

**CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM IN
MODERN CHINA**

**Calvin Chao and the "Chinese For Christ"
Movement**

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I. INTRODUCTION

To most students of modern Chinese history, Calvin Chao 趙君影 (1906-1996) is not a well-known figure. Even in the much narrower field of Chinese church history, Chao is not a familiar name compared to Wu Yaozong 吳耀宗, Zhao Zizhen 趙紫宸, John Sung 宋尚節, Watchman Nee 倪柝聲, Wang Mingdao 王明道 or Marcus Cheng 陳崇桂. Despite the relative anonymity of this man, this paper intends to reconstruct the life and career of Calvin Chao, who has made significant contributions to the Christian movements in modern China, especially in the following three areas:

(1) The Christian student movement in colleges and universities in Republican China, and then outside China after 1949.

(2) The training of church workers and seminarians in Greater China, as well as in the United States.

(3) The building of a Chinese denomination called Chinese For Christ, Inc. (CFC) with a number of churches established throughout the major cities of the United States.

Calvin Chao was born in 1906 in central China, and he passed away on March 27, 1996 in Los Angeles, California, at the age of ninety. His life span covers almost the entire twentieth century. Chao spent half of his life time in China and then he went overseas, first to Southeast Asia and later on the United States of America. As an evangelist, an educator, a church pastor, a Christian scholar and also a theologian, his career extended from the 1930s to 1990s, and that could be divided into three phases as follow.

(1) From the beginning of his Christian service in the 1930s to 1948, the year of his departure from China, his evangelical work and Christian ministry focused primarily on university and college students. As leader of the national Christian student movement, he founded the National Alliance of Christian Students in China in 1945. Working with David H. Adeney, he had led the China Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship through the civil war years.

(2) From 1949 to 1956, Calvin Chao had lived in Hong Kong, Manila and Singapore. He worked among overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, looking for new opportunities and new roles in Christian ministry outside Communist China. In this period he had founded the Pei-ling College in Hong Kong, the Singapore Theological Seminary and the Youth Gospel Center in Manila.

(3) In the mid-1950s, Chao and his family emigrated to the United States, beginning another chapter of his life and ministry. His most significant achievement of this period was the founding of the Chinese For Christ, Inc. 中華歸主協會 (commonly referred to as CFC), which coordinated evangelical projects among Chinese students in the United States and helped building a chain of CFC churches in several major cities in America. In 1985, Chao, at the age of eighty, established the Chinese For Christ Theological Seminary 中華歸主神學院 in Los Angeles, which trains pastors for the Chinese communities in the States. It also provides further study for Chinese pastors from both Asia and America, in the field of theology, as well as cultural studies. CFC churches and the CFC Theological Seminary continue to operate now, under the leadership of Chao's colleagues, followers and family members after his death.

Calvin Chao's work and career, in my view, have been important parts of Christian movements in modern China, and so deserve more scholarly attention and critical analysis. This paper represents a preliminary attempt to put his life in to proper perspective in the context of modern Chinese history. The focus will be on his role as a dynamic Christian educator, an effective church builder and an influential seminary leader. The other aspects of his life, such as his views toward modern theology and liberalism, his anti-Communist stance, and his effort in bringing together Confucianism and Christianity, will not be analyzed in depth here.

II. CHALLENGE, CRISIS AND CONVERSION: GROWING UP IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINA

Calvin Chao, originally named Zhao Qingsheng 趙慶生, was born on March 15, 1906 in a poor scholarly family in Hanchuan 漢川 in the province of Hubei 湖北, central China. His father was an opium addict, and a minor subaltern at the local yamen of the Manchu or Qing 清 government, during the period when the last imperial dynasty was in rapid decline and disintegration. The revolutionary movement led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 was picking up momentum and drawing more supporters in China, especially the young military officers and intellectuals from the northern and central provinces. Hubei was at the heart of political agitation, and the revolution of 1911 took place in the city of Wuchang 武昌 in this province. When Chao was six, the Qing dynasty collapsed and was soon replaced by the Republic of China, with Sun as provisional president, and later on Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 as the first president. The revolution and new political ideas no doubt had had an impact on the young mind of Chao, though family and personal matters were still the main concern in this early stage of his life.

Tragedy struck Chao, in the year after the founding of the Republic, when his mother died unexpectedly, leaving him her last words, "promise me to be a good man."¹ His father then sent Chao and his sister to a Christian boarding school, which was supported by Presbyterian missionaries. Chao had stayed there for ten long years, where he learned

¹ 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》（台灣：中華歸主協會，1982），頁3。

to take care of himself and acquired the fundamental teachings of Christianity. In his later writings he always remembered his mother fondly but had harsh words for his uncaring father.

Chao obtained a Christian college education after graduation from the mission school. He first entered Hangchow Christian College 杭州之江大學 in 1925 and then transferred to Ginling University 金陵大學 in Nanjing 南京 in 1928. For Chao, the college years were exciting, challenging, and yet also trying, frustrating, and marked by physical illnesses. The first intellectual challenge came from modern science and liberal thoughts. At Hangchow Christian College, Chao became a "modern intellectual" of the May-fourth type: patriotic, anti-imperialist and pro-science. The Hangchow Christian College (later Hangchow Christian University), which was affiliated with the Presbyterian mission in China, had provided a liberal environment for young Chao to absorb new ideas and new intellectual stimulation. He was greatly influenced by western philosophers and liberal thinkers, and had gradually developed doubts and skepticism towards Christianity.

Like other students of the May-fourth generation in the 1920s, Chao was convinced that modern science held the future for China as well as humankind. Although he accepted Christianity in secondary school, he now turned to scientific thoughts and liberalism for inspiration. Popular slogans like "religion is superstition" (宗教是迷信), "The space of science is expanding and the space of religion is shrinking" (科學的領域擴大, 就是宗教的領域縮小) and "all true scholars reject religion and all religious believers are not scholars" (學者無不反宗教, 信宗教者不是學者) were not offensive to him.²

Like many other young Chinese intellectuals, Chao was also concerned with China's social and political developments, such as the rising tide of nationalism and the anti-Christian, anti-imperialism movement. One of his students said Chao had shown interest in the student movement as early as 1919 when he was only a teenager.³ He even had contacts with members from political parties of various background, including the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).⁴

² 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁90。

³ 鄭更榮：《趙君影博士之宗教觀》(Los Angeles：中華歸主協會，1993)，頁15。

⁴ 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁91。

In the first two years at Hangchow Christian College, he had lost interest in Christian faith, though he attended religious services on campus occasionally, including a religious meeting led by a well-known pastor from Beijing, Wang Mingdao. Wang became a good friend of Chao years later, though Chao was not impressed with the content of Wang's sermon at this time. He commented, "Wang was a good speaker with a perfect (Beijing) accent. But his sermon was not suitable for college students."⁵

Another crisis Chao had to face was a severe illness that could be described as a brush with death. When Chao was at Ginling University he was infected with tuberculosis he therefore was confined to hospital for a sustained period, preoccupied with the thought of death.⁶ It was here in Nanjing that he finally returned to Christianity and committed himself to Christ. Chao had acquainted with Christianity at the mission school in his childhood years, and was baptized by the sprinkling of water into the Southern Presbytery. However, according to his writings, he did not truly understand the meaning of baptism and Christianity before he turned 25 in 1931, during his recovery from tuberculosis.

In January 1931, Chao attended a series of evangelistic meetings of the Shanghai Bethel Evangelistic Band 上海伯特利佈道團 led by Andrew Gih 計志文 in Huanyin 淮陰, Jiangsu 江蘇. Gih had emerged in the early 1930s as a powerful preacher and revivalist in China. As leader of the Bethel Evangelistic Band based in Shanghai, Gih and several of his colleagues such as John Sung and Wang Zai 王載 organized evangelistic and revival meetings all over China, drawing heavy crowds to them wherever they went. Chao had attended the first meeting but was not impressed. As a self-appointed May-fourth intellectual grounded in scientific thought and rationalism, he regarded the preacher too emotional in style and too "shallow" in thought. Unexpectedly, in the last meeting of the week-long program, he was struck by the emphatic call of the preacher, "All men are sinners, including those who have received a university education. Still they are sinners, and ought to repent!" Chao was directly touched by God in that evening; and after some inner struggle, he decided to come up to the altar, confess his sins publicly, and ask forgiveness of God.⁷

⁵ 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁 92。

⁶ 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁 104 ~ 107。

⁷ 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁 204 ~ 207。

Recalling his conversion experience fifty years later, Chao remarked in 1981,

When I was growing up, the knowledge that I received from the pastor's religious teaching was that 'God is in heaven.' This is the fundamentalist teaching that I received when I was in high school. Then, during my college days, I learned from the Liberals that 'God lives in my heart.' In January of 1931, I was on my knees confessing my sins with bitter tears before the Lord. I was praying to a God who is highly exalted! His only Son died for me on the cross, resurrected, rose to heaven, and he will return to sit on the judgment seat to judge all. From this point of view, the Lord Jesus is transcendent, external. I prayed to the Lord of heaven, who is Christ, and asked him to come and live in the center of my heart. Then whenever I wanted to know if I was truly born again, I would always confirm the evidence of my salvation with verses of scriptures from the Bible. I also experienced Christ living in my heart as his life became my life."⁸

Chao's conversion marked the beginning of a new purpose and direction in his life. From that time onward, he had become a devoted Christian and was committed to evangelical work and Christian studies.

III. THE CAMPUS CRUSADER: CHAO AND THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE STUDENT MOVEMENT

At the time, most Christian evangelists in Republican China had focused mainly on Chinese peasants in the countryside, or ordinary workers in the cities. Calvin Chao had his mission on a special targeted group in China at the very beginning of his Christian ministry. From the mid-1930s and on, after a few years of being an itinerant preacher, he had committed himself to student evangelism, especially college student. He was actively involved in the Christian student movement, organizing university student Christian fellowships, and building Christian student alliances. In the 1940s he became a leading "campus crusader" and pioneered the "Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship" (IVCF) movement in China. Chao's students focused career makes him distinctive among other active evangelists and revivalists in wartime China.

In Chinese church history, Calvin Chao's role in Christian students movement has gone unrecognized. The few books that have touched upon IVCF in China are works by David Howard Adeney, or about

⁸ Chao's own words, translated by Stephen Liang, in *Memorial Service Program of Dr Calvin Chao* (n.p, n.d.), 15.

Adeney.⁹ David Adeney and his wife Ruth were missionaries in China in the 1930s; they had been actively involved in campus ministry throughout their lifetime. A common perception among Chinese Christians is that Adeney was the pioneer of the IVCF and college students evangelism in China. But in Adeney's own words, Calvin Chao was an important moving force in organizing the student fellowship. According to another contemporary, Chao was not only a co-worker in the Chinese Christian student movement, but a dynamic speaker and organizational leader.¹⁰ More recently, in a study of evangelists and revivalists in modern China, Liang Jialin 梁家麟 (Leung Ka Lun) has pointed out that Calvin Chao, though often overshadowed by his missionary partners deserves more credit in the history of the Christian student movement.¹¹

After his conversion, or rather spiritual rebirth, Chao was overwhelmed with the desire to serve God as a full-time church worker; yet he did not focus his ministry on campus immediately after his graduation from university. Chao first worked as a school teacher in Manchuria, northeastern China, for a brief period; then became an itinerant preacher in Jiangsu, receiving irregular income. In 1933 he returned to teach in a mission school in northern Jiangsu, where he worked as English instructor and Bible teacher, working extra hard in the latter area.¹²

During these few years Chao fully engaged himself in enriching his knowledge of Christianity, and developing his spiritual life. He studied the Bible, read books that related to systematic theology, and different Bible commentaries. He read translated works of authors like Andrew Murray, R.A. Torrey, Ruth Paxson, Jessie Penn-Lewis, Dwight L. Moody, Charles G. Finney and others. From his study, Chao had developed a conservative stand in Christian theology that could be labeled as Christian Fundamentalism.¹³ The theological ideas that he received from these

⁹ Carolyn Armitage, *Reaching for the Goal: the Life Story of David Adeney* (Wheaton, IL.: H. Shaw Publishers, 1993), Chinese translation 黃從真譯：《艾得理傳——全力以赴的一生》（台北：校園書房出版社，1994）。Works by Adeney include *China: Christian Students Face the Revolution* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973) and *Christian Students in a Communist Society* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1951).

¹⁰ 黃從真譯：《艾得理傳》，頁131。

¹¹ 梁家麟：《華人傳道與奮興佈道家》（香港：建道神學院，1999），頁41～42。

¹² 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁223。

¹³ The core of Chao's fundamentalism was the belief in biblical inerrancy, spiritualism, and

works could be summarized as follows: (1) That God is transcendent and external; (2) that faith in God is the most fundamental principle in a Christian life; (3) that personal salvation depends not on righteous deeds but on God's grace; (4) that spiritual growth is a result of living in faith and constant prayer; and (5) that the Bible is the only source of God's revelation, and the Bible is always right in its entirety. These convictions differentiated him from the liberal views of modern theologians at Yenching and Ginling, the two leading theological schools in China subjected to the Yenching and Ginling universities.

In 1933, Chao met a young Chinese Christian woman from the Southern Baptist mission at a retreat for church workers in Lushan 廬山; they soon fell in love with each other and got married the next year. She was Zhang Xingchu 張性初 whom is later known as Mrs. Faith Chao.¹⁴

When Chao decided to enter Christian ministry in the 1930s, he followed the path of the itinerant evangelists and revivalists such as John Sung and Andrew Gih. These evangelists had received no formal theological training; they went from place to place, province to province, to preach at churches, schools and retreat meetings.¹⁵ According to Chao's own memoir, he considered himself no eloquent speaker; he had no dramatic acts and demonstration on stage like that of John Sung. However, Chao's co-workers, including David Adeney, had very different impression of him. According to a colleague of Adeney, Chao was an effective organizer, and also a powerful and stimulating speaker.¹⁶ Another usual eyewitness at rallies led by Chao, Rev. Yu Ligong 于力工 said:

In delivering his sermon, Chao was extremely sincere, enthusiastic, and highly "stirring." He was sweating all the time, wiping his sweat-covered head and face while preaching. The audience followed him naturally, and by the time of conclusion, his sermon would reach the climax and the audience erupted in emotion like a volcano was about to burst and a hurricane was to hit.¹⁷

conservative morality. For a discussion of his fundamentalist ideas see 鄭更榮：《趙君影博士之宗教觀》，四至五章。

¹⁴ Mrs. Faith Chao is still living in Los Angeles and has been confined to wheelchair for some few years.

¹⁵ 梁家麟：《華人傳道與奮興佈道家》，頁 43。

¹⁶ Adeney, *op.cit.*, 121, 131.

¹⁷ 梁家麟：《華人傳道與奮興佈道家》，頁 46。

The 1930s was a period of trials and tribulations not only to China, but to Chao and his new family as well. He quit teaching in Manchuria after the Japanese had occupied the territory in 1931, then gave up also his teaching job in northern Jiangsu, and became a "self-employed" full-time evangelist without regular income. He relied on the donations of churches or schools that invited him to speak at evangelistic or revival meetings. Sometimes there might be no invitation for months. For instance, in autumn 1935 Chao had no income for two and a half months.¹⁸ He recalled the life of his family in those difficult years,

We did not have a set salary. We looked only to the Lord, through His children's timely provisions. This was not an easy path, sometimes we faced difficulties and even came to the point where we were not able to provide for our daily meals. Sometimes we just had a bowl of porridge and our son only drank some water with sugar.¹⁹

Besides the family's financial difficulty, Chao also had to face crisis, such as his relapse of tuberculosis, and outbreak of war between China and Japan. In his memoir, Chao considered this period "a time of thorns and trials but beneficial to the development of his personality and spirit, and in particular, the strengthening of his faith in God."²⁰ He had written many poems and songs during this period; some of them such as "O Lord, I Love Thee" (主啊我心愛你) and "Faithful to the Lord" (盡心為主) have become popular hymns in Chinese Christian churches down to the present day. A well-known Christian leader in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia in the 1950s and 1960s, Rev. Stephen C.T. Chan 陳終道 recalling his revival experience in a rally led by Calvin Chao and Yu Ligong at Fudan University 復旦大學 in Shanghai, said "the songs (by Calvin Chao) led by Yu were so touching that my heart had melted like wax upon fire."²¹

The fear of war had finally become a dire reality for the Chinese people living in China proper. The Japanese invasion of China in July 1937 initiated the eight-year Sino-Japanese war; it had great impact on Chinese politics and society. Both public and private life of the Christian community was also disrupted. At the beginning of the war, Chao continued to be an itinerant preacher, but he found invitations and financial support dwindling. As war wore on and Japanese occupied area

¹⁸ 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁 281。

¹⁹ *Memorial Service Program of Dr Calvin Chao*, 16.

²⁰ *Memorial Service Program of Dr Calvin Chao*, 16.

²¹ 陳終道：《遊子遲遲歸》（香港：宣道出版社，2000），頁 72。

expanded, Chao's evangelistic activities were also restricted. He began looking for opportunities in the western region that was still under the control of the Chinese Nationalist government. While pondering the possibility of moving westward, Chao began to see that millions of Chinese refugees were fleeing the Japanese occupied territories, flocking to western cities like Chongqing 重慶, Chengdu 成都, Guilin 桂林 and Kunming 昆明. Among them were university professors and students who wanted to continue their education during war time. By the end of the 1930s, Chao recognised his new challenge – spread the gospel among intellectuals and students. Having once been an intellectual influenced by western liberalism and rationalism, Chao was able to understand the students' patriotic zeal and anti-Japanese sentiments. Therefore, in early 1940s, he decided to be a campus crusader, while the war was still going on.

In the 1930s, though evangelists like Wang Mingdao, John Sung and Andrew Gih, had made speeches among secondary school and college students, Christian leaders of YMCA, YWCA and the left-wing Christian student groups were also active in promoting social activism, yet Chao was the first one that had entirely devoted his time and effort to student evangelism. With the support of China Inland Mission, and David Adeney's Inter-Varsity Fellowship (based in America), Chao founded a Christian student fellowships alliance in 1942. He was the first person to organize Chinese Christian student movement in such a systematical way.

Helped by the Quakers, Chao first began his Christian ministry among college students in Guizhou 貴州, southwestern China, in 1937, not long after the outbreak of war. His endeavor was supported by an American mission organization, the Chinese National Evangelical Crusade 中國佈道十字軍 (later the Chinese National Evangelical Commission/Church, CNEC). Soon the China Inland Mission (CIM), which was under the directorship of Duncan McRoberts, also backed the work with manpower and resources.²² In 1945, Chao invited college student fellowships of different universities to form the China Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in Chongqing, then organized the first summer retreat in the name of IVCF.

²² 梁家麟：《華人傳道與奮興佈道家》，頁 39。

By then, the Adeneys were in America. After the war, they returned to China immediately in 1946; that was four years after their departure. Adeney recalled activities of the IVCF in the year he had just come back:

in January 1946 I flew over the 'hump' from India to Chungking (Chongqing 重慶) to take part in a remarkable spiritual movement among the thousands of university students who were crowded into makeshift quarters in that war-time capital. Scores of students attended a conference, and together we slept on the floor of the gymnasium in a university just outside the city. Under the leadership of Calvin Chao, a gifted Chinese evangelist, the China IVCF had come into being the previous summer, and the spirit of revival had spread from college to college. This first winter vacation conference was marked by tremendous fervor as new Christians were welcomed into the kingdom of God. In between the main meetings small groups gathered to pray for non-Christian friends, and day by day the Christian Fellowships in the universities of west China increased in numbers.²³

The college student Christian fellowship organized by Chao and Adeney in the post-war period was an evangelical movement that emphasized personal salvation, spiritual development, and evangelistic activities. Other Christian activists among college students during this time were primarily from the liberal school of theology, among them were Wu Yaozong, Deng Yuzhi 鄧裕志 of YMCA and YWCA respectively. They emphasized Christian participation in social reforms and national reconstruction. Politically, they inclined toward the left and were sympathetic to the Communists. Another group of Christian students, under the leadership of Gu Ziren 顧子仁, were also active in social service and politics.

Though facing such political current, Chao and Adeney adopted a very different approach and philosophy. They believed spreading the gospel and spiritual revival were the most important events in campus ministry, and so had organized inter-varsity fellowships, retreats and gatherings for Christian college students. Chao was a good speaker and a talented leader. He traveled campus to campus to deliver sermons and speeches that focused mainly on the following topics: (1) The Christian perspective on cosmology, (2) The Christian perspective on life, and (3) Why I believe in God.²⁴

During the war, Chao was frequently invited to give speech in evangelical and revival meetings by Christian groups on campus. In those

²³ David H. Adeney, *China: Christian Students Face the Revolution*, 20.

²⁴ 趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁 138。

meetings he spoke to thousands of college students, using the same message focused on topics mentioned above. Like evangelists who had a fundamentalist background, such as Andrew Gih and Wang Mingdao, Chao emphasized personal salvation and spiritual growth instead of social service and national reconstruction. However, unlike Gih and Wang, who preached simple doctrines centering on sin and deliverance, Chao's sermons appealed more to the intellectual and rational senses of the young students, who were products of the May-fourth movement. Though Chao did not give dramatic sermons like that of John Sung, he did give sentimental speeches sometimes.²⁵ Chao believed that when giving message, one should not rely on dramatic expression, but the "break-down power" of the Spirit. Following the evangelical-spiritual tradition, he emphasized faith and prayer; and this was in line with contemporary itinerant evangelists and revivalists.

In early 1940s, when the war was still going on, Chao and family stayed in Guizhou 貴州 in the employment of CNEC. He moved to Chengdu 成都 in Sichuan province, where more than a dozen universities and colleges had been moved from northern and eastern China, bringing into the city thousands of "refugee students." Several Christian universities had borrowed the campus from West China Union University, as to reinstating their academic programs, while others found new sites as temporary campuses. Chao, accompanied with Yu Ligong and others, saw the huge influx of college students to Chengdu and neighboring Chongqing as a great challenge for Christian evangelists.

Chao's student evangelical campaign was supported by Paul Contento 孔保羅 and other missionaries of the China Inland Mission, and later it was also joined by Yu Ligong, Zhang Xingsong 張行松 and the Adeneys.²⁶ It is said that Chao had converted thousands of Chinese students to Christianity even before the Adeneys' return to China.²⁷ Some converted student had later on become well-known Christian leaders in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia.²⁸

²⁵ 于力工：《夜盡天明——于力工看中國福音震撼》(Berkeley：作者自印，1998)，頁257～258。

²⁶ 黃從真譯：《艾得理傳》，頁114、121。

²⁷ 黃從真譯：《艾得理傳》，頁117。

²⁸ For example, Rev. Stephen Chan 陳終道 in Hong Kong and Singapore, Wang Xinghun 王醒魂, Chen Wufu 陳五福 and Luo Dong 羅東 in Taiwan。參陳終道：《遊子遲遲歸》，頁72～73。趙君影：《我的宗教經驗》，頁139。A well-known Christian leader in Hong Kong,

In 1945, Chao was elected the first secretary general of the National Christian Students Alliance, which was formed immediately after the end of war. Two years later when the International Christian Students Fellowship was established, Chao was appointed concurrently as its secretary general for the Asian region; and in his capacity as secretary general, he was invited in 1947 by the International Christian Students Fellowship to America to give speech in evangelical meetings throughout the continent. The American tour had broaden Chao's experience in the ministry in western society; he especially the needs of Chinese students who were studying oversea. This experience motivated his "Chinese For Christ" movement in America a decade later, when he and his family decided to immigrate to the United States, after seven exile years in Southeast Asia.

IV. BUILDING A CHINESE "DENOMINATION": CHAO AND THE "CHINA FOR CHRIST" MOVEMENT OUTSIDE CHINA

National Government, the ruling party in 1920s and 1930s China, was closely linked with anti-Communism and Christianity; for its leader, Chiang Kaishek 蔣介石, and many of his cabinet members were Christians, or had obtained their education in the west. These leaders included H.H. Kung 孔祥熙, T.V. Soong 宋子文, C.T. Wang 王正廷, David Yui 余日章.

Some Christians even considered the "golden decade" of the Nanjing government as a period of "Christianization of China," and the New Life Movement 新生活運動 in the mid-1930s a "marriage of Confucious and Christian cultures."

Though Calvin Chao had contacts with different political groups during his college years at Hangchow and Ginling, he had not join any political party throughout his life. Like many contemporary Christian leaders, Chao was anti-Communism; yet this stance was based on his belief, rather than on political reasons. First of all, Communism is atheistic. It denies the existence of God, takes materialism and economic

Rev. Philip Teng 滕近輝, was also converted in the campus revival meetings in Chongqing, though he did not mention Chao as the speaker of the summer retreat, in which he had recommitted himself to Christ. See 《事奉的人生》 (*A Life of Ministry: Essays Presented to Philip Teng on His 60th Birthday*) (Hong Kong: China Alliance Press, 1982), ed. by Ronald Y.K. Fung and Carver T. Yu, 398-99.

determinism the only shaping forces of human history. This is in opposition to Christian fundamentalism, which is centered on God and his revelation in the Bible. Moreover, Chao considered Communism a radical social movement controlled by a few political leaders, it was not truly democratic. It was also an intrusive philosophy imported from Europe and Russia, and its collective form of society was not suitable for modern China.

Because of his uncompromising attitude towards Communism, many Christians have looked upon Chao as a Nationalist or Guomindang 國民黨 (GMD, KMT) loyalist. But Chao and his newly organized Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) tried very hard to keep a neutral stance in politics in the closing years of the war. Chao, Adeney and other leaders of the IVCF claimed that their only concern was the spiritual welfare of Chinese people, and they were not interested in politics. However, despite their declared neutrality, the IVCF was branded by the public and other Christian organizations, such as the YMCA and the Student Christian Movement (SCM), as the "tools of the GMD."²⁹ Adeney said, "during the period immediately preceding the Communist takeover, the IVCF was denounced by the more progressive students who charged them with being reactionary, a hindrance to the progress of the revolution."³⁰ On the other hand, Chao, Adeney and other Christian workers at the universities were also suspected by GMD. Adeney described the predicament as being "caught in the middle."³¹ As a strong critic of Chinese Communism, Chao was perceived by Chinese Communists as an "informal" ally of the National government. So when the civil war between the GMD and CCP was coming to an end with imminent Communist victory, Chao knew that he had to leave China.

Calvin Chao decided to leave China in 1948, a year before the Communist had tookover the mainland. He and his family first immigrated to the British colony of Hong Kong, where they had briefly stayed for a couple of years. In Hong Kong he rejoined the CNEC and supervised its operation, including, the launching of Peiling Bible College 培靈學院. In 1951, Chao and family moved further down south to Singapore. His co-workers at the IVCF, David and Ruth Adeney, continued to stay in China for student evangelism until the mid-1950s.

²⁹ See Oi Ki Ling, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries in China, 1945-1952* (London: Associated University Press, 1999), 84.

³⁰ Adeney, *China: Christian Students Face the Revolution*, 23.

³¹ Adeney, *China: Christian Students Face the Revolution*, 23.

There were several paradoxical features in Calvin Chao's Christian ministry after he left China in 1948. First, Chao was not a trained pastor had little formal theological education, yet he made great effort in building seminaries and theological education. He was an English teacher after he graduated from college. However, after the "reborn" experience in 1931, he became first a part-time evangelist, then a full-time Christian worker without going through formal seminary training. To enter was not unusual among evangelists and revivalists to enter service by calling and faith, and by self-education. Famous preachers, such as John Sung and Andrew Gih, had not completed formal theological education, became very popular and successful evangelists. In fact, many evangelists and revivalists of this time, as Liang Jialin (Leung Ka Lun) asserts, exhibited an anti-intellectual, anti-seminary and anti-denomination attitude. Leaders like John Sung and Calvin Chao, who were well educated, (Sung with a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Ohio State University and Chao with a B.A. in English from Ginling University) were unusual among Chinese Christian workers. Many Chinese pastors and preachers did not have secondary school diplomas and few had university degrees. They usually entered Christian service after three or four years of seminary training.

To those evangelists and revivalists who were well-educated, theological training in seminaries might do more harm than help in preparing the full-time Christian workers. Seminary education was being looked down on as most of the students enrolled were those who were not qualified for university admission. Wang Mingdao, John Sung and Calvin all held similar views towards seminaries.³² Many evangelists believed they could understand God's will by going directly to the Bible. They even had severe criticisms of churches which were established by seminaries, no matter they were of the liberal or denominational backgrounds or not.

Paradoxically, building seminaries, Bible colleges and founding training centers for evangelistic work had become a very important part in these evangelists and revivalists' career later on. Andrew Gih, Calvin Chao and Yu Ligong all became founders of theological seminaries, both in China and outside China. For Chao, this endeavor had begun immediately after he left China. He established the Peiling College in Hong Kong in

³² For a brief review of their view on seminary standards of the time, see 梁家麟：《華人傳道與奮興佈道家》，頁 18 ~ 20。

1948,³³ the Singapore Theological Seminary (now Singapore Bible College) in 1952, the Youth Gospel Center in Manila in 1954, and finally the Chinese For Christ Theological Seminary in Los Angeles in 1985.

Another paradoxical feature of Chao's ministry laid on his relationship with the foreign missions. Chao emphasized non-reliance on foreign missions and self support. He often mentioned his practices of "faith living" in his books and memoirs. But in fact he had to find employment at the CNCC, both his student evangelistic campaign in China and his Christian services in Hong Kong and Singapore were supported by foreign missions. The paradoxical relationship between the independence he sought in Chinese evangelism and the continuous dependence on foreign missions and missionaries (from CNCC primarily) should be noted.

The third paradoxical feature could be seen in Chao's effort in planting and building church. On the one hand he advocated detachment or disengagement from denominationism, but on the other hand he was building a cluster of Chinese churches under the name of "Chinese For Christ," that resembled a denominational structure. In the following pages we shall first look at Chao's view on denominations, then attempt to analyze his "Chinese For Christ" movement in the context of inter-denominationalism and the Chinese independent church movement.

Chao was a Presbyterian in his early years, and his wife Faith was a Southern Baptist. But after he had decided to be a full-time Christian worker, he choosed to be a self-employed evangelist without denominational affiliation. He was not against missions or denominations per se, but preferred rather to be independent. Chao did not clearly say that he wanted to adopt the "three-self" concept (self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating) in his Christian ministry. And he seemed to get along well with foreign missionaries of the CIM and later the IVCF. He knew that some missionaries had prejudice against Chinese culture, and some of them exercised their power of control through resources distribution and allocation. Most of the independent evangelists and revivalists of his time such as John Sung, Andrew Gih, Wang Mingdao and others had demonstrated a feeling of reluctance, if not a

³³ According to information provided by Dr. Chan Kim-kwong (陳劍光), who is familiar with Chao's connection with the CNEC, Chao was employed by the CNEC as supervisor of the mission in Hong Kong in 1948; and the Peiling College was established by the CNEC.

condescending attitude, toward the "established churches" of the mainline denominations. In part it was because of the rituals and regulations of these denominations, and in part it was because of foreign control.³⁴

The latter issue easily became a power struggle within the church leadership. Marcus Cheng, a contemporary Chinese Christian leader of Chao, whose relationship with missionary co-workers turned quite sour. He fought bitterly with his foreign co-worker over resources and power of control in his organization and seminary.³⁵ Though Chao also had expressed feelings of Chinese nationalism in his early years and he was quite aware of the problem of imperialist encroachment in China after the May-thirtieth incident his preference to become an independent Christian worker, in my opinion, was not rooted in "anti-foreignism" or "anti-denominationalism." Rather, it was because of the nature of Christian work that he had chosen for his career. First, as an itinerant preacher who received invitations and free donations from a variety of church groups, he had to be "non-denominational." Second, as leader of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship with members came from different church or denominational backgrounds, he had to be "inter-denominational." After Chao had left China, again, almost all his work in seminaries or Gospel centers was either a cooperative venture, or a coalition movement of different church groups and denominations.

Now the question arises: is the "Chinese For Christ" an independent church movement or an "Inter-denominational" operation? The Chinese For Christ (CFC) movement, in essence, was a continued endeavor of Chao in student evangelism in China. When he and his family immigrated to the United States in the mid 1950s, he found thousands of Chinese students stranded in America after the Communist takeover of the Chinese mainland. Many of these Chinese students came to the United States for further education during the Republican period. They had not intended to stay permanently. Yet as the political circumstance of the time changed (i.e., the civil war resumed after WWII ended, and then the

³⁴ For a discussion of this aspect of the Chinese evangelists and revivalists, see 梁家麟：《華人傳道與奮興佈道家》，頁 29 ~ 40。

³⁵ For Marcus Cheng's relationships with foreign missionaries, see Daniel Bays' unpublished paper on Cheng, presented at the "Missions, Nationalism, and End of Empire." Conference organized by the Currents in World Christianity Project at Cambridge University, September 6-9, 2000. Chao commented on Cheng's bitter relationship with foreign missions thus, "Because of his fervent patriotism, he (Chen) had not been in good terms with foreign missionaries." See 趙君影：《漫談五十年來中國的教會與政治》（台北：中華歸主協會，1991），頁 32 ~ 33。

Communist victory in 1949), their plans and their fate had to changed too. Many decided to take advantage of the new immigration law that allowed the Chinese "refugee students" to settle down in America. Therefore, Chinese churches in America in the 1950s were filled with these student immigrants.

Calvin Chao had known these students well since he worked as secretary-general in the IVCF. He then grasped the opportunity to spread the gospel among this particular group. Chao was supported by some of the returned missionaries from China and former colleagues of the Chinese University Student Fellowship. The evangelistic mission to Chinese students in America started in 1956. It lasted for more then four years. Then in 1959, the Chinese For Christ was incorporated in Los Angeles. The trustee board of the CFC, Inc. consisted of twelve American and Chinese Christian leaders including Chao's former colleague Yu Ligong; and Chao served as the supervisor and director. The CFC established a string of churches for Chinese students and other Chinese-Americans in several Chinese-concentrated cities such as New York, Berkeley, San Jose, Haywood, and Chicago.³⁶

The CFC, and Calvin Chao, helped to organize these Chinese churches in the initial period. And over the years most of the CFC churches have become independent, both administratively and financially. The trustee board of the CFC, Inc. has remained a supervisory body of these CFC churches, and there are regular exchanges of news and information between CFC and the churches, and among CFC churches. There are joint retreats and conferences sporadically. Calvin Chao remained the honored president of the CFC movement and respected founder-leader of these CFC churches till his death in 1996.

It is fair to say that the CFC movement, which has been started in the 1950s, is a non-denominational evangelistic movement among Chinese students in America. The trustee board comprised members from different mission organizations and from different denominational backgrounds. They came together under the leadership of Calvin Chao. They had a common goal – to convert the Chinese students in America to Christianity (Chinese for Christ); and they shared a common belief – fundamentalist evangelicalism. Just like the independent churches in China (Wang Mingdao's Christian Tabernacle for example), Chao's CFC churches

³⁶ See 鄭更榮：《趙君影博士之宗教觀》，頁 18 ~ 19。

emphasized basic Biblical teaching such as the concept of trinity, salvation through grace, and Inerrancy of the Bible.

After the war, mainline denominations in the United States such as the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists were moving slowly toward the liberal wing in theology, much to the dismay of the conservative and fundamentalist such as Calvin Chao. In order to keep these CFC congregations in the realm of evangelicalism, Chao saw the need to train and educate pastors and preachers of fundamentalism and conservative theology, hence the beginning of the CFC Theological Seminary in 1985. Even though Chao had always said the CFC movement did not aim to build a "Chinese denomination" such as the The Chinese Church of Christ 中華基督教會, the tendency of "involution" was apparent in the movement. However, the CFC Theological Seminary could not enrol students who were from the CFC churches only; it had to open its door to students from various denominations, for the number of CFC churches was limited. In other words, the Seminary has to be inter-denominational in order to sustain itself and survive. The two-pronged effort contradicted as well as reinforced each other, but throughout Chao's tenure the internal tension was kept in a delicate balance and had not erupted into open conflict or dispute.

V. CONCLUSION

Calvin Chao's life (1906-1996), covers almost the entire twentieth century. It was a period of revolts and revolutions (political as well as cultural), warlordism, incessant warfare, and intensified imperialism, followed by the war with Japan, World War II, and the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists. Like everyone else, Chao went through the turmoil, the sufferings, the ideological and political struggles of these chaotic decades. As a Chinese Christian he was caught between dividing forces, both politically and theologically. Some of his contemporaries who had made their political stance explicit, such as the pro-Communist Wu Yaozong and the pro-Nationalist Hollington K. Tong, yet Chao and many others still wanted to keep politics and religion separate. But in those tense years, very few were able to remain a neutral stance. Most of the social gospellers (the Christian leaders of the Ys, for example) that emphasized social welfare, charitable service and education, had been drawn deeply into the political mess, and at the end, a clear political declaration was always unavoidable. For those who emphasized

spiritual development over political loyalty such as Wang Mingdao and Calvin Chao, the public political declaration never came. However, when the Nationalist-Communist confrontation was about to end, they voted with their feet. Chao left China and moved into non-Communist territory, and Wang stayed and continued his work in China. The two friends had lived in two separate worlds since then.

After 1949, Chao moved from Hong Kong to Singapore, Manila, and finally settled in America. He had participated in different kinds of Christian ministry: planting church, building Gospel centers, setting up Bible schools and seminaries. Wang Mingdao, who had remained in China, was kept in prison for not cooperating with the Communist-operated Three-Self Patriotic church. But the bond between these two close friends was not broken in the long period of separation. A phone call had linked the two together again after Wang Mingdao was released from jail, and was living in Shanghai in the 1980s.³⁷ Their friendship was renewed by the bond of their unyielding belief in Christian fundamentalism and Chinese evangelism.

³⁷ In 1990, I personally witnessed Chao was on the phone with Wang Mingdao at the CFC Theological Seminary. He was in tears talking to and sharing with his old friend.

ABSTRACT

This article examines the life and ministry of Calvin Chao (1906-1996), fundamentalist Chinese Christian evangelist, educator and theologian, focussing on his career in three phases:

(1) Chao's role in organizing the Christian student movement in war-time China;

(2) Chao's Christian ministry in Hong Kong, Singapore, Philippine and the United States after 1948;

(3) Chao's "Chinese For Christ" movement in America which led to the founding of the Chinese For Christ Theological Seminary in Los Angeles in 1985.

撮 要

本文探討趙君影之生平、思想與事業。趙氏是二十世紀中國基督徒基要信仰的代表人物，早年在國內從事學生佈道工作，成立大學生團契，與艾得理同工。趙氏於1948年後南來香港，建立培靈學院，又在新加坡和馬尼拉等東南亞地區，開辦聖經學院及展開其他佈道工作；五十年代後期舉家移民美國，在新大陸推行「中華歸主」運動，並在美國洛杉磯建立中華歸主神學院。趙氏於1996年去世。