that" (Jn13-1). These assertions were mirrored in relationships of the twelve married individuals in my sample, who were all in relationship with others of Chinese ethnicity. Of the five individuals who self-identified as dating or engaged, only two[43] of these relationships where with a person of a different ethnicity. So, while the age median and single relationship status of the majority of individuals in my sample may result in exogamic percentages similar to national averages of around 51 percent in the second generation, I would argue that my sample appears to skew in the opposite direction.

Many of my younger participants talked to me about the familial pressure they faced to practice endogamy. In some cases they described, at times sheepishly, their relatives' discriminatory perspectives on relationships. The young male participant mentioned above, when asked if endogamy was important for him, responded, "It is important, but it's not a must. Like, I think it makes things a lot easier…like in terms of parents, grandparents" (A13-3). When I asked

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43 A male participant was dating a Korean Canadian, and a female participant was dating a Dutch Canadian.

him to clarify he continued, "Um, well, my grandma she says as long as she's not black or brown then it's okay (laughing)…she's not joking." He went on to say that he is not attracted to those ethnicities anyways, but hurriedly added "Not that I'm trying to be racist." In the end he confided that he still feels a little pressure "to please the family, because I think they do prefer Chinese."

A twenty-eight-year-old female laughed when I asked her if endogamy was important to her parents and then said, "They have always emphasized that any future relationships should be with people who are believers [i.e., Christians], first and foremost. And they usually just presume or just assume and give the notion that, you know, they should be Chinese. My aunt has outright said so…" (S13-2) When I asked how her aunt said this, she told me through nervous laughter "It's so racist. Plus, it's so shameful anyway. Okay, she said just no chocolate people… I didn't know whether to laugh, or be embarrassed." Her aunt's race-driven comments contrasted with her explanation for why she wanted to marry a Chinese Canadian.

> Uh, [endogamy is] definitely important to me. I don't know if I told you this before, but it's one of these things where I've seen my peers in church not able to communicate with their grandparents. And (pause), knowing that I haven't got a chance to know my grandparents while they were alive, it's important to me to be able to allow that type of relationship, a grandchild-grandparent relationship, within my immediate family. And so, if at all possible I would try to, um, seek a relationship with someone who actually knows how to speak the language, and understands a bit about the culture…because that's where my parents come from. Without understanding that, it's hard to build a relationship. Not to say that it's impossible, but it would be rocky…so that's why it's important to me.

Her comments were similar to those of a twenty-four-year-old woman who also laughed when I asked if her parents had expectations for her future partner. She lowered her voice and embarrassingly said, "I told my parents [who live in Hong Kong] 'Oh, I met a black friend.' And they're like 'Okay. Having black friends is okay, but just don't bring back one.' As in, don't marry one. So, no black people…[and] no Indians" (S13-4). When I followed up by asking her if endogamy was important for her she responded

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"I think it is something that's important for me. I think they'd have to have the same culture…the same culture as me so that we can relate. We can eat the same food…that's important, I'll be cooking right? And I only like Chinese food…I don't really like pasta, or like…just Western food (laughing). I mean, I wouldn't eat it every day. I'd eat Chinese food everyday. So ya. He has to have the same culture…I don't think it's a deal-breaker if he doesn't speak Cantonese. But I would prefer someone who can understand Cantonese. Like, they don't even have to speak it…they just have to understand Cantonese."

Another woman told me that passing on Chinese language skills was crucial for her. She said "I feel like it is an important part of your identity, and it's also a good skill to have. It's a way of communication, so I feel like the more languages someone knows, the more you can connect with people… if I were to have my own kids, then I want to be able to pass on that skill" (S13-6). I asked her if her parents cared about the ethnicity of her future partners, and she described, "For my dad, it is very important that I am with someone Chinese. But language is not the issue; he just wants someone Chinese. And then with my mom, she couldn't care less. As long as they're not, like, someone that's very dark-skinned." She clarified that they have articulated these opinions overtly.

So, (laughing) I was on exchange at one point and I became very close with someone from North Carolina. He was black. And my mom was pushing me to date him (laughing). So, I mean…I don't think she was very serious about it, but…like, she's way more lenient. Like, she jokes about the whole dark-skinned thing, but I know that at the end of the day if I were to fall in love with someone like that, she would be completely okay with it. But my dad, even if I was with, like, a Korean, he would have major issues."
SW: Has that created conflict?
"No…well, Dad didn't know about my Greek boyfriend. So, no it hasn't created any conflict. But I do have friends that are in multi-cultural relationships, and once in a while he'll make a comment about how it would never work, and that would piss me off. 'Cause it's not his business (laughing).

This kind of implied critique emerged in other conversations. For example, an eighteen-year-old male student told me that, "(laughing) My parents just joke about [me marrying a Chinese Canadian]. It's really bad…I shouldn't say it. They just joke…they're joking around…but at the same time I'm like, 'Mom, how could you?!'" Like, [she says] 'Don't marry, like, these people!

Don't date these people!' And I'm like, 'Dude!'" (Jn13-1) He made it clear that he took

exception with his parents thinly veiled racist comments, and that the conversations were marked

by levity to ease the underlying tension of their preferences. Similarly, another male participant

articulated his rejection of similar parental attitudes when he told me:

> Oh my gosh. They're like…Chinese people are so racist. It's ridiculous…it's ingrained
> into them. Like, I brought one of my black friends home one time and…[my mother]…I
> just…as a joke I told [my friend] 'Let's just tell my parents we're dating.' And then…my
> mother screamed (laughing). And I think there have been a couple rules in our house, but
> then one of them is, like, no dating black girls (S13-5).

He offered a qualifier later when he added,

> Ya, so…parents care very much about ethnicity. If you have this conversation with most
> Chinese people, it [a long term partner] has to be another Chinese person. But I think
> that…(pause) I think it's due to a lot of cultural pressure as well as parental. But also…a
> very narrow scope of understanding, um…I don't want to say beauty, but just (pause)
> compatibility.

This kind of generational awareness illustrates how some second-generation Chinese

Canadians distance themselves from parental expectations they view as harmful and

discriminatory while simultaneously acknowledging their own practice (current or intended) of

endogamy. Another male participant articulated this differentiation when he shared his

experience with me.

> Ya, I think my parents would be more okay with Caucasians…Asian…um, not
> necessarily for Indians or Africans or Middle Eastern…Arabs. But, I mean, they don't
> care if I end up being with…um, I mean they don't have one particular race that they'd
> want me to be with. It's more like, for them, that 'I don't care who you end up with. It's
> just…it's ideal that you don't end up marrying this race that I've mentioned.' Because
> there's sort of…like, I think their rationale would just be like, practically the way the
> world is going, um…it becomes a disadvantage, quote unquote, for me to be associated
> with a culture that has historically been stereotyped or been caricatured. Or been
> oppressed, etcetera, right? That's their thinking. But of course, behind that there's also
> sort of prejudices that they had experience in their own life. I mean, the older generation
> has those hangups still…and I understand that, but there are things, sometimes, I wish
> they'd come to understand or transcend (Jan14-3).

What responses like this illustrate is how second-generation practices of differentiation from their

parents appear to be based on an internalization of widely accepted Canadian values of multiculturalism and diversity. In taking exception to their families' prejudices, my participants follow national survey data suggesting that the vast majority of Canadians feel that race is not a deterrent for marriage, with young Canadians showing more support for diverse marriages (Biles et al. 2005). These values were affirmed in participants' contrast with their parents, but also emerged among some participants who claimed that their parents harboured no ethnic expectations for their future relationships. One male interviewee claimed that his mother (who was in an inter-racial marriage) was different from the rest of his family in this regard, saying,

> My mom does not care. She doesn't care…she said that to me, because we have these talks, right? In the past when I dated girls, she was like 'I don't care who you date. I don't care if she's black, she's white, she's Chinese. I don't care if she's four feet talk, or six foot five. The thing is that I want to be happy and genuinely love her, right? Not for some stupid reason (F14-9).

Another male respondent (Mar14-3) answered my question of whether endogamy is important to his parents with "No not at all. I've actually asked that question to them before. They were like 'Yeah you can bring home any girl…As long they're a good girl' (laughing)." A young female participant in an inter-racial dating relationship gave an even more poignant example when she described the difference between her parent's responses, and how she was becoming aware of these internalized values as a second-generation individual leaning toward exogamy.

> I mean, I think my dad has always been, like, 'Whatever! Fall in love!' My mom? She's still, like…I think she's still holding out for, you know, a Chinese engineer. So…I think it's too early to tell. And also, to add to that, I think even driving up to his parents' place [in northern Ontario]…I guess, never in a million years did I expect to see that scene play out in my head. Like, the scene of driving up to northern Ontario to meet someone's parents. Like, I think I've always pictured going to Markham (laughing)…like, you know? So, ya…I mean…I guess it's interesting that this is the research you do, because, I mean looking at my background and reflecting on all the influences in my life. Seeing where I am right now…it's kind of important (laughing) (F14-8).

> While my participants differentiate from familial expectations of discriminatory

endogamy through their internalization of values of acceptance and diversity, this does not appear to correlate to widespread practice of exogamy. In fact, many of them affirmed a preference for endogamy because of their desire to maintain and honor familial ties. One male participant described his parents' expectations, "I believe they would probably want someone, um, who would have good relationships with the rest of the family. So, my siblings… as well as my parents and my relatives as well. Particularly, with the older generation" (O13-1). He continued,

> I think one of the things, at least what my mom looks for, is someone who takes care of their own grandparents or their own parents very well. And…it might be…I'm not sure if that's a Chinese thing or not, because I know…like, one of the jokes goes…there was a fire in the building and there's three people. One of them was…I don't know what the other two were (laughing)…it was probably a Jewish person and someone else…and [the Jewish person] ran in and grabbed all their money, one grabbed something else, the third one ran and grabbed their mother. And it's like…because Chinese people tend to take care of their parents. So, in that way, with that request or that, uh, requirement, I think that's where it comes from. You want your children or your future, what's it called, in laws? Anyway…your kid's spouse to have that kind of respect and care.

A married female participant described her experience similarly. She asserted that her parents had not communicated their expectations of what her future partner's ethnicity should be,

> But at the same time…all the other people I did date…they were Asian. I think, like, I did see the importance of family…in that there was a respect for family. And that, in a way, whoever I wanted to marry I wanted them to love every single member of my family and be able to bear with them. Essentially, you're going to be part of the family, and you know, it's not just going to be me and him. So, ya… I think I did gravitate more towards the Asian culture per se, but I would've been open to dating, you know, someone of a different race if they embraced that aspect (F14-3).

These expectations of adaptability into familial culture were reiterated by a young male university student who claimed that "I think [my parents would] expect [my future partner] to be, like, or at least, able to adapt to their culture. Like the Chinese culture…for example, the food that we eat. Or the same values" (O13-2). I asked him for an example and he responded simply, "More like traditional Chinese values. Like, honouring the parents. Or respecting the elders."

Participants often described their interest in endogamy as deriving from a desire for their partner to be able to communicate with their family. One respondent shared with me that her parents had

> …admitted it that obviously their preference is a guy who is Chinese and, like, can speak Cantonese to them. I used to not really care…like, when I was younger I didn't really have a preference. But obviously…if he wasn't really fluent in English and Chinese was his main language I think we would have some communication problems…And to them, because they identify very strongly with being from Hong Kong and not from mainland China, they see…they feel there is a really big distinction between people from Hong Kong and people who are from mainland China. So, I think that they would prefer if I married [a Cantonese speaker] (May14-2).

She went on to say immediately, "I used to not really care, but I think that for me now I really…like, for marriage…which is really far away, but I don't really see marriage as just something that's just between me and that person. There's so many…it's such a family thing too. I definitely hope that my parents will love my future husband, like their own son." Similarly, a university participant (Mar14-2) told me that while his parents had said they were okay with him ending up with anyone, he could "read them" that they would prefer a Chinese individual. He claimed that "they already have a hard enough time communicating with me…" and, as a result, he wanted his future partner to get along with his family which "is really close to me." In addition to addressing these challenges of filial and language competency, one female participant (married to another Chinese Canadian) contended that for her, endogamy provided vital cultural awareness. She felt that married partners

> …should, I guess, kind of understand each other's culture…understand how our families work and stuff, it's important that, ya, they're able to communicate to my family. Like, they could've been completely more CBC than I was, and not know any Chinese…that's fine. But…just that respect that comes with, like, growing up in an Asian family that's assumed. I think it's kind of hard to teach. There's a lot of, like I said, uncomfortable things. And being with someone who's not Asian would make it…could make it very uncomfortable very easily. Things that are, like, culturally expected (F14-2).

I asked her for an example of this, and after a pause she continued with a personal anecdote.

Maybe things like, and I guess it's more 'cause these are things I'd find embarrassing, like talking about feelings for example with my parents. Like, that'd be soooo (pause) scary. Like, it'd be very scary to do that…to be that open or honest. And being with someone who…that's normal to their family would almost make me feel like I 'd have to do that as well. And that would be very uncomfortable (chuckle), and I'm like 'Oh, that's impossible', but that (pause) idea is kind of creepy and scary because I don't think my parents would react at all. Or, like, being with someone who, like, I don't know, um…like other cultures are more physical and like hug and stuff like that. Um…I don't think I've ever really hugged my parents before. Like, when I went on a missions trip to China for four months, it was the first time I think I remember, when I was older…like, second year university, when my mom hugged me. And she was crying! And like, and because it's one of the few times I've ever seen her cry, like…I lost it! Like, because it was so abnormal to my world. And my dad hugged me so awkwardly. And like, when I was in China he wouldn't talk to me on the phone because he would miss me too much. Or, that's why I think he wouldn't. He was scared of showing any emotion. So, to be with someone who was…who has that, like…that would…it would probably scare my parents for one thing (chuckle), but it'd definitely scare me because I don't think I could like that to my parents. It's too sensitive, I guess. And it's not that we don't care about each other…it's just…because we didn't do that…(laughing).

My participants' nearly unanimous endorsement of endogamy (both in practice and intention) aligns with national averages for Chinese Canadians, already noted as being some of the highest. While it is possible that my sample's average age and yet-undetermined marital status may result in exogamic percentages similar to the national average for Chinese Canadians, this appears unlikely due to their religious convictions and the strength and size of the social organizations that inform their venues of ethno-religious identity negotiation (both English-speaking Chinese congregations, or generic evangelical churches attracting significant numbers of Chinese Canadian young adults, such as those I visited). In instances where they choose to stay in a Chinese evangelical church, their comfort with or acquiescence to some form of Chinese identity has the potential to act as a substantial social impetus to continued endogamy. Conversely, my project found that many of those leaving Chinese congregations grouped in generic, multi-ethnic churches with substantial numbers of other young Chinese Canadians, also providing significant opportunity for endogamous relationships to form. The fact that both those

staying in Chinese evangelical churches and those leaving to join multi-ethnic ones adopt more conservative Christian theologies than those of their parents illustrates how choosing to be religious has the capacity to inform my participants' recommitment to ethnic identity in the second generation.

With regards to their religious convictions, my participants repeatedly asserted that, whether or not ethnicity plays a crucial role in their search for a future partner, the most integral variable is that of being with someone of shared religious identity. For example, participants mentioned above described the importance of a shared religious identity, like one who told me, "I think my number one criteria for looking for that type of relationship [i.e. marriage] is still someone who is Christian…someone who has shared those same beliefs" (S13-2). Another respondent answered my question of how important religious compatibility with their future partner is by saying

> [Faith is] Very important! He has to be a Christian. Like, he has to love God. And I'm hoping to marry a person who can lead me in my faith as well…and having our foundation, like, having God as our foundation. Because, if you don't have God in your foundation…like, you know romantic love? Like, that passionate love can disappear and what holds you together would be god, right? (S13-4)

Other participants discussed their families' expectations for them to date and marry someone of shared religious background, like one who said, "My mom would say that she's open minded, open to me dating anyone. The main thing is that she has to be a Christian…" (Ag13-1). This was similar to another respondent who said, "I don't think that they will care about the ethnicity, or the race, or anything like that. I think they expect me to date a Christian" (O13-2). Another asserted that their family's opinion matched their own, saying,

> I think in my family the most important thing was that whoever we dated was a Christian. So I think that [religious compatibility] was foremost important…I think it was more implicit. Like, definitely in terms of them being a Christian…I don't think they even had

> to say it. I think I already knew. And, I myself…I wanted to be with a Christian person…that wasn't up for discussion (F14-3).

In asserting this clear boundary, my participants enact the identity capital provided by evangelical subculture (which I described in Chapter Four), while simultaneously aligning with national survey data indicating that roughly one-third of Canadian respondents would be uncomfortable with inter-religious unions (Biles et al. 2005). The additional sociological reality is that these perspectives are reinforced by the extensive network of English-speaking congregations and para-church ministries that provide opportunities for them to negotiate ethnic and religious identities among those with similar familial experiences—and to find partners with the same ethnic and religious identities. While it would be unlikely that my sample practice endogamy at 82.6 percent like other Chinese Canadians in contrast to the national average of 76.2 (Milan et al. 2010: 71), these social realities do provide some basis of explanation for how strong ethnic and religious identities may remain salient for many second-generation Chinese Canadians. We turn now to a consideration of how some young Chinese Canadian evangelicals consolidate identity by adopting religious beliefs, behaviours, values, and style that distinguish them from their parents.

6.3 Gospel and Culture

It is in this section that my participants' ability to "reconstruct boundaries and identities that their immediate forebears…may have taken for granted" (Beyer 2013a: 5) can be seen most clearly. Beyer (2013b: 294-301), in summarizing recent work done among second-generation immigrant Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in Canada, goes on to appeal to research on Muslim youth in Europe as a way of explaining similar processes in the Canadian sample. Specifically, his inclusion of the work done by Vertovec and Rogers (1998) offers some clarity for the experience of my participants. Vertovec and Rogers' summary of the "highly diverse and unevenly distributed" means of identity negotiation employed by last twentieth century Muslim

youth points to the distinct contexts and factors present. These include, among others, a shift toward ethno-religious mobilization, the adoption of implicit Western values, a sharpening of Muslim self-consciousness in the second generation, and a hardening of the distinction between religion and ethnicity (1998: 10-14). The latter two factors are of particular interest to this project as they help to conceptualize how some of my interviewees distinguished themselves from their parents religiously.

Vertovec and Rogers observe that increased self-consciousness in the Muslim sample referred to the desire of young adults to read the scriptures for themselves and, in that reading, questioning religious authorities and their parents. A similar theme emerged in my research as participants invoked "the gospel" as a form of true religion that foils the practices of parents or authorities in first-generation religious organizations. I also found that many in my sample wanted to make a clear distinction between religion and ethnicity, much as Vertovec and Rogers observed young Muslims doing in rejecting their parents' first-generation practices that they deemed a confusion of cultural and religious practices. The most frequent examples of this came in my interviewees' critique of Chinese practices in Chinese congregations, including the moralistic teaching they received in those communities. For many of those making these critiques, the influence of conservative, evangelical ministers and ministries from the United States were notable in shaping the points of comparison and critique. This is an important observation, as these influences support young Chinese Canadian evangelicals by providing narratives and communities in which they can consolidate their religious identities, which, as discussed earlier in Chapter Four, they hold in tension with the surrounding Canadian culture. Also, my participants engage this religious negotiation with the significant social capital of the Chinese Canadian community: a group of organizations, communities, and initiatives that

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stretches (via social networks) into the multi-ethnic and diverse organizations some join as they leave ethnically bounded churches. This means that we might expect those second-generation, English-speaking Chinese Canadian churches that still exist twenty years from now to be considerably more conservative theologically than those of the first-generation founders. One example of this might be how, on an issue such as gender equality in the leadership of the Christian community, my participants skewed more conservative that the previous generation, i.e. they do not believe women should be allowed to teach or lead men in the church context. The fact that some of the most vocal participants on this issue quoted prominent American evangelicals (or were part of one of the conservative, generic evangelical churches I went to in my fieldwork, both of which had significant and public links to prominent and public evangelicals in the United States) is an indication, albeit limited, of where this influence comes from. In addition to this then, we might also surmise that young, Chinese Canadian evangelicals may be a considerable factor for the growth of conservative and fundamentalist congregations (via transfer) in the following decades.

It is worth noting that I encountered the practice of distinguishing between religion and ethnicity both among those who no longer attended a Chinese congregation and those who continued to. In this regard, the individuals who stay in Chinese Canadian congregations performed a kind of collaborative critique: wherein a second-generation, Chinese Canadian religious identity can be formed via differentiation from the first-generation while simultaneously maintaining the capital found in remaining part of the ethnic community. Many participants did acknowledge an underlying tension to varying degrees between their faith practices and cultural constraints. In the case of one interviewee from the Chinese congregation where I conducted fieldwork, the tension was perceived as overt and glaring. During our conversation, he

characterized the congregation as "moderately conservative," and when I asked him what he

meant he expanded with an example.

> P: Well, um…they're pretty biblical in most ways that count. And maybe a little bit more liberal in ways that are more secondary or tertiary type of things.
> SW: Tertiary…what do you mean? (laughing)
> P: (laughing) You know…like, general issues, right? Like, they'll have um, like…say Tai Chi at church. Which is part of the Chinese Buddhist[44] (his emphasis) culture. And then…they've been doing that for…well, Chinese congregation has been doing that forever. English congregation, that's more now…but 'Hey! That's…not…that…biblical (speaking slowly).' So they changed it to 'Chinese exercise night'…same thing.
> SW: So the English congregation runs a Chinese exercise night?
> P: It couldn't have been from the Chinese side, 'cause they've been doing it for probably longer than I've been born. So it must have been some of the English congregation that had grown up and identified it as now part of their culture. So then they look at it from a purely biblical aspect, and they're like 'This is not a…something Christians should be doing within the church because it has roots in Buddhism.'
> SW: So then they changed the name.
> P: Ya (N13-1).

For this participant, the connection of this non-ecclesial, cultural practice to his faith community

raised questions of religious categorization. Additionally, he was clearly bothered by the lack of

religious and theological boundaries between culture and devout practice. I asked him if this

exercise night (which I never saw advertised or announced) was an example of his church being

more liberal on periphery issues, in response to his earlier comments. He responded,

> Um, well…that had more to do with the mixing of Chinese culture and Christianity. But we do draw some of that…some of those things into, um, into the church. So that would be one example…or this is a way that, say, maybe how they look at parenting. They'll mix in Christian principles with Chinese principles. So they'll emphasize things that they like…in terms of 'Obey your parents' 'cause that's a very Chinese culture thing. Where you don't talk back to your parents…you show them great respect. So we would have that kind of respect for elders and widows type of thing going on 'cause, you know, they live…a lot of parents they live in their children's home whenever they get older…which is kind of unheard of a lot of cultures. So they emphasize things like that. They might emphasize trying hard in school, and uh, being prosperous. You know, putting a lot of weight on working hard. So they'll outline those type of verses, and…so, in that way they're traditional but it's more of a cultural tie.

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[44] The source of this practice is actually rooted in the Daoist tradition.

This kind of distinction between Chinese moralism and a perceived orthodoxy emerged

frequently in my sample, regardless of whether or not a participant still attended a Chinese

Canadian community. However, not all participants from the English-speaking Chinese

congregation felt the tensions were as acute, such as one young male who told me that he felt the

connections between Christian and Chinese identity were subtle. When I asked him to clarify he

continued,

> So I think many…like, within our church and also within others, like when I speak to
> other people who come from English congregations within a Chinese church, I think we
> try to actually separate ourselves from the Chinese culture so that we can be more
> accepting and open to people that are not Chinese, right? Even though we meet in Chinese
> church and they may already feel like 'It's still a Chinese church', but like we try to make
> it as neutral and not, like, you don't have to be Chinese to come here. Um, so I think in
> subtle ways because we still are Chinese that there are subtle connections to, like,
> sometimes there are some odd references that you know someone will say that only
> Chinese people would understand. And I think those are kind of thrown in or sometimes
> in a sermon or like in a reference but most of the time we're actually more…I think we try
> to be cognizant of trying not to make those ties to be more accepting (Ag13-2).

The underlying premise of his comments was that there should be a separation. Another

interviewee described it very similarly.

> P: I think there is a definite Chinese (pause) culture [in the congregation]. It might not be
> apparent, or explicit.
> SW: So what would make it Chinese?
> P: Just…just how certain things people say…maybe a Chinese word here or
> there…expressions, Chinese expressions. Once in a while, even [our English pastor]
> references maybe a Chinese word or something…during Sunday sermons. And so it's like
> there's that underlying culture…subculture…Chinese subculture in the English
> congregation (N13-5).

I asked him if he felt it was always in the background, and he responded,

> I don't know. It just seems like…it's sometimes hard to differentiate between church
> culture and Chinese culture. Um…like communalized church culture is always
> welcoming and that's kinda taken after [our English pastor] and his welcoming nature.
> But at the same time it's the Chinese family culture kind of thing. Everybody's part of the
> family…big, big Chinese family (chuckling). But how do you differentiate between those
> two things…um, I don't know...But that's with every single church…you don't have to be
> Chinese culture.

Another young male respondent from the Chinese congregation repeated this problematizing of

integrated identities. He was the same individual who, as I noted in the previous chapter, felt that

there is overlap between things that are mutually exclusive. I asked him to give me an example.

> P: Like, so…like, loving one another. And also being nice to other people and respecting other people…I think the being nice and respecting part of it, it can also come out of the whole Chinese culture. Although, it could go to a point where it's like, you get the culture of just…um, being kind of a Sunday Christian. Like, when you're at church, you're completely normal and you always put up a front. Or, at least from what I've noticed, and for myself as well. I would tend to put up the Chi…um, the-the…I'm trying to…like, the good kid kind of personality when I'm at church. And then all the older aunties and uncles will be like 'Oh ya…how are you doing? Oh, your family is so…oh you're very obedient. Your family is so obedient…', like, 'All the kids are so obedient to your parents.' And, I guess, it sounds good and all, but it's just like…at a certain point it's, like, fake.
> SW: Do you mean that, at some point, it's not rooted in religious faith…it's just rooted in trying to be good so people say those things?
> P: Ya. And I think a lot of that might also come from the Chinese culture of respect and face and…it's gone wrong, rather than what, I guess, to me is what God intended it to be, which was actually loving one another. Whereas now we've just turned it into a game…in a sense (O13-1).

Interestingly, the impetus for this individual to engage in a form of collaborative critique actually

came during his experience at the Urbana conference outlined in Chapter Three. There, students

are challenged to consider forms of international advocacy and proselytization by well-known

evangelical speakers who invoke images and ideals of diversity and multi-ethnicity. In sharing

about his experience, the participant told me that instead of being drawn to missionary service

abroad he had felt compelled to return home and address the issues caused by these integrated

identities he had described.

> P: It was very eye-opening and very challenging because the end result was 'Go home and love your family'…that was pretty much the calling. Ya…and 'love the Chinese church.' It's like…that's not what I wanted, but I know God really wants me to do it…it's probably the hardest thing to do"
> SW: Were you thinking about leaving then or something?
> P: I think I was in the state of mind of, like…all those stereotypical Chinese churches are all, like, putting up a front and being fake and just playing church and they needed to be

saved, or, I didn't want to deal with them anymore. It was God who kind of convicted me…it's like 'Ya, they need to be saved too. I need your help.' Well…not in that way; it's like 'I want you to go and love those people because they are my church' (O13-1).

Two other individuals I spoke with about their experience at Urbana shared similar perspectives.

A young woman shared with me that, in her Chinese church experience,

> You grow up being told that you're good…or being told, yeah, 'Just be good. Be happy all the time.' But that's not the reality. And through [my history], that's why my heart is so burdened for the Chinese church community, because the Chinese way is just…sweep all issues under the carpet. Don't want to deal with it, don't want to see it, um, don't want to hear it (F13-3).

She claimed that despite occasionally attending the multi-ethnic Toronto Uptown Church (outlined in Chapter Three) "God has called me back. Because I can see all these issues and things like that, like, I'm not just to run away from it all. Like, I'm here at a Chinese church to do what I can…like, because God has placed them on my heart as a burden so I can't just run from that." Similarly, another participant talked to me about how the experience at Urbana challenged him, and also expressed thanks for a book he picked up there was shaping his life and that of his university fellowship group. "We're going through a program called Losing Face, Finding Grace,' he told me (F13-1). This program is based on a book of the same title written by Tom Lin, a Taiwanese American who served as the Chief Executive Officer and President of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the time. The interview outlined how his attendance at the conference helped him to realize that "there are some things that are just more tradition than actually biblical. Maybe those should be taken out." He went on,

> So stripping away the Chinese aspects of church…that comes from an Asian church…and really just going down bare to what's biblical. You know, a lot of times there's so much tradition that's intertwined in the church, that when you look at it, it's not really biblical. So there's this whole concept of keeping face in the Chinese culture, of always putting a mask on, of pretending that everything's fine…to bring honour towards your family. But in a sense, that's not really biblical. So…ya…(pause)…I call my identity more…I identify more myself as a Christ follower rather than Chinese or Canadian.

This desire to distinguish between religion and ethnicity was reiterated by those in my

sample no longer attending Chinese Canadian congregations. They too expressed a range of

opinions as to how and why these separations are important. One male participant in the

downtown congregation shared with me how, several years earlier, he had moved from a

Cantonese-speaking service to English-speaking.

> P: I was starting to work at RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] at that point as well, and so I
> have all these colleagues who are non-Asians and then in my life, largely at that point,
> you know…I largely hanged out with non-Asians outside of my church community. So,
> my church community was, really, the community where I did interact with Asians
> primarily. And so, in many ways, going to the English congregation helped me to
> understand how to live out my faith in the context when I'm outside of my church…when
> I'm not dealing with Asians.
> SW: So…for your faith to be lived outside, you felt it matched more to not go to church
> in Cantonese?
> P: Absolutely…that's right, ya (Jan14-1).

His personal choice was predicated on his conviction that Chinese Canadian communities were

intrinsically closed to individuals of other cultures, which he described,

> …they like to do things in community. Like, communally. Like, all the time, in large
> groups. And, um, revolve around food. Um, you know, they organize…they're not…most
> Chinese churches I know of, they're not very big on small groups. They're very big on
> fellowships. Um, they…um, after church…after fellowships they go dim sum…go bubble
> tea. So, ya.

As his personal and professional social networks expanded in young adulthood, he began to see

the alliance between religion and ethnic boundedness as problematic. This idea surfaced again

with another participant who felt that Chinese congregations helped to foster connection to

Chinese culture "maybe subtly. Not blatantly. I think in a way the messages, the sermons and

message of the church was very (tentatively) Chinese-thinking…" (Mar14-2). I asked him to

clarify what he meant.

> P: Yeah, but like, you know, like honor your parents kinda thing. Or like…just like
> traditional Chinese values but packaged in a Chinese Canadian way.
> SW: Or as being Christian?

> P: Yeah, exactly. And now that I look back, now that I attend a multicultural church and looking at the differences, I can see that, yeah, it does teach morality more than the gospel. How to be a moral person, or a humanist. When I was in it, that's what I thought being a Christian was. I didn't know anything else.
> SW: Did you ever see that when you were at your [Chinese Canadian] church?
> P: I saw it, but I couldn't put my finger on it. Like, I knew something was off a bit. I think I was looking for more than just the surface, 'Be a good person'. Uh, but I didn't put my finger on it, I didn't realize it at the time…I just knew something was missing.

He offered a similar report about the tension between his social network and his religious community later when he told me,

> Part of the reason why I made the switch [to my new, generic multi-ethnic church] was because I couldn't bring non-Christians to [my Chinese Canadian church]. Like, I didn't think that the gospel was preached there…I didn't think that they would get anything out of it…it was just teaching moralism. And they're already moral (chuckle); they don't need to learn how to be more moral.

I will to return specifically to his contrasting of Chinese moralism with "the gospel" below but want to offer one more example of how he felt the religion and culture of his Chinese Canadian community shaped the lives of attendees. In this instance he was very specific in contrasting his beliefs and practice with those of his parents. He said,

> In a way, my theology is very different from my parents is. Because my parents' is still under the moralism message. Like, I probe my parents every now and then, 'Why do you do these things?' And they don't question it! Um, they mix Chinese culture so much with Christianity that they believe that they're the same thing. So, sometimes when they say Chinese proverbs or…Chinese people have tons of sayings, but whatever…and then I'm like 'Is that Biblical?' And they go 'Of course, it's Biblical.' And I'm like 'No, it's not!' (laughing)

I asked him if he could give me an example of when this had happened, and he related a discussion he had had with his mother. His mother claimed that the Chinese term xianmu, "which is, basically a good form of envy" is appropriately used when congratulating some parents whose child was just married. "You say 'I envy you,'" he told me, and that this is complimentary in Chinese culture. He took exception with his mother's culturally rooted perspective, asking 'Why does it have to be about you? Why can't you just be happy for someone?' He claimed that his

parents were offended at his questioning of Chinese culture, and then asserted that their usage of

the term is appropriate because it is found in the Chinese Bible. My participant did not feel that

the concept was properly contextualized or accurate after checking his English versions, and

ultimately felt that embedded Chinese cultural morals had undermined his parents' Christian

orthodoxy.

Among those who had left English-speaking Chinese congregations, the most emphasized

touchpoint for the tension between Chinese moralism (which they defined as culture) and

Christian orthodoxy (which they defined as religion) was the ecclesiastical practice of preaching.

One participant talked to me about several areas in which his values had diverged from his ethnic

congregation. He was concerned with the cultural insularity and, in describing the activities of the

organization, mapped the network of ministries that frame the Chinese Canadian evangelical

subculture I have outlined. He said,

> It was just like, 'Let's just play church.' It was like 'This is what we do as a church…this
> is what church people do. We should have a fellowship. We should have a softball league.
> We should have, like, a youth group. A young adults group. A university group…and all
> these other groups… They spent a lot more time just doing a lot of the logistics, but not a
> lot of the 'Why are we doing this?' Ya, it just felt like we were just doing things (Jan14-
> 3).

Then he continued into an evaluation of preaching practice.

> Another example is like, during the preaching, it was like…it was a lot of (pause), topical
> sermons. In terms of, like, 'How can you improve your life?' Sure, like in a Christian
> way, but, like, not necessarily emphasizing Christ and his work. Life, death, and
> resurrection. It wasn't about that. It was like, 'Let's look at the bible and see what kinds
> of practical…great practical things, ministry-wise…life-skill-wise, that we could squeeze
> out of this great timeless book.' That was the approach usually, and using very Christian
> terms. And I felt, 'Ya sure we can talk about these things', but there was very little about,
> like, what did God accomplish through Christ.

Another attendee of the same multi-ethnic congregation echoed these thoughts when he said that

> [the preaching in Chinese churches] is…not…they're not usually expository preaching.
> They're usually moralistic… I mean, it's not bad or anything. They want you to be a good

person…absolutely. But, even more than that, I think we need to preach Christocentric sermons because it's not…you know, Christianity…the fundamental core is not that you can be good enough, right? We can never be good enough…that's the whole point!" (Jan14-1)

I also heard similar language from those attending the multi-ethnic uptown community. One participant compared his previous Chinese congregation with his current church:

> P: I would say [my old Baptist church] still falls within Christianity, but I would say there's better ways to go about it. Better ways to go about preaching, better ways to go about running things.
> SW: The structure of the community…is that what you mean?
> P: Ya, in terms of structure. In terms of what they teach as well.
> SW: How so?
> P: So, like…the sermons at [my Baptist church] usually would be the pastor would pick a topic, 'I feel like talking about this today.' And they'd just pull up scripture from who knows where and lecture…sermon on it. Whereas at [my current…or some other churches I've been to and enjoy them more, as a church they go through one book of the Bible…and over time they go through chapter by chapter, verse by verse in order. So you get more of the context of the whole book. You're not just going on the whim of what the pastor wants to talk about (N13-4).

In parallel fashion, another respondent described and compared liturgy in his former Chinese congregation this way.

> Well, a lot of the time, you know…I'm sure you know this…like, you can have the whole sermon…it would be sprinkled with biblical verses but they would use it very 'strategically' [his emphasis], right? Essentially, like…a typical sermon would be 'there's a topic that we want to talk about.' I remember when (chuckling) the financial thing all collapsed…we had four weeks after that, the pastor had sermons on what to do in a financial crisis. And they would have bible to back-up. They might have two verses to back-up their entire sermon, but we weren't studying the word of God. We were studying the topic, backed with a couple of words from God…and, so, a lot of times we were looking for people's opinions and preferences. Either they were elders or whoever, right? And that's what I'd always known (F14-6).

These examples of increased differentiation between religion and ethnicity illustrate the diverse ways in which young, Chinese Canadian evangelicals are shaping the ongoing existence of English-speaking Chinese congregations and, when some leave, the myriad of evangelical groups that might claim the descriptor "multi-ethnic" on Toronto's religious landscapes. They

also demonstrate Vertovec and Rodgers' observation (1998: 11) of increased second-generation

self-consciousness marked by an evaluation of authority and desire to read and employ the

scriptures independently. In my sample, participants' desire to distinguish between culture and

religion was often shaped by their increased self-consciousness. This awareness was often (while

not always clearly) tied to their encounters with conservative evangelicalism, and frequently

surfaced in their use of "the gospel" trope. "The gospel" was a phrase used by participants to foil

forms of religious practice and theology they perceived as illegitimate or unorthodox, forms

always tied to practices of Chinese organizations. Frequently, the phrase was equated with the

clear, didactic preaching they had found outside their Chinese congregations. It was often aligned

with renewed or refocused emphases on Christology and strict Biblicism and, more poignantly, in

a rejection of religion influenced by enforced moralism or overbearing expectations.

> One university student critiqued his former church sharply when he told me,

> I didn't see the purpose of having a church when I was there. The gospel was never
> spoken about at all, except maybe on Easter. And even then, very briefly. And I didn't
> understand the gospel at that point either, in my faith...Doctrinally it was just the lack of a
> gospel, the lack of vision for the church in terms of where it's going. Because I'm very
> meaning focused and I need reasons for why we do things…It was a very big, I would
> say, mess in a sense that they didn't know where they were going. Or, they say they were
> going somewhere, but their actions did not reflect that vision. And then there was no
> gospel in the church (S13-5).

For this respondent, "the gospel" stood at odds with the politics of the community that he claimed

were "disgusting" to deal with. Ultimately, the greatest affront to him was the power brokering

done by his pastor: which he viewed as having no basis in theological or biblical precedent.

> So [the pastor and I] had disagreements of what I should do, and what exemplified my
> leadership and what that meant for the church. So his statement was that I needed to have
> a 3.7 GPA in order to lead. And I was, like 'That's disgusting. And not doctrinally
> founded at all.' Um, but he rules with an iron fist so he never opens space for asking
> questions. So there's already issues for me there 'cause I have problems with authority
> (laughing). For me, it was the fact that he would always just, 'Don't ask questions. Just do
> it.' And for me, it didn't sit well with me how he was running the church and how he was

setting himself almost like an idol. So I had to leave. And that's what I mean by Chinese church politics.

Interestingly, this student (and leader in his university fellowship) talked to me about infrequently listening to sermons from prominent, conservative evangelical leaders Tim Keller and Voddie Baucham. When I asked him why he stayed clear of these resources, even when others forwarded links with a recommendation, he said,

> …personally I like learning and I like doing things on my own. So, I would rather train myself to read the bible and look at these patterns myself rather than hear from someone who just spoon feeds me the answers. So, I think when you listen to sermons you get lazy and you don't learn to interpret the bible yourself…and, I guess, go deeper by yourself. So, for me I don't do these things 'cause I want to be able to do it myself.

Another male student shared with me how his new church in Toronto was distinct from his Chinese church in another large Canadian city. "It's completely different," he said, because:

> I think [my Toronto church] have…their purpose is driven towards providing an atmosphere where you can explore Christianity. And, uh, the message preached is heavily gospel centred; I think it's because of Tim Keller's influence. The church back in [my hometown]…it's difficult because it's…(pause) it seems to have a lot more conflict in terms of, um, like, message preached. In terms of what the pastor is preaching versus what the congregation wants to hear (F14-10).

This student found the message of Keller, a prominent New York City Presbyterian minister (whose sermons he later admitted to having listened to "every day for a few months"), and the more mainstream evangelical teaching of his GTA congregation more compelling than what he experienced earlier in his Chinese church. The inability of his former leaders to preach in a manner that effectively connects with the experience of younger, second-generation congregants was a key factor in his disengagement from Chinese Canadian congregations. Similarly, another participant discussed how this perceived lack of good teaching influenced his religious experience as a child.

"We grew up in a Christian culture for sure. You know, church on Sundays. We went to small group occasionally. I wasn't specifically brought up…when I look and reflect back, I wasn't brought up in terms of a Christ-centred childhood. It had all the tenets of Christianity that you would see in a general, superficial churchgoing," he said (N13-1). He felt that the absence of good teaching had led to his parents not understanding the basic tenets of Christian faith, and like other participants, he used the gospel as a source of authority intended to counter what he had been taught or exposed to in his Chinese congregation, saying

> …I would say what's different about my religion or my beliefs or my worldview compared to all the others, it'd be that this is the only worldview that gives the understanding that you can't save yourself…that there's no way to save yourself. And there's no way to earn any type of salvation or positive afterlife or reincarnation or anything like that. Everything is done by grace alone. That would be the difference than any other religion that I understand.

When I asked him if he listened to sermons online, he responded,

> Ya. I listen to a variety. Uh, some of them I don't even like that much, but I listen anyway just for variety. Well, I listen to like MacArthur who is quite Reformed. I listen to maybe a little John Piper who is a little bit more ecstatic. I listen to Tim Keller, who is very, I guess, logical. I listen to Mark Driscoll, just to see what shirt he's wearing. I'll listen to Francis Chan just to get a, you know, 'I-don't-feel-like-getting-yelled-at-too-much'. [I was laughing.] I'll listen to, like, [American analytic philosopher and Christian theologian] William Lane Craig just to get the pure apologetics. I'll listen to [British biologist and atheist Richard] Dawkins45 just for a laugh. I'll listen kind of all over the place in terms of trying to get all the different perspectives out there, and so I can read the scriptures myself and see where I feel the truth is strongest.

In a similar example, another interviewee shared with me how, as a university student, he had encountered "the gospel" for the first time. The implied criticism in his comments was directed at his experience in ethnic churches, which had not exposed him to these ideas. He attributed this encounter to a specific YouTube video.

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45 Dawkins is a celebrated biologist and notable critic of religion, and has debated prominent Christian intellectuals such as John Lennox, Alister McGrath, Cardinal George Pell, and William Lane Craig (who the participant mentions) coincidentally. This interviewee was taking a glib jab at Dawkins' ideas to illustrate his disagreement with them.

I would describe my second year in university as…sort of a second revival moment in my life, in which I was confronted and challenged by the severity of my confession of faith. Did I really live like a Christian? Was I really serious about my faith? Was it really about God, and Jesus…or was it just about me trying to prove something out of my life--as a Christian? So, I listened to this preacher…guy called Paul Washer. You might be familiar with his, like…the most famous perhaps, or infamous, shocking youth message he did somewhere in the US. I listened to that, like, fifty-seven minute sermon, and I was just floored by it. That was the first time…he just said…like, he presented the gospel in a very straight-forward way. I hadn't heard it from anyone… (Jan14-3)

He described the video in more detail, but then described how after watching it he began to

fiercely advocate for change in his religious communities.

That was the first time that anyone has ever, like…that I've heard at that moment in my life, to preach that way. And I was just freaked out by it. That was second year…November 2009. So, then I started reading a lot of stuff online on the reformed lines of, like, the tradition of Christianity. And there were a lot of things that…suddenly I just became angry at myself and the church at large…many Christians, my pastor, etcetera, etcetera. I was just a really mean guy now, right? Just fuming. Just saying 'We're not doing this right!' I thought I had all the answers.

In his description, this participant illustrates how encounters with mainstream American

evangelical subculture crystallized his understanding of what he defines as authentic evangelical

Christianity, leading him to be critical of his ethnic congregation and, ultimately, to find his way

to a multi-ethnic congregation where this kind of teaching could be found. Another Chinese

Canadian attendee of this downtown congregation compared his experience similarly, repeatedly

referencing how "the gospel" was presented more frequently in his new community.

I think the thing that really, really got me (at my new church) was that the gospel was preached every week. Everything is related back to the gospel. To me, when I first came there, I felt like I had all the pieces. All the puzzle pieces. Like, I had tons of Bible knowledge…all these things, but it didn't fit yet. Until I came to (my new church), and then, 'Oh, these pieces are starting to come together. It's part of grand narrative!' And then, only then did it start to click for me. Um, yeah, so if I bring people…and I've brought a lot of people, its biggest draw is that the gospel is preached. Non-Christians, [those] who are Christian, from my old church, from, yeah, people who are…there are a lot of Asian Christians who are dissatisfied with the way church is run in their ethnic churches. Or they're dissatisfied with the types of messages that they get. And so, when (some friends) brought me for the first time, it was like a breath of fresh air (chuckle). Like, 'Oh, this is what is refreshing!' I didn't think that the gospel was good news until I

came to (my new church), to be quite honest. Like, it was okay news (laughing), but it wasn't good news, you know? And everybody I've brought to (my new church) so far, and I've brought many, they've all said, like "This is really good. This is the kind of message I want to hear (Mar14-2).

He explained that his experience at Chinese churches was quite different because they focused on moralistic teaching based on programs of self-improvement. He contended that at his new downtown church,

> What's different is, uh, everything is in relation to the gospel. Whereas, for example, um, at a Chinese church, and I've heard this sermon many times, they would do the 'honor your parents'. 'Honour your parents, because it's good,' and that's it. That's all they would preach. But at (my new church), you got the same passage…they would preach 'honor your parents, because this is what Christ has done. And Christ is the ultimate…did the ultimate honouring of his parents' kind-of-thing, and then relate it back to the gospel in that way, and Christ's sacrifice and that kind of thing. And then when people listen to that, they're like 'Oh, that makes so much sense!' Like, 'that is a much better reason to honor my parents…rather than just because it's good.' Like, so…again, we already know everything. We already know these materials. It just hasn't been connected for us yet."

His statements point to the way in which newly discovered self-consciousness allows some second-generation individuals to reinterpret their religious identity in relation to their ethnic experience, which is also an example of what Heelas and Woodhead refer to as "autonomization," where modern religious adherents pursue self-determination in their religious lives (2005: 130). By seeking to separate themselves from what they perceive as the paternalistic style of religion of their parents (with its automatic deference to the authority of the preacher and the tradition), my participants assert a religious identity where they decide what constitutes authentic Christian faith based on their experience. To some degree, they use the teaching they get from non-Chinese evangelical preachers as a cultural release valve whereby they reject or distance themselves from, for example, the familial pressure to succeed or conform or save face. In this way, "the gospel" serves as a way in which they reject or redefine the ethnic boundedness and forms of religion they feel are informed and constrained by Chinese culture and determine

what alternative forms to pick up. One young woman from the same downtown community

expressed this idea in her contrasting of her experience between Chinese and multi-ethnic

environments.

> At my old home church I would feel like there's a sense of community and family just because they're all Chinese. And maybe it's 'cause I also grew up there, but when I started going to [my downtown church] I didn't feel that at first. It was hard to identify with each other. Like, I felt like people were…um, like, I know that what brings us all together is because we're all believers, but I felt that people put on more of a façade. Not because it was an intentional façade, but it's just because…growing up in the city you don't talk to someone for no reason unless there's a reason. And so that's what I felt like at first. What else should I say (voice trailing off)…? [My current church is] very gospel centred, which is pretty different from my upbringing where I felt like, um, salvation was kind of put as the main message of the gospel and then, it's like 'Now, what can I do for God?' Whereas, it's the gospel as central, and it's not what we can do but what God can do through us…and what God's already doing (F14-2).

She continued with some comments about how she felt second-generation, English-speaking

ethnic churches were increasingly obsolete, and I asked why she felt this way. She responded,

> I guess it's because language and culture no longer identifies us. If we claim to be believers, than what brings us together is Christ, and so we don't need the means of being in a Chinese church or an ethnically dominated church to, uh, to…I guess, to connect to the gospel. We can connect anywhere now, like, in terms of any church. Like, any multi-ethnic church, right?

She clarified that this perspective "doesn't mean though that you have to leave your church just

because you grew up in it or whatever," adding however that "…there's a very definite Chinese

culture that fits with our faith and sometimes that culture proceeds our faith, and that's the

unfortunate part."

This rejection of ethnically bounded community on the basis of a putatively neutral

religious identity (sparked by self-consciousness encouraged by the broader evangelical

subculture) acts as an agent of identity consolidation for some of the second-generation adherents

in my sample. Curiously, they fail to acknowledge the ethnic roots of the theological and

religious ideas they are replacing their Chinese Canadian experience with as stemming from

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fundamentalist and American sources. The distinctive religious culture of their new, multi-ethnic

communities provides the structure for reimagined religious identities. One participant from the

uptown congregation shared with me how, in the first few weeks in that community, the senior

pastor of the church had outlined "the four pillars": this church's commitments to preaching,

worship, prayer, and proselytization, all described with adjectives such as unapologetic,

unashamed, and unafraid. This interviewee described his former Chinese church's services as

feeling like a funeral, so I asked him to explain.

> Uh…first word that comes to mind for me was obligation. But…I think reverence above
> all things is what I see in a Chinese church. You know, you're very quiet. You are
> very…you know, procedural. It's about (pause)…the inherent part of it is just that people
> believe works more than grace. They feel like 'If I come in here, I dress nicely, I follow
> the rule…I stand up, I sit up exactly when that guy's telling me to and I sing all the songs,
> this is me loving God. This is me, almost…in a way, earning my ticket into heaven.' And
> obviously, this is just my opinion (F14-6).

He continued to clarify his "funeral" comment by dealing with the biblical text himself and

suggesting a more authoritative reading.

> The reason I did the funeral comparison is because, again, it's a biblical matter. When you
> read, David [Bronze Age king portrayed in the Hebrew Bible] did not worship God with a
> sad face. He played the harp…he played the drums, he was dancing. Sometimes he had
> his clothes off and all these things. It was exciting… And for us to not stimulate that into
> people…to let them know that, you know, that...'Hey, worshipping God is a happy thing.
> It's an inherent thing. You should be doing that every minute of your life. There's joy in
> it…there's hope in it.' You know, 'your God does not want you to sit there and weep.'
> You know, and it's not…yes we need to…we need to have reverence for him, but his
> desire for reverence for him is not so we're scared of him like we're afraid of our dads.
> It's because it's for our own good. Right? So, they never really close that loop for
> you…they kind of always just stopped at 'God needs to be respected', but they don't
> really explain why God wants us to respect him! And I think that's really a huge thing,
> because salvation in itself really closed the loop of that.

This participant's reframing of the Christian biblical text was sparked by increased self-

consciousness he attributed to his new, multi-ethnic congregation. This self-consciousness

emerged too in his direct contrasting of his new community with Chinese churches. He talked to

me about how he appreciated that his new church does not how "hide the fact that worshipping God is…is above all things," how clear they were about their values, and characterized the lead pastor as saying something akin to 'This is what we do. We're not going to hide behind it' during his first few visits. He went on,

> And in a way, they don't say it like this, but it's kind of like 'If you don't understand why we do these things, and you don't understand why we worship the way we worship, then perhaps this is not the place for you.' And I'm saying they're trying to kick people out, but inherently…it's almost like, when you get God right…when you get it right between you and God, you would understand why, you know, you're proclaiming God's word. And you're worshipping, and your prayer is important, and all these things. So, I just like that we don't hide…we don't hide behind culture, and like…I think that's it. I think I just hit it there. In a Chinese church, culture is above God. In a church like [mine], because there is no such thing as culture, God is above everything. It connects the cultures, right? So, um…that's it. And I think the Chinese culture has a lot to do with, um, a lot of the problems in Chinese church.

The distinction made by this participant represents a kind of differentiation, in which culture as reified in ethnic practices is spurned while culture as religious ideology remains unexamined. For those second-generation, Chinese Canadian individuals leaving ethnic congregations and continuing with religious life, this distinction is a helpful identity-building practice. With it, they are able to frame their experience in Chinese environments as formal, overly structured, and predicated on performances of morality. They contrast this with their experience in new, multi-ethnic congregations that appear sincere and frame religion and faith on the basis of grace. They do not acknowledge the strict Reformed theology of these churches as overbearing, nor do they see the cultural roots of those churches' conservative moral teachings on human sexuality or gender as prescriptive or harmful for individuals. Specifically, in the case of those attending the Toronto Uptown Church, they do not recognize the cultural sources of authority and power that their leaders use to exert influence in the community because it is not connected to Chinese culture. In fact, this influence kept some of them from participating in my

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research, as mentioned in Chapter Three. In using these methods, they practice forms of

individualistic culture (Matsumoto et al. 2008) that allow them to distinguish themselves from

their parents on one hand while also providing another bolstering factor for a religious identity

that is already tenuously held against the effects of broader Canadian society.

I encountered a couple of other examples of this. One respondent, who was quoted earlier

saying that Christocentric sermons are necessary in churches because Christianity's central belief

is that human being cannot improve themselves, contrasted the gospel teaching of a particular

American pastor with his previous experience.

> The classic example, um, that Tim Keller from New York uses all the time…the famous pastor…is David and Goliath. If you go to a moralistic church, at the end of the sermon the pastor will tell you 'Look, you gotta have faith like David. Whatever giants that you face in your life…learn from David. Have faith in God.' If you go to Tim Keller's church…you got to [his church], he say 'You can't do it. You're not David…and you will always fail. But David points us to Jesus…he's a type of Jesus. You know, Jesus died for you, and he's the representative. You know, he went into battle for you. He fought the giant…which is the devil. He slayed him. And now, because of his victory, we also have victory in him. Look to Jesus, [participant used their own name].' Like…it's very different right? (Jan14-1).

His use of the descriptor "moralistic church" refers to the Chinese congregations of his past, and

those in the GTA around him currently. However, of even more interest was how he described

the impact of this Christ-centric (or gospel) teaching on his personal sense of identity. In

describing "the gospel," he continued,

> We can never be good enough…that's the whole point! And so…why do you want to keep living like that after you've become a Christian?! Like, you want to make sure you fix your eyes upon the gospel. On Jesus. And so…that was revolutionary. I mean…that was like, it was from, like, trying harder and harder…failing and failing and failing…to, ya…like, it just made a total difference in my sanctification, in my enjoyment of God. In trying harder, I'm actually consummating what God has accomplished on my behalf…and how this gift is now available to me and being enjoyed by me because of the Holy Spirit. And this is all a gift.

When I asked him if this language of 'enjoying God' was something that people would

experience in moralistic or Chinese communities, he was clear:

> It wasn't for me. I don't think so. Ya…enjoying God…like, when Piper…like, his grand statement, right, like 'God is most glorified in us when we're most satisfied.' That changed my life, ya. Like…that…like, I can enjoy God. Like, he's most glorified then! So it's not me actually doing all these ten things. No…well, enjoying God will and must include some forms of action…no doubt. But it's not just actions. It's like an attitude…it's a desire, right?

His quotation from outspoken American pastor and author John Piper was curious, and similar to

the citations offered by another participant. This interviewee described his new, multi-ethnic

community as a "Bibliocentric, Christocentric" church (N13-2). These were terms that he used

throughout our conversation as markers of what he felt was authentic Christian expression. Their

connection to his emerging self-consciousness became clear as he described how he and his wife

ended up in their current community.

> P: It's the experience that my wife and I have always said is…it really bothers us that Chinese churches are more Chinese than they are Christianese.
> SW: What does that mean?
> P: Um, so I grew up in a [Chinese church]. My wife didn't really grow up in one, but she spent her time in a Chinese church. And obviously we had, by then, you know…our network kind of grew and we knew some people in other Chinese churches. And um, it would be things like…mmm…you know, you'd always see this. It'd be whoever's on the elder's board wouldn't be necessarily a guy who's biblically qualified. He's the guy that had the money. So he'd be that guy who's like 'Ok…we need new chairs for whatever. Or we need new bibles. Or we need a piano.' Whatever, he'd be the guy…he was the business owner who had the money, so he'd be on the elder board. And since he's such a big money maker, he's obviously going to be a really good elder board chairman…'cause he can be good with finance and make all this kind of money [mild sarcasm]. So he would just be the guy naturally…that everyone felt is qualified.
> SW: When you say he's not biblically qualified…what do you mean?
> P: Ya, so if scripture talks about, um…your Titus 2s, your first Timothys…all that kind of stuff…your first Peters [references to writings in the Christian scriptures], of what an elder should be. You know, a husband of one wife, not a lover of money or greed, not a drunkard, being able to manage his household well…all that kind of stuff. Essentially, he should be above reproach…hospitable…all that stuff. You know, you look at these guys and they're just typical…kind of, business men. Right? You look at them…like, 'Wow…ok…so he's well off. But does he lead his family well? I don't think this guy's ever done any kind of family worship or discipleship in his life. You know…hospitable?

> Uuuuhhh…I guess he could have some people over to his house every so often.' Not a lover of money? It's like… 'Um, ya he is.' Not a drunkard? 'Well…okay…that's usually pretty easy. You don't want to be a drunkard…that's easy.' Ya…I don't know.
> SW: So, the big deal for you was that people could be in leadership without having…
> P: (interrupting) Not biblical qualifications. Husband of one wife…etcetera. Having children who believe. Ya, really the 'manage your own household well.' If they can't lead their own household, how do they expect to lead the household of God? Right? Check out the kids!

Many respondents shared this sentiment and used Christian Scripture to criticize the practices of

their former Chinese congregations and arrive at the same conclusion as the same participant,

who told me,

> P: I know it sounds bad, but for us when we were looking for one, if we were truly looking for a Bibliocentric and Christocentric church, we're not going to find one in a Chinese-styled church. Which is frustrating…it really worried, in that sense of, like, 'That's really sad. But…okay…let's move on.' Ya, like you said…if you look at all the evidences of everything, it's sad. And we know some people who see that, and are still in the Chinese church. And they're like 'Okay, now that I'm here…my job is now to correct this problem.'
> SW: So you have friends that stay because they feel they can make a difference?
> P: Ya…make a difference. But 'Sorry dude…I know that's really optimistic and I'd love to say that it'll happen, but I'm going to say no…it's never going to happen.'

These comments illustrate two patterns present in my sample. First, that many Chinese Canadian

young adults shape their sense of religious identity by rejecting forms of cultural religion they

deem as inauthentic or unorthodox because of how those forms connect to the Chinese

community they grew up in. They do this while simultaneously failing to acknowledge the forms

of cultural religion embodied by the evangelical leaders they watch or listen to online, or by the

conservative multi-ethnic churches they choose to attend when they leave their Chinese Canadian

ones. As I argue above, in many cases this appears as an expression of my participants' growing

self-consciousness and attempts to exert autonomy as second-generation young adults. This

highlights the importance of the second pattern: that these practices do not always correlate to

Chinese Canadian young adults leaving and separating from Chinese Canadian churches and

religious communities. The participant quoted above serves as an illustration of those who leave Chinese Canadian congregations as they construct their religious identity but still maintain connection to the vast social network of young Chinese Canadian evangelicals in the GTA. I was not surprised when, after observing a session at Teens Conference (discussed in Chapter Five), I ran into this participant and his wife because they had dropped by "just to see some friends:" hanging around a religious environment rooted in cultural forms that he had told me he rejected. Additionally, his comments above also undermine any concrete correlation between growing self-consciousness among young Chinese Canadians and their choice to leave those heritage congregations because of his reference to how some of his friends acknowledge and critique the cultural forms of religion present there and choose to stay.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter outlines how Chinese Canadian young adults in my sample attempt to assert their identity as a second-generation cohort in three broad areas. First, some do so through their negotiation of expectations around Chinese language acquisition and (for some) the use of failure in this area as a form of second-generation Chinese ethnicity. Second, many assert a second-generation identity while simultaneously critiquing the racist and exclusivist expectations of endogamy that come from their parents and drawing from the expansive network of relationships and connections provided by the network of Chinese Canadian evangelical communities outlined in this project to practice endogamy. Third, many in my sample distinguish their sense of religious identity from their parents' generation by drawing on conservative American evangelical personalities, events, and resources to reject religious practices and values they feel compromise the theological legitimacy and orthodoxy of Chinese Canadian congregations. In each of these areas, my participants function as religious actors in a variety of ways that include:

leading vibrant English-speaking Chinese congregations, contributing to first-generation

Cantonese and Mandarin churches, providing a significant growth factor for the conservative,

multi-ethnic churches they join when they move from Chinese Canadian churches, and

organizing second-generation events and ministries aimed at helping their peers and emerging

Chinese Canadian populations. The diversity and dynamism of combinations they make in their

identity formation warrants future study, and is the focus of my concluding remarks below.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Summary

a. Methodology overview

When I boarded a charter bus loaded with young Chinese Canadians headed for Urbana in 2012, I had no idea how drastically my conception of this project would change, nor did I fully comprehend the size and vibrancy of the Chinese evangelical community in which I was beginning to form relationships. What started as an effort to find some Chinese Canadian students to do second-generation immigrant research with quickly shifted into an attempt to understand a religious community largely unaccounted for in scholarship.

What I found can be summarized in points generally corresponding to the preceding chapters of this dissertation. I discovered a vibrant and extensive network of Chinese Canadian churches and organizations with roots in the migration movements of the mid-to late-20th century. Changes to Canadian laws related to multiculturalism and migration along with the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 contributed to significant numbers of Chinese immigrants moving to Canada, drastically altering the Chinese Canadian community, especially in Vancouver and Toronto. The considerable influx of Hong Kong migrants in Toronto led to the start and development of Chinese evangelical churches and movements that have evolved into a significant network of more than two hundred Chinese congregations today that represents a variety of language and ethnic groups from multiple countries. Many of the congregations that emerged after 1967 eventually started English-speaking gatherings to support their second-generation children. At the time of this research, many of these gatherings had evolved into fully functional congregations on their own. In addition to these parallel congregations, several significant events and ministries tailored to second-generation Chinese Canadians have emerged, forming an array

of opportunities for my participants to access as they negotiate their ethnic and religious identities during their journey into young adulthood.

These extra-congregational events and ministries were included in my study because I adopted a multi-site ethnographic approach. While single-site case studies have the ability to provide rich data about the experiences of religious adherents, many contemporary young adults have meaningful religious experiences in a variety of communities and institutions. For example, a single-site case study model may have accounted for the efforts of negotiating a Chinese Canadian evangelical identity by individuals in a congregation. However, it could not uncover the ways that those in the congregation may see their university Christian fellowship as their primary religious community (despite attending the congregation every Sunday) or the ways that some who have left Chinese Canadian congregations use their experiences leading and volunteering at the annual Teens Conference (TC) to express and negotiate their second-generation Chinese Canadian religious identity. In this regard, this project's use of a multi-site approach offers a crucial contribution to our understanding of how religious identities are built, negotiated, and transformed. While some rich data may have been forfeited in moving to multiple localities, by following my participants I discovered a richer experience of 'locality' - beyond the scale of geography. This led me to conceptualize the GTA groups and sites I visited as expressions of bounded potential and shared meaning, while also accounting for the relational networks and potential nexus points that tie those sites to others. I would argue that these assumptions allow for a reimagination of locality as more than a particular space or area, seeing it instead as a structure or series of encounters, a composite of shared moments, or a shared spectrum of experiences. By finding and following the pathways used by my participants in these religious communities (i.e. between conferences, fellowships, congregations, and events), I found

that I was immersed not just in multiple sites but in a string of experiences that more closely mirrored their "local" GTA lives and involvement. It would be interesting to see if future studies of ethnicity, emerging young adults, and religious identity-making can make use of this theoretical insight.

In addition to this, the project included multiple sites in an effort to incorporate para-ethnographic methods, namely allowing my participants to affect the nature and direction of this project. For example, members of the Chinese Canadian evangelical community made a substantial contribution to this project by alerting me to the fact that some young Chinese Canadians are leaving Chinese churches and finding religious community elsewhere. These assertions led me (at their recommendation) to find a couple of generic, multi-ethnic congregations in the GTA that have received influxes of Chinese Canadian young adults over the past five years. Speaking with these individuals in generic congregations gave me an opportunity to cross-reference the experiences of those still involved in ethnically bounded communities with those who have joined other conservative Christian congregations in their young adulthood.

Incorporating data and interviewees from these different sites led to several insights into how my participants negotiate their ethno-religious identities. I conceptualized these in three ways: their identity as evangelicals in Chinese Canadian churches (Chapter Four), their identity as Chinese Canadians in evangelical churches (Chapter Five), and their identity as second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals (Chapter Six).

Chapter Four situates my participants' religious experiences firmly in the suburban network of Chinese Canadian organizations in the Greater Toronto Area. This network provides substantial opportunity and resources for these young adults to discover and explore their identity. The chapter illustrates how participants perceive tension with the surrounding Canadian

culture not on the basis of their ethnic minority status but because of their identity as religious adherents. For many, this tension is based on their experience of the broader society's expectation that religion be excluded from public life, and the limits this expectation places on key evangelical practices such as evangelism. Very few respondents spoke about actual religious discrimination, showing that the tension they feel with the surrounding culture is more symbolic, helping them create and sustain a differentiated evangelical identity.

In Chapter Five, the discussion moves to my participants as evangelical Christians in Chinese Canadian organizations and communities. Data is presented from an English-speaking congregation in Toronto, the annual Teens Conference, and a chapter of the University of Toronto Chinese Christian Fellowship. In all three locations, it is apparent that young Chinese Canadians use these spaces and the social network they provide to maintain or negotiate their sense of connection to previous Chinese generations, while experimenting with new combinations of ethno-religious identity. Each site provided clear examples of how individuals have constructed second-generation forms of evangelical practices that are influenced by Chinese heritage and the broader evangelical subculture.

Finally, Chapter Six explores the ways that some young Chinese Canadian evangelicals are distinguishing their ethno-religious selves specifically as second-generation members of the Chinese community. The themes of language acquisition, endogamy, and judgements about religious authenticity are explored. Participant responses show that the Chinese evangelical community in Toronto provides significant opportunity for consolidated ethnic identity through its facilitating of Chinese language acquisition, and in its gathering of a significant Chinese Canadian cohort who have language school experience but no Chinese-language competency. The data hints at how this network of relationships and ministries in which Chinese Canadian

young adults meet and develop connections may lead to high rates of endogamy, despite my participants' contentions that parental pressures for endogamy are either unimportant or secondary to their own choices. The point is that these environments provide opportunities for individuals to find a partner that shares their ethnic background and religious beliefs, satisfying the desire that many of them have to maintain familial connections and solidarity.

While these language and endogamy practices may suggest that my participants are trying to replicate their parents' ethno-religious identity, many of them attempt to distinguish themselves from previous generations by affirming forms of Christian theology and practice they feel are more authentic than those they felt were influenced by Chinese heritage and culture. Rejecting the religious culture of their parents, they adopted more mainstream Canadian and American forms of conservative evangelical Christianity in English-speaking and multi-ethnic communities. However, most of them fail to acknowledge the American evangelical roots of their criticism of their parents' religion and uncritically differentiate themselves from what they feel to be the demanding and moralistic Chinese Christianity they inherited. The fact that, along with other Chinese Canadians, they assert these forms of religious identity illustrates the importance of this GTA network in providing my participants with spaces to retain connection with Chinese ethno-religious identities well into young adulthood.

This project incorporates six formal sites, including three congregations along with other events and gatherings (such as Teens Conference, which I outline in Chapter Five). Contacts were found at each site and snow-ball sampling used to arrange and conduct dozens of formal interviews, including fifty-one participants for the project. These conversations offer the most significant insights into the ongoing discussions around ethno-religious identity construction in

Canada, with most participants discussing personal history, their current religious involvement, along with markers of ethnic and religious importance.

Accounts of their experiences fill a gap in Canadian scholarship on Chinese Canadians because research has historically ignored religion as a significant factor when considering Chinese Canadian ethnicity, or has ignored the diversity, vitality, and strength of the Chinese evangelical community in its consideration of shifting religious loyalties in the second-generation. Additionally, participants in this project illustrate the need for our research models to move beyond strict congregational analyses if we want to account for the breadth of resources that 21st century adherents use to construct their religious lives. Research into these resources is particularly relevant because, in contrast to those marginalized and restricted samples often highlighted by American researchers, my sample was situated in suburban communities of considerable social capital and upward mobility.

My central research question inquired how those in my sample negotiate their ethnic and religious identities in Canada's largest urban centre. I found that many young Chinese Canadians are drawing on a significant network of ministries and organizations to do this important work. The crucial factor is that these sites provide spaces of strong religious affirmation where second-generation Chinese Canadians could distinguish themselves from a secular and pluralizing culture as well as spaces of ethnic solidarity. For those needing to distinguish themselves from the culture and evangelical traditions of their parents' generation, these venues offer room for self-exploration and discovery along with the camaraderie and friendship of many other Chinese Canadians. For those who have left Chinese Canadian communities, these spaces also provide a significant base of relationships and venues for continuing second-generation discovery of ethnic significance.

b. Constructivist combinations

The data gleaned from these sites points to new ways of understanding second-generation identity construction in Canada, showing how some young Chinese Canadians move beyond the boundaries of Chinese Canadian institutions while many others create and sustain vibrant second-generation Chinese Canadian organizations. Constructivist theories proved to be helpful as I attempted to recognize the sites and processes being used by individuals to distinguish themselves from others, and they also explain the increasing variety of combinations young Chinese Canadians are making in their practices of ethnic and religious adaptation.

To explain my participants' strategies of ethnic adaptation, I relied on Christian Karner's (2007) exploration of ethnicity in everyday life. He argues that ethnicity is produced and maintained through structures of action, ways of seeing, and structures of feeling. These categories explain how young Chinese Canadians in my sample negotiate social expectations of endogamy or continued involvement in a Chinese congregation (i.e. structures of action), how they imagine their experiences in Chinese families and institutions and religious communities over and against the dominant culture and other ethnic groups (ways of seeing), and how they describe the importance of Chinese domestic spaces or the significance of religious experiences shaped in second-generation, Chinese Canadian communities (ways of feeling).

Karner's framework is valuable because of his assertion that many individuals do not regard themselves "as equally or permanently 'defined' by the boundaries that encircle them and the social categories to which they are deemed to 'belong'," (2007: 23) a social reality described by my participants throughout this dissertation. Many of them problematize, restructure, and challenge forms of Chinese identity. However, the recurring incidence of them saying that they are not Chinese, or that Chinese institutions and religious groups are not important to them while

sitting in a Chinese Canadian megachurch or after leading a Chinese Canadian fellowship group illustrates what Karner recognizes as the feature of ethnicity whereby individuals construct (and negotiate) identity in an effort to sustain "a sense of familiarity (or ontological security)" (2007: 29). My participants' efforts to differentiate themselves from their parents or from Chinese-language religious groups serves a role in their identity formation, but so too does the fact that so many of them do this work in youthful, second-generation groups with a sense of familiarity to Chinese congregations and institutions. The importance of Karner's notion of "familiarity" is perhaps most clearly seen in my participants who have left Chinese Canadian churches and ministries, but still volunteer with those ministries and maintain vibrant social networks with other second-generation Chinese Canadians with similar experiences.

These features of ethnic identity formation in my sample parallel the ways in which my participants appear to be shaping their religious identities. To explore these, I rely on Peter Beyer's extension (2006) of Niklas Luhmann's work (1982), which argues that for religion to maintain its social effectiveness in the modern world it must assert its functional distinctiveness. Where before religious groups and institutions maintained social cohesion through their influence on ideas and systems such as governance, ethics, medicine, and what makes a community, now they do not. This marginalization has forced religious organizations and institutions to differentiate internally as a way of ensuring social coherence, which Beyer observes and describes as "pluralistic religious convergence" (2006: 108). In such an environment, Beyer argues that one of the ways religion takes form is by being "thematized in social (namely function) systems" (2006: 108), such as when it aligns with the efforts of ethnic or political groups.

These ideas help to explain my participants' sense of religious identity in two ways. First, they are able to access significant social resources by participating in ethnic minority religious communities whose social cohesion is closely linked to the migrant experience and first-generation efforts to maintain connection with their sending culture. This linkage strengthens the social cohesion my participants feel with the associated religious identity those communities offer them. However, Beyer's work also helps explain my participants as religious actors because of their connection to evangelical Christianity, a group that Christian Smith broadly describes as thriving "on distinction, engagement, tension, conflict, and threat" (1998: 89). Smith points out evangelicals in North America maintain social cohesion through their use of symbolic boundaries and how they renegotiate their collective identities by revising how their "orthodoxies engage the changing sociocultural environments they confront" (1998: 97). These concepts help explain why many of my participants articulate a sense of tension with the surrounding culture because of their sincerely held religious beliefs rather than their ethnic status. It also explains the way, in an effort to assert their second-generation identity, they disengage from forms of Christianity in Chinese congregations that they feel are unfaithful because of their ties to Chinese culture and then choose to attend multi-ethnic congregations which teach that same-sex marriages should not be allowed and that God created the world in six days. On the one hand, they are distinguishing themselves from their parents' cultural forms of faith, and on the other they are distinguishing themselves from the pluralistic and secular culture that surrounds them. Both types of differentiation function as powerful connections to a sense of evangelical identity (one that is often shaped by or directly tied to prominent American leaders), whether or not they stay in or leave Chinese Canadian congregations and ministries.

These theoretical considerations of ethnicity and religion reveal that my participants do not follow a strict trajectory of segmented assimilation models applied to other newer immigrant groups, nor can they be said to be strictly maneuvering through a highly competitive religious landscape (Zelinsky 2001; Finke and Stark 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Christerson and Flory 2017) with no regard to their ethnic heritage. In fact, most appear to be dynamically involved in some combination of the two. This is why I have attempted to outline below how my interviewees and those I observed broadly fell into one of five categories. The first two groups involve people who have left ethnically Chinese congregations, and the final three are composed of people who have remained in those congregations but have taken significantly different positions to them.

The first group would be those whose experience is marked by separation. They leave their inherited religious communities and distance themselves from their ethnic communities. Given the structure of my research, I did not meet any of these individuals because of the sites I incorporated and the ways social networks informed my sample. I also never heard anyone mention a friend or acquaintance that might have fallen into this category, though there were frequent anecdotal allusions to those who had left the church.

A second group is made up of second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals who leave the ethnic churches of their parents' generation and join multicultural or generic evangelical Christian churches, in what we might call parallel attachment. They do so for a myriad of reasons, but all of them to a certain degree criticize the religious beliefs and practices of Chinese Canadian congregations as being rooted in Chinese culture as opposed to "the gospel," a term they use to describe their ideal of a "pure" form of Christianity. However, separating from those congregations and organizations does not mean that they separate from the social networks of the

evangelical Chinese Canadian community. I found that many of them continued to maintain significant connections to Toronto-based Chinese Canadian ministries (even serving as volunteers), all the while joining generic multi-ethnic congregations that hosted growing numbers of like-minded Chinese Canadians. These ongoing connections to the social networks of the Chinese Canadian evangelical community represent a prime touchpoint for these individuals to maintain a strong sense of ethnic identity while separating from the traditional Chinese congregations.

The third group I encountered are those whose experience is defined by critical attachment. These individuals are often intimately involved with and connected to Chinese Canadian ministries, expressing some appreciation for Chinese culture and heritage while also noting the ways that heritage compromised their evangelical values. They often use conservative American evangelical authors and speakers as their sources for these critiques and often cite their writings and sermons in our interviews. These critiques were offered in an apparent effort to challenge and reform their Chinese Canadian congregations (e.g. by criticizing first-generation members for allowing women to preach), not as expression of detachment from the ethnic communities themselves. However, some of these individuals expressed opinions and desires that placed them at odds with the leaders in their Chinese evangelical communities, and shared with me their sense that they may have to leave if change did not happen.

Fourth, I observed those who appear to model a form of engaged maintenance. These individuals are often those with significant Chinese language competency and long-standing connections to the inner circle of an English-speaking Chinese congregation and the first-generation immigrant Cantonese or Mandarin congregations around it. They express deep appreciation for their Chinese heritage, while communicating little to no concern over the style

and theology of their congregation. In some cases, these individuals are or have been involved in outreaches with the Mandarin-speaking congregations at their church – often the fastest growing segment of the church (in keeping with steady migration from mainland China to Canada). Their experience and practice model a strong commitment to helping Chinese Canadian churches and ministries maintain their vibrancy and uniqueness.

Finally, I encountered those whose experience and involvement is marked by what I call generative attachment. These participants differ from the third category mentioned above by articulating a far less antagonistic posture toward Chinese Canadian evangelical groups that still assert and foster a strong sense of ethnic solidarity. That is not to say they do not identify points of tension between first and second-generation elements in their congregations, or comment about the challenges Chinese tradition poses to their reading of the Christian Scriptures. The difference is that they are far less likely to make strong prescriptions for eliminating or constraining Chinese cultural mores and instead have a tendency to hint at the dynamic ways Chinese Canadian heritage and identity could be amalgamated into a healthy and vibrant second-generation religious identity. They often want to see Chinese Canadian organizations and ministries generate greater levels of social engagement and justice work in their neighbourhoods and communities. Members of this group tend to not be closely aligned with US-based conservative, evangelical networks of conferences and schools (and their leaders) and often express criticism and apprehensions about these. This final group was a minority, at least in part because of my limited sample but also, perhaps, because of the tentative and difficult social space they occupy in their attempts to hold their ethnic heritage and religious identity in tension without creating antagonism.

7.2 Limitations

My research shows that many second-generation Chinese Canadian young adults engage in several sites to negotiate a new ethno-religious identity. It also shows that a specifically American evangelical subculture holds significant sway in the communities that my interview subjects participate in. Having said this, I recognize the limitations of being able to generalize some of these observations on to other populations, whether they are Chinese Canadian or not. Given the significant social capital available to most of my participants and the fact that they live inside of or around the largest concentration of one of Canada's largest ethnic minority communities, I recognize that my research offers only a snapshot of a particular population. For example, the fact that the evangelical, second-generation Chinese Canadian community in Vancouver, BC, does not possess the same scale of interconnected ministries and groups is sure to shape a very different experience (and factors for identity formation) for the young adults in that urban environment. Additionally, I acknowledge that researchers have observed young Canadians from other religious traditions seeking strong, conservative religious sources from around the globe (as my participants do) to shape their religious lives (Beyer and Ramji 2013; Ramji 2014), but would argue that the factors shaping those searches (i.e. systemic racism, lack of economic security and opportunity, and continuing immigration from heritage cultures) are often different than those shaping my suburban Toronto participants – and would therefore limit generalizations without further evaluation.

Similarly, I also recognize the potential influence my own ethnic identity may have played in my data collection, presenting a possible limitation. As an older, Caucasian male, I was almost always a conspicuous presence in the groups I attended. In some cases, this led some individuals to defer to me or assume my connection with organizational leadership, as it did on

one occasion when I arrived at a Chinese Canadian church and was asked in the hallway if I was the guest speaker for the day. In other cases, I am aware that my position as an academic researcher and ethnic outsider may have conditioned certain responses from participants, i.e. encouraging them to reflect more favourably on their experiences in Toronto or not be as honest about racism or marginalization experienced at the hands of other Canadians. Ultimately, I am not aware of any specific instances in which my presence or involvement in groups resulted in reflexive interview responses that either were not honest or did not reflect the experience of those in the group I was studying. However, to combat this possibility, I worked hard to include a diversity of participants: e.g. community leaders, low-level attendees, married/single/dating individuals, parents, university freshmen, and professionals in their mid-30s. I also feel that incorporating multiple sites over more than twelve months allowed me to mitigate these tendencies and offer more opportunity for data contrast and comparison. Of course, by including multiple sites I was unable to go into greater depth in any one congregation or organization, thus limiting the data I was able to access. Furthermore, ethnographers and researchers have shown that long-term studies do yield a depth and breadth of data that correlates directly to time spent in certain groups. By focusing on breadth, my study may have sacrificed depth, that is, the data that could be attained by fuller or longer-term immersion in any one site. Instead, I followed the advice of my participants to include additional sites. This allowed me to discover and mark the pathways of these young Chinese Canadians, pathways largely unaccounted for in the data that expand our understanding of how ethnic and religious identities are being formed in some instances. I would have been happy to spend more time in each site, and while I am sure that would have enhanced the nuance and clarity of my conclusions my multi-site approach offered a richness of its own.

7.3 Further research

Discussion of the limitations of this project provokes some consideration of what further research is needed. For example, one avenue of fruitful research would be to examine the factors that lead to effective ethno-religious cohesion in second-generation immigrant religious communities. The historical placement and strong cultural roots of my participants play a significant role in how most if not all of these individuals form their identities. However, more research on the organizational networks and varied resources that other religious or ethnic groups use (or have access to) would allow us to more clearly identify both unique and common factors of each generational cohort, ethnic group, and denomination. This would be extremely helpful in Canada where there are strong values of cultural diversity and multiculturalism paralleled by continuing marginalization and discrimination. Being able to delineate how and why various young Canadians experience pressure or antagonism from the surrounding Canadian culture could provide us with stronger data on why some religious communities persist as hubs of ethnic identity formation into the second and third generation.

In the case of my sample, additional research and longitudinal observation of endogamous practices would be extremely helpful. The correlation between endogamy and my participants' espoused ethnic and religious values warrants further investigation, and how their gathering at Chinese Canadian events or in generic, multi-ethnic congregations well into young adulthood allows for active ethnic identity formation. A long-term study would be able to identify the dynamic forms of ethnic consolidation and adaptation that young Chinese Canadians use both after they disconnect from the ethno-religious communities of their childhood or when they choose to stay and maintain them.

Finally, one of the factors of my study that could use more investigation is the way second-generation immigrants replace the ethnic structures of action (i.e. as outlined by Karner 2007: 27-31) that shaped the religious experiences of their childhood in Chinese churches with North American alternatives. It is notable how many of my participants criticize their experiences in Chinese religious communities on the grounds that they are rooted in "culture" that is at odds with what they determine to be legitimate Christianity, but how they fail to see or acknowledge the ties of their new religious and theological homes to the distinctively American evangelical subculture born in the early and mid 20th century. Future study could investigate the degree to which the problematizing of ethnic religious forms leads to an actual disintegration of individual ethnic identity (an assumption my participants' continuing involvement in Chinese networks and organizations even after leaving them appears to challenge), and how it might contribute to religious innovation.

There are a number of intriguing avenues for new research as a result of this project. One of the most pressing is that of the ever-evolving Chinese Canadian subculture of evangelical groups in Toronto, which, despite the influence of American evangelicalism, is unique. Canada continues to receive significant numbers of immigrants from the People's Republic each year, a factor that is already changing the demographics of Toronto's Chinese churches. On one hand, this immigration continues to provide some existing communities with a steady flow of newcomers who both bolster membership and attendance and also provide ongoing connection to Chinese culture and practices. For Toronto's Chinese churches, these new arrivals represent a steady flow of potential converts and members with whom they already have strong cultural affinity, even if may also introduce increased ethnic diversity to the Chinese community.

This project found that my second-generation participants do not appear to be experiencing or expressing tension or conflict with others who call themselves Chinese Canadians. The broader argument of this thesis addresses this point in two ways. First, it shows that the sites discussed provide spaces of exploring and (for some) negotiating ethnic identity as part of a response to the surrounding secular Canadian society and the Chinese congregations started by first-generation immigrants. Second, it illustrates that, as part of this process, there appears to be some softening of ethnic identity vis-à-vis ethnic divisions among Chinese Canadians for this second-generation cohort. For example, most of my participants described themselves simply as "Chinese" (rather than Hongkonger or mainlander) or used the label Canadian-born Chinese (CBC) to self-identify. These terms obscure the differences inside the Chinese immigrant community that many first-generation migrants emphasize (Li 2005; Yu 2013; Yan et al. 2019). This softening or obscuring may derive from the dominant Hong Kong cohort in the sample and evangelical network I studied, where limited subethnic diversity may lead some young adults to downplay internal ethnic differences. Finally, participants regularly emphasized the institutional completeness and perceived safety of the broader Chinese community in multicultural Toronto, a factor that (at least in my sample) appears to lead some young adults to soften their sense of attachment to internal, subethnic differences or broader markers of Chineseness over and against the surrounding society. Furthermore, one cannot discount the idea that my participants thought that the topic of tensions within the Chinese community were either embarrassing or simply irrelevant to my study.

That said, future research must consider the possibility of tension as most new Chinese immigrants arrive from the PRC and speak Mandarin, in contrast to the Cantonese dialect spoken by the first-generation power brokers of many of Toronto's Chinese evangelical churches.

Moreover, Chinese and Hongkonger identities are fluid, and current events—such as the democracy protests in Hong Kong and the fallout from the COVID-19 crisis—may certainly change things dramatically. Already during my research, the rapid growth of the Mandarin congregations was noted by some of my interviewees, and perhaps one of the most telling signs is that Canada's largest Chinese congregation recently chose a trilingual senior leader with ties to the Mandarin-speaking community. The question of how this continuing migration will shape how Chinese Canadian churches use their facilities and manage their heritage is significant. During my fieldwork I attended a seminar for Chinese congregations at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. One first-generation Chinese church pastor outlined how he and his team had made the strategic choice to focus on reaching and helping incoming Mandarin-speaking migrants as opposed to engaging with second-generation challenges. He set the two over and against each other as institutional imperatives in his presentation. Given that most English-speaking Chinese congregations in the GTA still operate as one of two or three language specific gatherings in a Chinese church, it remains to be seen whether they will remain in that structure a) as the generational cohort ages and builds their own social capital, and b) as the founding Cantonese generation ages and dies while the Mandarin congregations grow via continuing immigration and an emerging second-generation. The rapid growth in the Mandarin-speaking population combined with a decreasing Cantonese-speaking population will shape the way second and third generation Chinese Canadians with strong ties to these evangelical communities choose to stay and maintain ethnic congregations or if they choose to leave en masse, and further study of these developments would yield helpful insights into Canada's unfolding religious landscape.

Another point for future research to engage is to look at other significant Chinese evangelical communities (in North America, and beyond) and explore if similar patterns have

emerged in their second and third generations. As noted above, my limited exploration of the Chinese evangelical community in Vancouver, BC, another hub of Chinese migration to Canada, indicates that the experience of its current second-generation cohort might differ significantly. Some individuals in my sample who have spent time or lived in Vancouver spoke to these differences anecdotally. An examination of the organizational and cultural differences between Teens Conference in Toronto (discussed in chapter five above) and the Vancouver area's annual Canada Chinese Christian Winter Conference supports their narrative. Teens Conference is a large, decidedly second-generation, English-speaking event with clear connections to American evangelical conference culture, whereas the Vancouver event is much smaller and the English-speaking component is just part of a broader, intentionally bilingual event. Comparisons such as these would allow for a clearer discussion of any uniqueness of the Canadian or GTA context, especially in instances where secularization mutes and marginalizes publicly vocal evangelicalism.

Finally, more discussion is needed on the kinds of multi-ethnic communities that young second-generation Chinese Canadians are joining. In my sample, I noted a clear affinity with congregations that were generally quite conservative, in some cases more so than the Chinese churches that my participants had left. A study of those Chinese Canadians (or other ethnic minority young adults) who have joined more progressive evangelical communities that ordain women, welcome LGBTQ members, and push for public engagement on issues of justice and equality would provide a more robust picture of the motivations of those who leave ethnic congregations. For example, it could tell us if people are moving to more conservative or more progressive communities, which would tell us if they are adopting more mainstream Canadian values or are rejecting them.

7.4 Significance of study

After spending some eighteen months going to events, speaking with more than two hundred young Chinese Canadians and interviewing dozens of them, I believe that the observations and conclusions of this study would matter to them.

What this project has done is provide a glimpse of the relationship between ethnicity and religion in one population group in Canada. First, it illustrates one particular instance of how religious identity continues to persist into (and potentially beyond) the second generation of an immigrant group. This phenomenon hints at how other ethnic groups with social capital consolidated in Canada's urban landscapes might also provide ongoing support for continued religious adherence, and connects this project to an ongoing and current conversation among scholars across various traditions (Nijhawan 2008; Sodhi 2008; Hirji 2010; Holtman and Nason-Clark 2012; Nayar 2014; George and Chaze 2016; Nagra 2017; Spina 2017; Selby et al. 2018; Barua 2019).

Secondly, the religious identities claimed by this project's participants offer an important insight into the potential future of Canadian Christian communities. This is due, in large part, to continuing migration from the People's Republic of China and how that trend will shape Canada's religious population and practice. The National Household Survey found that the Philippines (with its large Catholic population) was the number one sender of immigrants to Canada from 2006-2011, with China second on the list with just over 122,000 in that period (Statistics Canada 2013). Roughly eight percent (10,845) of the Chinese migrants in those five years identified as evangelical Christian, adding to a Chinese Canadian community of more than 150,000 (Statistics Canada 2014). Some 30,000 individuals from China obtained landed immigrant status in 2018 (behind only those from India and the Philippines), and China will

feature prominently in the Canadian government's plan to welcome 350,000 immigrants per year

by 2021 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2018). Clearly, migration will continue

to shape the Chinese Canadian Christian community for the foreseeable future—even if the

number of Chinese immigrants claiming no religious affiliation is greater than the number

claiming to be Christian by more than two and a half times (852,750 to 318,935: Statistics

Canada 2014).

Second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals in Toronto have been shaping and

leading their own unique communities for some time now, and their institutions and ministries

provide a means for other young co-ethnics to create a sense of identity. The variables of how the

founding, Cantonese-speaking generation of Toronto churches approaches succession (e.g.

community values and governance, property management, and legacy) and how the increasing

numbers of Mandarin-speaking Christians joining those congregations shape liturgy and

practice—especially given the influence of charismatic forms of religion prevalent in China (see

Yang et al., 2017)—will play a significant role in the niche my second-generation participants are

able to occupy on the Chinese Canadian and broader evangelical landscapes.

More broadly, the religious and social conservativism discovered among my participants

parallels the socio-political influence the evangelical Chinese Canadian community can wield

when it engages in public discourse, illustrated by their involvement with members of other

ethnic minorities and religious groups in public protests against the Ontario Liberal government's

proposed sex-ed curriculum revisions from 2010 to 2016 (Benzie 2010; Hune-Brown 2015; Jones

2015; Lopez 2018). Kong et al. (2018) point to congregations such as Scarborough's large

Chinese Alliance Church as locations of political advocacy to reverse the curriculum, and argue

that the election of prominent Progressive Conservative Party members in 2018, such as Billy

Pang and Daisy Wai (both with long-standing ties to Toronto Chinese congregations), shows how Chinese churches are able to influence Canadian political life. While it is unclear to what degree second-generation young adults like those in my sample were and are connected to such movements (as my fieldwork was completed in 2014), the potential link between conservative religious values espoused by my participants and the real-world activism performed by their ethno-religious communities makes our understanding of their identity formation all the more pressing.

Finally, this project highlights the importance of observing and listening to second-generation young adults in the study of religion. While there is an appropriate and growing emphasis (Manning 2015; Oakes 2015; Thiessen 2015; Wilkins-Laflamme 2015; Drescher 2016; Thiessen 2016; Clarke and Macdonald 2017; Tomlins 2018; Beyer et al. 2019) on the increasing numbers of young people in North America choosing to affiliate with no religious category or group (called 'religious nones'), the fact remains that roughly 67 percent of Canadians identify as being Christian (Statistics Canada 2013). Given that between 41 and 47 percent of immigrants that came to Canada between 2001-2011 identified as Christian (Statistics Canada 2013), it is vital that we continue to pay attention to the emerging immigrant generations of Canada's largest religious group as a way of identifying how religious affiliation and practice are changing. This project's discovery of religious conservativism in the Chinese Canadian second-generation is important, especially because of how this shows that conservatism may act as a conduit for this particular community to be a rejuvenating and stabilizing growth factor for evangelical movements going forward. The fact that technology plays a role in the formation of religious identity for my participants is also noteworthy, especially because this, along with their place in a growing immigrant population, marks them with two indicators that sociologists have proposed

we should track in studying the future and well-being of Canadian Millennials (Bibby et al. 2019). For now, it appears that these Chinese Canadian young adults are well on their way to solidifying a collective sense of identity, one that has the potential to impact Canada's religious landscape in the years to come.

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Appendix - Interview Questions

Personal Information

Gender:
Age:
Marital status:
Type of residence: independent, with parents, etc.
Number of immediate family members:
Number of children, if applicable:
Place of birth:
If born outside of Canada, specify how long (in years) you have lived in Canada:
Chinese ethnicity, if applicable:
Language(s) spoken, read:
Education completed:
Current occupation:

1. Background Information and Experience
Where did you grow up (childhood and adolescence)? How would you describe the ethnic and cultural make-up of the neighbourhood? School?
Where do you live now? How would you describe the ethnic and cultural make-up of your current neighbourhood?
What language(s) are spoken in your home? What language(s) do speak with your parents?
(If participant has children) Have you taught your children to speak a Chinese dialect? What language(s) to you speak with them?
Can you describe how and why your parents moved to Canada? What connections did/do they still maintain in the previous environment?
Describe your parents' religious background.
Did you attend a Chinese church with your parents during your childhood and adolescence? How often did you attend? What determining factors influenced your family's attendance?
Why do you think your parents took you to a Chinese (or other ethnicity) church during your childhood/adolescence?
Do you think going to a Chinese church during your childhood helped you retain Chinese cultural traditions and identity? If so, how?
Did you attend a Chinese language or cultural program during your childhood? Where was it operated?
Did you belong to a Chinese or Christian club during high school and/or university?
Think of your five closest friends or acquaintances from your childhood. How many of them would you identify as Chinese, or Chinese-Canadian? If they were not Chinese, please describe their ethnicities.

2. Current religious involvement
How would you describe your current church?
What is the language of the service you attend? Are services offered in other languages at your church? If yes, what languages are represented?

How often do you go to church?

Tell me about why you attend this type of Christian church.

Do you hold any position of leadership in the church?

Describe the leadership structure at your current church.

Describe how you relate to this structure.

How many of your relatives attend the same church regularly?

Think of your five closest friends or acquaintances. How many of them attend your church?

Does your church offer any Chinese cultural activities (or celebrate any traditional Chinese holidays) during the year? Describe them briefly. Do you attend or get involved in these activities?

Do you think attending a Chinese Christian church is helpful for maintaining Chinese cultural traditions? If yes, how so?

How important is it for a church of/for second-generation Chinese to maintain Chinese cultural traditions through various programs?

How would describe how it feels when you're in/at a Chinese church?

Do you feel that church should be ethnically defined, or multi-ethnic? Please explain.

If informant has children:

Do you take your children to church with you?

Do you feel that attending a Chinese church is helpful in teaching your children Chinese cultural traditions? How so?

Is it important to you to teach your children Chinese cultural traditions? Please explain.

If informant does not attend a Chinese church:

Have your ever switched religious groups (e.g. churches)? What led to that shift? Would you consider a switch in the future? What circumstances might lead you to make that change? What kind of group would you look for?

How would describe how it feels when you're in/at a Chinese church? What about at your current church?

Has leaving the Chinese church/group resulted in you feeling a sense of disconnection from Chinese culture or identity in any way? Please explain.

3. At home

How many Christian holidays do you celebrate? How are they celebrated?

How many traditional Chinese holidays do you celebrate? How are they celebrated

4. Christian and non-Christian organizations

Do you belong to any Christian (e.g. parachurch) organizations or groups? Are they Chinese, or multi-ethnic? What language(s) is used by the group?

How often do you go to meetings?

Describe the goals and work of the organization for me.

Do you belong to any Chinese or Asian Canadian/community organizations?

How often do you go to meetings?

Describe the goals and work of the organization for me.

5. Personal identity

How important is your Christian faith to your personal identity? How important is your cultural and family heritage?

Are there any specific ways you feel you participate in Chinese culture? Please explain.
Think of your five closest friends or acquaintances currently. How many of them are Chinese? How many of them are second-generation Chinese-Canadian? How many of them are Christian?
Think of your five most important (i.e. the most frequently contacted) professional, educational, or work relationships. How many of them are Chinese or Chinese-Canadian?
If married: In your past romantic relationships, did you date Chinese-Canadians? Explain.
If not married: How important to you is it to marry someone with a shared cultural background?
Can you think of a time when you were discriminated against because of your Christian beliefs and practice? If yes, please give me an example.
Can you think of a time when you were discriminated against because of your Chinese-Canadian identity? If yes, please give me an example.
Do you feel there are roles or expectations you are expected to fill or meet as a young Chinese-Canadian (wo)man in your Christian community?
What about in broader, Canadian society?
Do you feel that there are limitations to the leadership roles (wo)men should be permitted to fill in Christian community? Explain.

6. Religious identity
What label or adjective might you use to define your Christian identity if describing it for someone? Would you describe yourself as evangelical?
Do you feel that evangelism is an important part of a Christian life and practice?
If yes, what do you think is the number one challenge faced by those trying to evangelize in Canada?
If no, why not?
Do you follow or pay attention to politics? Do you care about the politics of any particular region or community more than others?
How aware are you of politics in Canada? Are you involved in Canadian politics in any way?
Briefly describe your views on what you feel are the most important social issues in Canada (If participant asks for examples, offer the following list: environmental crisis or global warming; human trafficking; sexuality; same-sex marriage; abortion; human right to clean water; homelessness, poverty).
Are you involved in any form of social advocacy? Describe the nature and frequency of your involvement. Is this done through a religious group, community group, as an individual?
What resources would you say are the most useful and important for encouraging/building/strengthen your Christian faith?
Do you ever download audio or watch streaming video sermons? From your church? Who do you watch? How often? Why do you do this?
Do you currently read the Bible? How often?
Do you currently pray? How often?
Do you currently give financial donations to any religious individuals, groups or organizations? How often?
Do you read Christian books or blogs? Who do you read? Why?
Do you buy or use any other materials to strengthen your faith?
Do you ever attend Christian conferences? If so, which ones? Where?
If participant is from a university fellowship:
How would you describe the fellowship? What does it feel like when you attend?

Does participating in the fellowship help you live a life of faith on campus? Please explain.
Does the fellowship create a sense of connection to broader Chinese culture or identity for you?
Those that attend?
Is the fellowship your primary spiritual or religious community currently?

If participant attended Urbana:
Who did you attend with? Describe how your group experienced the conference together? Why did you choose to go? How did you pay for it?
What track/seminars did you attend? Why?
Did the conference impact you in any way? If so, how was it most impacting? What was your least favourite aspect of the experience?
Did you fill out a response card? If so, what did you commit to? Are you taking steps to meet or complete that commitment?
Urbana brings together people from many cultures and locales. Can you describe your experience of Urbana's diversity for me? What words would you use?
Did you go to the Asian American Lounge at any point? With whom? Why?
Was Urbana different than your day to day experience? For example, the people you were around, the things you experienced, what you chose to do?
Was it important or significant to you that we sang in Mandarin? What about other languages?
Were you familiar with any of the music at Urbana?