

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

TEACHING THE DOCTRINE OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP IN A CHINESE CONTEXT: A
WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates various methods of teaching church fellowship to a Chinese audience. While appropriation of Christian doctrine properly belongs only to the work of the Holy Spirit, he calls Christians to teach his truth to others. The author integrated the work of Western educators in China with interviews from men who have experience teaching Chinese Christians. The points of agreement and disagreement between the two groups are discussed with specific application to church fellowship, all the while attempting to contextualize church fellowship for the Chinese.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
UNDERLYING PRESUPPOSITIONS	3
The Role of the Holy Spirit	3
Church Fellowship	4
The History of the Chinese Church	4
Chinese Culture	6
RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES	8
FINDINGS	9
Limitations	9
General Overview	10
The Relational Nature of Church Fellowship	11
Relationship with God	13
Relationship with God's Word	14
Relationship with other Christians	15
The Impact of Collectivism	18
Emphasis on the Positive	19
Indirect Communication	20
Face	21
Teaching Methodologies	22
Questions	22
Case Studies	23
Written Summaries	24
Repetition	25

Qualities of a Teacher	26
Authority	28
Personal Relationships	31
Expertise	33
Other Qualities of the Teacher	34
CONCLUSION	35
Overview	35
For Further Research	38
The Shepherd’s Clear Voice	38
APPENDIX 1.1	40
APPENDIX 1.2	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	70

Introduction

Jesus says in the Good Shepherd discourse, “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd”¹ (Jn 10:16 NIV). With these words, the Good Shepherd calls his people both to handle his Word with all earnestness and also to unite with others under him. Still, he also must bring the other sheep, just as he brought his original audience into the flock. Once he brings those sheep into the flock, they continue to listen to his voice and follow their shepherd.

The teaching and practice of church fellowship is a sincere effort to listen to the voice of the Shepherd and ignore all other voices that attempt to lead away from the truth. Listening to his voice in everything unites the sheep under their one Shepherd. Finally, all who listen to their Savior—who trust he is the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep—will be gathered into one flock. In heaven, believers will no longer stray from the clear words of their Savior.

For now, though, divisions do exist. Therefore believers point wandering sheep to the clear voice of the Savior in his Word. Jesus says, “When [the shepherd] has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice” (Jn 10:4,5). After the Shepherd brings the sheep into the flock, he leads them. They listen to his voice but shun anyone who tries to steal them from his flock.

¹ (2011) New International Version. All subsequent quotations of Scripture will also use this translation.

Jesus' sheep live all around the world, so the enemies go around the world in an effort to destroy the flock. In China, the devil has employed his usual tactics to drown out the clear voice of the Savior. He has ensnared some with false religions of works. He has spread the lie that Christianity is not suitable for Chinese culture. He has used secular government to suppress the Savior's voice. Although it may appear to some that the devil won, the Lord is still growing his flock in China. As the Chinese Christians flourish, Satan seeks to attack the church from within. In China, as in the Church around the world, the devil is attempting to trick the flock into adding other voices to the clear Word of God. Within the church itself, he tries to convince Christians to prioritize unity within the flock over the Word of their Shepherd.

In Christian love, believers point the flock around the world to follow the Shepherd's voice. In every place, this brings its own unique challenges, as other sheep have distinct backgrounds and ways of thinking. The gospel is contrary to every culture established on earth. China is no exception. Nevertheless, these sheep, too, must follow their Good Shepherd and listen to his voice. Other sheep lovingly direct them to follow the voice of their Savior and no other voice. The question arises, then, as to how believers can point these other sheep to their Savior. What methods have worked with the flock "from every nation, tribe, people, and language" (Rev 7:9), and with the Chinese flock in particular?

Along with the Holy Christian Church, the Chinese Christians must listen to the voice of the Lord who calls them, even though many false voices try to entice them. This paper will focus on particular teaching methods that may be useful for a Western teacher in a Chinese setting. It is the author's hope to begin a dialogue of how best to direct the Lord's flock in China to drown out the voice of others and listen only to their Shepherd.

This paper seeks to answer the question: How can the doctrine of church fellowship best be taught to the Chinese? To do so, it is first necessary to look into the historical and cultural setting of the Chinese people. A few common characteristics shared by the Lord's sheep in China may prove insightful for Western believers who wish to point others to the clear voice of their Shepherd.

Underlying Presuppositions: Defining Terms and Background Information

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Some may argue that this paper is superfluous, as only God can lead people to a proper understanding of church fellowship. As with any doctrine of Scripture, church fellowship "is foolishness" to those who do not have the Spirit of God, because it is "discerned only through the Spirit" (1 Co 2:14). Nevertheless, Christ from commanded to teach church fellowship, as he commissioned his church to "go and make disciples of all nations, ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19,20). While it is true that God the Holy Spirit works a proper understanding of his Word supernaturally, he does not do so immediately. Rather, he works through his Word as it is faithfully proclaimed by his people. As such, the church recognizes that the Spirit works supernaturally in his Word, while at the same time working psychologically in the head and the heart. Teachers of God's truth seek to address the psychological aspect while trusting that the Spirit does and will work wherever his Word is proclaimed. He has promised it: "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isa 55:11). Thus going into the teaching of church fellowship, the teacher must acknowledge his role

is not to usurp the Holy Spirit's power but rather to let him work as the teacher strives to reach the heart and mind of his hearers.

Though the Holy Spirit has promised to work through his Word, he has not promised to work a proper understanding of church fellowship instantaneously. In other words, the student of the Word may need extra time to grasp the teaching of church fellowship. By nature people search for unity on some basis other than the Word of God. This is true regardless of the student's cultural background.

Church Fellowship

To be united in the practice, the church must also be united in doctrine. This is fundamental to church fellowship. True unity is established on the basis of confession; false unity simply overlooks doctrinal differences in non-fundamental areas. Brug writes, "Church fellowship is every expression of faith in which Christians join together because they are united by their acceptance and confession of all the teachings of Scripture."² Fellowship is drawn from Scripture, as the Word never distinguishes between fundamental and non-fundamental teachings. Brug continues, "Complete agreement in doctrine is necessary. The New Testament admonitions to doctrinal unity and its warnings against false doctrines are all-inclusive, general statements that in no way imply there are some scriptural doctrines that can safely be omitted."³

The History of the Chinese Church

Applying these truths to a Chinese context may be difficult for a Westerner. This is due in no small part to the recent history of Christianity in China. The Communist Party nearly succeeded

² Brug, John F., 20. *Church Fellowship: Working Together for the Truth*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996.

³ *Ibid.*, 38.

in putting an end to Chinese Christianity. Charbonnier notes, “Believers were ... invited to repeated study sessions where their faith was not directly attacked but where it was gradually replaced by a faith in the people, in the results of science, in the construction of Socialism, and, finally, in the Party.”⁴ Missionaries quickly disappeared from China, whether they were compelled to leave by the government, they were asked to leave by their people, or because they were persecuted and imprisoned. “By the end of 1952 what had existed of Christian missionary commitment for 140 years either had been completely eliminated or had taken on an entirely different character from that envisaged by those who had created or maintained the institutions.”⁵ This persecution reached its zenith with the introduction of the Cultural Revolution, an attempt by Chairman Mao Zedong to bring the Chinese nation under his ideology. The Cultural Revolution targeted many groups, including Christians. Charbonnier remarks:

As well as making such unexpected victims, the Cultural Revolution targeted Christians who were always suspected of counterrevolutionary activities. All the churches were closed and destroyed or turned into warehouses, prisons, workshops, or wood stores. All the bishops, the priests, and the members of religious orders, whether they were patriotic or not, were arrested, insulted, and sent to hard labor or to prison. Many suffered a miserable death as a result of ill treatment. Christian families were undermined by an odious system of mutual denunciation and lapsed into silence ... the Church was effectively buried, but with hope of resurrection.⁶

However bleak the scene, Christianity did survive in communist China. This was due, in no small part, to the efforts of Y. T. Wu and the Three-Self Movement. “

The Protestant church in mainland China was beaten almost to death by the Red Guards; however, it did not disappear. The survival of the church may be regarded as the principal

⁴ Charbonnier, Jean-Pierre, 427. *Christians in China: A.D. 600 to 2000*. Translated by M.N.L. Couve de Murville. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007.

⁵ Patterson, George N., 52. *Christianity in Communist China*. Waco, TX: Word Inc., 1970.

⁶ Charbonnier, 443.

achievement of Wu in his capacity as the leader of the Three-Self Movement. Indeed, saving the church was Wu's paramount goal in launching the movement."⁷

The Three-Self Movement began as an independent coalition of Protestant Christianity and the Chinese Communist Party. Nevertheless, "After the unification of 1958, all the different Protestant churches in China became in fact Three-Self churches.... The government was pleased to see that the churches were now in the hands of those it trusted, but the aftermath of such a sudden change was traumatic to many Chinese Protestants."⁸ The survival of Christianity in China may be considered one of the only positive outcomes of Wu's work; "many of the problems [in Chinese Christian churches] today may be traced to the failures of Y. T. Wu."⁹

This is the scene upon which Chinese Christianity is being built today. The Three-Self Church is the result of unionistic measures and is influenced greatly by the Communist Party. Other Christians survived by maintaining their worship lives privately in homes, but they often lacked pastors and theological training. Thus recent history has had a deep impact on Chinese Christians, leaving the field "ripe for the harvest" (Jn 4:35).

Chinese Culture

The Chinese have a rich, 5000-year history which has shaped their culture. The dominant ideology throughout much of their history was Confucian thought. In the last century, Confucianism has been challenged by the ideals of communism. The aforementioned Cultural Revolution has achieved a profound change in the people on the mainland. As its name suggests, the movement was aimed at replacing the traditional cultural heritage of the Chinese people with

⁷ Gao, Wangzhi. *Y.T. Wu: A Christian Leader Under Communism*. Published in *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, 343. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 352.

Maoism. Still, “Even if the Cultural Revolution on the surface has put an end to the earlier policy of preserving the Confucian heritage, this does not mean a total negation of the Confucian principles.”¹⁰

Many volumes have been devoted to Confucian ideals, which cannot be treated exhaustively here. Rather, two traits relate to the subject at hand. First, by virtue of the relational aspect of church fellowship, Confucius’ teaching on “human-heartedness” (*jen*)¹¹ The ideal of virtue, or human-heartedness, which was central to Confucian thought, demonstrates itself in relationships. This is clear from the Chinese word itself, as Chai and Chai explain: “The ideograph for *jen* is composed of two characters, ‘man’ and ‘two,’ showing stress on the relationship between man and his fellow man. Confucius maintained that human relationships should be based on the moral element *jen* in the individual, the natural compassion of human heart.”¹² The modern concept of relationships in China is one of extending individual influence to others in one’s circle.

The second relevant trait is the “rectification of names,” namely, social status.¹³ Relationships tie in directly to a system of social status in which someone in a higher position is able to provide greater influence on someone in a lower position. A hierarchical social structure is therefore foundational to Confucian thought. Chai and Chai note:

A name is a title that gives a man his definite status in society and defines his relationships with others. What is more important is that every man in social relationships

¹⁰ Chai, Ch’u, and Winberg Chai, 173. *Confucianism*. Woodbury, NY: Baron’s Educational Series, Inc., 1973.

¹¹ Sherley-Price, Leo, 168. *Confucius and Christ: A Christian Estimate of Confucius*. London: Camelot Press, Ltd., 1951.

¹² Chai and Chai, 35.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 44.

implies certain responsibilities and duties. To rectify name (*cheng ming*) is to set up an objective standard by which one will behave in accordance with what the name of one's position implies.¹⁴

This concept shapes and impacts the teacher's authority over students in China, as will be discussed below.

One final note on Chinese culture is necessary. The Chinese tend towards a collectivist attitude that emphasizes the unity of all. Nevertheless, individuals are still diverse in many ways and practice their collectivist ideals with great diversity. This becomes readily apparent when the Chinese of the mainland are compared to those in Hong Kong or Taiwan. As the latter two did not undergo the Cultural Revolution, they have preserved far more strongly the traditional Chinese culture than the former. "Hong Kong especially has preserved 'pure' Chinese culture and thought."¹⁵ Although there is great diversity in these Chinese subcultures, they share a number of unifying characteristics useful for teaching them.

Research Methodology

Precious little research has been devoted specifically to teaching church fellowship to the Chinese. In order to more fully grasp the concept, the author of this paper conducted research in a variety of tangential issues: cross-cultural communication, education in China, the doctrine of church fellowship, the history of Christianity in China, Chinese philosophy and Confucian thought. The literature covering education in China, especially that written from a Western perspective, identified a number of underlying concepts and teaching methodologies that have generally proven effective for foreign teachers the Chinese. Particularly noteworthy was the

¹⁴ Chai and Chai, 44-45.

¹⁵ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 6, 2017.

work of Greenlee and Stueck, whose research provided the greatest contribution to the direction of this paper. Background concepts frequently frustrating to foreigners included an understanding of the power difference between the teacher and student in China and the norms of such a relationship, as distinct from the expectations present in Western society; the influence of collectivist thinking on Chinese students; and the indirect communication patterns generally adherent in Chinese culture.¹⁶ In addition, various practical methods were employed successfully to teach in China: open questions, repeated questions, competition, written summaries as homework, arranging teams and appointing leaders to raise questions, and forcing students to ask questions or admit a lack of understanding in order to pass the course.¹⁷

Utilizing the above information, the author sought input from those who currently are or have in the past taught church fellowship to the Chinese, both on the mainland and in Hong Kong. The questions employed in the interview are attached in Appendix 1.1. Interviews were conducted electronically unless otherwise requested; upon request, one interview was conducted over Skype and two over WeChat. The author sent the questionnaire out to fifteen individuals, including both Chinese and Americans. Of those, nine replied. For security reasons, the interviewed parties will remain anonymous.

Findings

Limitations

Before discussing the characteristics and methodologies useful for teaching church fellowship, a few limitations must be noted. First, the interviews conducted were limited to those who have

¹⁶ Greenlee, David, and James Stück, 496. "Individualist Educators in a Collectivist Society: Insights from a Cross-cultural Model Applied to China." *Missiology* 32, no. 4 (2004).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 498-500.

been involved in teaching theology in China. They were further limited to the work of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Another limitation is the completeness of answers provided by those interviewed, who were advised to treat the questions as guidelines. As a result, most of those interviewed did not handle every single question exhaustively; some chose not to answer select questions for various reasons. Instead, they added information as they saw necessary. In interviews, some methodologies proposed in the literature were never mentioned, while others were identified as relatively unhelpful for teaching church fellowship.

Limitations also apply to the methods suggested by the research. Some teaching approaches may not be suitable for teaching church fellowship, especially when instructing Chinese Christians. No teaching method fits a given constituency every time; the teacher will need to adapt to the needs of the particular group. For example, as a number of confirmation classes or doctrinal courses might be offered in a one-on-one setting, a competition between students will not fit this model. In light of this fact, the interviews are generally given priority over the research in this paper; where the two intersect will undoubtedly be beneficial for the prospective teacher of church fellowship.

General Overview

The responses of those interviewed can ultimately be distilled into two composite factors. First, to teach the Chinese a teacher must understand the expectations of the role of a teacher in China in order to effectively communicate any doctrine, especially church fellowship, which can be difficult in application at times. Second, it is necessary to have a grasp of effective teaching methodologies and contextualize them for Chinese culture. These two traits provide some insight

for the prospective teacher of Chinese Christians. Before investigating those two concepts, the relational aspect of both Chinese culture and church fellowship requires more attention.

The Relational Nature of Church Fellowship

Both Chinese culture and church fellowship emphasize relationships. The following two case studies highlight this facet.

CASE STUDY ONE: A Western teacher in mainland China thanks a former student who helps him make purchases using Chinese. The student asks him not to say “thank you,” but the Westerner has been conditioned since childhood that it is always polite to thank others when they offer help. The teacher habitually thanks the student for all subsequent help he receives, and each time the student gives the same request not to say, “Thank you.” After a few months of this kind of interaction, the student is offended and quits answering his former teacher’s calls.

CASE STUDY TWO: A pastor in mainland China has been put on the spot. Before the distribution of the Lord’s Supper, he explained that their practice is to reserve the sacrament for members of his church body. Despite his announcement, a non-member came up. The pastor did not administer communion to her, but instead asked her to speak with him after the service. After worship, the pastor discovers that she came to church at the invitation of a dear friend who has been a member of the church for the last several years. The pastor asks his member to join him while he explains their church’s teaching of fellowship and closed communion. Although the visitor does not like his explanation, she listens willingly. The next week, she comes with her friend again. The pastor again speaks cordially to her. Some time later, she enrolls in the church’s Bible Information Class and is finally received as a full member.

APPLICATION: Chinese culture stresses the importance of relationships. “Chinese are from a ‘Here We Stand’ culture.... Relationship is more important than rightness.”¹⁸ The difference in the above scenarios can be explained by relationships. The student considers his former teacher to be an influential person in his life, so he happily helps his teacher with anything he can. But the use of the word “thank you” bothers him, because in Chinese culture this implies that they are not close enough to ask favors of one another. In the student’s mind, expressing gratitude creates distance in the relationship. His former teacher’s use of the phrase, although well-intentioned, actually confuses the student about the nature of their relationship. Finally, he gives up. In the second scenario, although the visitor is both uncomfortable with the practice of closed communion and confused by the pastor’s teaching, she is willing to give him the benefit of the doubt because her friend is there to vouch for what the pastor says. That relationship provides context for the visitor’s relationship with the pastor. Although at first she does not think the pastor is right, she is willing to accept his words because she trusts her friend who trusts the pastor.

Chinese Christianity is still in its infancy. The Cultural Revolution left the Chinese Church weakened. Fewer Christians were able to openly practice their religion. Nowadays, “many Chinese Christians are first generation. Sometimes they are the only one in their family who believes.”¹⁹ As young Christians, many members of the church in China do not know their Bible well. They are not able to systematize it because it is new to them and outside of their mode of thinking. Chinese Christians, one must assume, do care deeply about God and what he

¹⁸ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

¹⁹ Ibid.

says. It is the teacher's responsibility, then, to tell Chinese Christians what God says—in all its truth and purity. At the same time, the teacher must be sensitive to the Chinese sense of love and community.²⁰ The teacher's task is to show that correct doctrine and love are not separate, but one.

A basic understanding of Chinese medicine is enough to know that the Eastern world views the body holistically. The body is all one unit, and what happens in one part affects all the others. It is the same with Christian doctrine. When one part is missing, underemphasized, or ignored, the rest generally begins to show problems, too. The whole body relates to itself.

Church fellowship is one such teaching. As it is not “the doctrine on which the church stands or falls,” church fellowship would, by many, be considered of secondary importance at best. Nevertheless, when Jesus says, “The Scripture cannot be set aside” (Jn 10:35), he demonstrates that all Scripture is important. One part cannot be removed from the others without harming the church in some fashion. The doctrine of church fellowship thus relates to all other doctrines.

Church fellowship also underscores the relationships believers have in the Church. It is an extension of all the relationships God has given to Christians. Even the term “fellowship” suggests such camaraderie. Since the Chinese come from a culture in which relationships are of high importance, perhaps a relational model of church fellowship might be effective in helping them grasp the principles of this doctrine.

Relationship with God

²⁰ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

The relationships inherent in church fellowship begin with a relationship with God. God created people, in part, for fellowship with himself. This truth is implicit already in the special way by which God created man (Ge 1:27, 2:7). James also expresses God's desire for a relationship with people: "Come near to God and he will come near to you" (Jas 4:8). Although humans have lost this connection (Isa 59:2), Jesus has restored the broken relationship by serving as the mediator (1 Ti 2:5,6). It is only by the work of Christ that anyone can have a relationship with God. This reconciliation comes to believers by faith (2 Co 5:19,20).

As such, the doctrine of church fellowship begins with fellowship with the Triune God. This fellowship was achieved by God the Son. The Holy Spirit causes this fellowship by creating faith in the hearts of believers as he works through the Word of God. The Holy Christian Church has unity with God, who called her out of darkness (1 Pe 2:9) into fellowship with himself (. As 1 John 1:3 says, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

That unity will finally be fully realized in heaven. At present, believers have fellowship with God but remain sinful creatures that do not always act according to God's will. In heaven, believers from every nation, tribe, people, and language (Rev 7:9) will have a perfect relationship with God and one another. For now, that fellowship remains imperfect.

Relationship with God's Word

God accomplishes this fellowship as he works through Word and sacrament. These means of grace have the power to create a renewed relationship with God in the heart of believers (Ro 1:16,17). It also is the lifeblood that sustains that unity. God also uses the sacraments to establish fellowship with himself. In baptism, God covers his believers with Christ and brings them into his family (Gal 3:26,27). Similarly, in the Lord's Supper the Church partakes of the body and

blood of the Savior (1 Co10:16). So fellowship is established on the basis of and by means of the Word of God and the sacraments.

Christians celebrate their unity with that Word by taking it to heart, gladly hearing, reading, and learning it. In so doing, Christians also recognize that the Scripture has great unity within itself. This does not mean that there are no apparent paradoxes in Scripture, but that it functions as a whole, with all the books pointing to the central message of Christ and the numerous ways in which his work for mankind can be described. Christians do well, then, to maintain their unity with the Word of God. This means putting God's Word above anything else—the only ruling norm that informs Christians of God's truth. Maintaining a relationship with the Scriptures means regarding them as God's Word and making regular use of them. As Christians do so, God strengthens the Christian's relationship with himself.

It is, in fact, the very nature of a Christian to confess faith in what the Bible says. Christians submit themselves to the Bible because they understand it to be God's Word to them. Christians confess with their mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord (Ro 10:9). Proclaiming this message demonstrates the believer's relationship to the Word. By proclaiming the Word, the Christian expresses his relation to the Word and to others.

Relationship with other Christians

As children reborn of the Father through the living and enduring Word of God, Christians have fellowship with one another, as 1 John 1:3 says, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us." God's children may lay hold of fellowship with God and establish unity on the basis of his Word. Fellowship must be established on the

basis of the Word of God in its entirety, rather than a subjective list of fundamental teachings or some other criterion. Then fellowship can be established with other church bodies.

Chinese people often do not view unity this way. In Hong Kong especially, “They don’t see unity based on doctrine; they see unity based on relationships.”²¹ Unity based on the Word of God, however, runs contrary to every culture on earth, not just the Chinese. The Holy Spirit must work the conviction that all God’s Word is the basis for fellowship. Nevertheless, unionism apart from the totality of confession does not come from the Bible, which holds, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful” (2 Ti 3:16). Scripture itself sets the standard for the unity every Christian must have with the Word. Christians unite under all of it. As Brug says, “Nothing in Scripture suggests that some ways of practicing church fellowship require less agreement in doctrine than others. In the New Testament all expressions of fellowship are treated as a unit. They are all ways of expressing the same oneness of faith.”²²

To teach true Christian unity to the Chinese, the teacher would do well to frame fellowship within the wider context of the Holy Christian Church. Anyone who professes saving faith in Christ is a true believer. Along with the angels in heaven, the Holy Christian Church rejoices over one sinner who is brought to repent and trust in Jesus (Lk 15:7). Chinese Christians, a small minority in a heavily populated country, often traditionally express great joy over fellow believers. In spite of opposition, the Church in China remains.

Where there are limited numbers of Christians, and where Christianity faces oppression, Christians will strive together with those who are Christians—even if they don’t believe

²¹ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 26, 2017.

²² Brug, 45.

the same thing. We have to start from the place of rejoicing over the invisible Church—whatever church people might go to.²³

Christians around the world share the same faith in Jesus as their Savior and use the same Scripture. These shared traits mean that all Christians do enjoy unity as members of the Holy Christian Church, even though they may not be in fellowship with each other. Ultimately this union, like the Christian's relationship with the heavenly Father, will be expressed fully in heaven.

It is important to emphasize the teaching of the Holy Christian Church from the the beginning when discussing the doctrine of church fellowship with the Chinese. For some Chinese, it may be important to make a distinction between false doctrine and false teachers. When Chinese students hear “false teacher,” they may think of someone outside of the invisible Church. One interviewee relates:

I recently taught about the doctrine of church fellowship, and I was told before class that I could not label Christians in other denominations as “false teachers” because this would be taken to mean that they are not Christian at all... On further reflection I realize that if the term “false teacher” implied to the Chinese that the person I was describing has no Christian faith, it was in fact a bad term to use for this audience.²⁴

Like siblings have a different relationship than distant cousins, Christians' relationships with each other differ. Not all Christians use the same criteria for understanding Scripture; clearly, not every church body's teachings of Scripture can be accepted. Otherwise, the truth would be lost quickly in the goal of union. If churches begin to cede “non-fundamentals” for a

²³ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 4, 2017.

²⁴ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 25, 2017.

perceived unity, they will likely lose the gospel altogether. As noted above, Christian fellowship is established on the basis of Scripture as a whole or unit.

It may also be difficult for some Chinese to recognize the difference between false teachings and the truth. Chinese Christians have vastly different experiences with false doctrine. Some admit there is a difference between different Christian denominations but do not see them as particularly problematic; others have seen the damage false teaching causes and want nothing to do with it.”²⁵

The Impact of Collectivism

In China, actively distinguishing between true and false doctrine is a particular struggle, in part because Chinese collectivism tends to emphasize sameness over difference. Collectivism may simply be defined as the tendency to identify oneself as a member of a group rather than as an individual.²⁶ “Only four countries ... are more collectivistic than China.”²⁷ This is additionally complicated by the mindset of individualism many Western teachers bring with them, sometimes unconsciously, when they teach in China. Westerners unaware of this stark contrast have experienced difficulty teaching. “We assume that if we make ourselves clear we will be heard. We tell a Chinese brother that he needs to do something and we give them five reasons why, and we expect that he will take us seriously because we have been so straightforward and logical.”²⁸

²⁵ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

²⁶ Greenlee and Stück, 497.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

The reality, however, is that Chinese people often think more in terms of the relationship of the group than in terms of a rational argument.²⁹

Collectivism may come across, to a Westerner, as being more considerate of others. “Chinese students are always cognizant of others around them and how their words will affect their fellow countrymen. If a student before them answered incorrectly, they will often not call out the person for their error. Instead, they would go to extremes to be polite in their follow-up to share what is correct without offending the previous student.”³⁰ The truth is, of course, somewhere in the middle; Americans could learn quite a bit from the collectivism of China, while the Chinese could learn from the individualism of the United States.³¹

Emphasis on the Positive

As outsiders to the collectivist culture, collectivism can be cultivated to the advantage of a Western teacher. The reality is that the inclusivity of collectivism also has an exclusive element. The Chinese have experience with exclusion.³² Points of emphasis may differ from individualistic societies, but collectivistic thinking understands by nature that those on the inside of a group share a bond not common to those on the outside. This same principle applies to church fellowship: those in fellowship with one another have a special relationship which does not carry over to others outside their fellowship. The difference is that, in church fellowship, this relationship is being mapped, not just to individual Christians, but to an entire denomination.

²⁹ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

³⁰ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 3, 2017.

³¹ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 26, 2017.

³² Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 30, 2017.

Developing a model of teaching church fellowship which relays the relationships inherent therein would be invaluable for the efforts of Western teachers. However, Lutheran teachers must be open about Lutheran doctrine and candidly confess the truths of Scripture. Teachers should admit that Lutherans handle the Scriptures as the sole authority. “Start with Jesus. Then just teach the Bible. Build relationships, then bring in closed communion..... They want to be a team. The team is based on the confession.”³³ The teacher will have to guide his students to an appropriate understanding of unity based on confession.

Placing appropriate emphasis on the positive aspects of collectivism and relationships also may help when teaching this doctrine. Christians benefit when they are able to enjoy their relationships founded on the basis of God’s truth. At the same time, rejecting error is nothing other than loving God’s truth. This pleases God.³⁴ Separating from errorists means joining with those who hold the truth. It also means rebuking those in error, but this too is loving to God, his Word, and his people. The teacher will need to speak graciously when offering correction, and he or she will need to understand the appropriate time for correction and when none is needed. This will require great wisdom and patience on the part of the teacher.

Indirect Communication

When the principles of collectivism are applied practically to Westerners teaching in a Chinese setting, a problem that comes up is often the difficulty of eliciting an honest response from Chinese students. This may be due to a highly collectivistic tendency to communicate indirectly. “According to a Chinese saying, ‘Westerners are very superficial—they believe what you say.’

³³ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 30, 2017.

³⁴ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 6, 2017.

... The Chinese will send and receive messages based as much on the indirect context of the message (which includes their relationship to the messenger) as on the actual, direct content of the message itself.”³⁵ In contrast, an interviewee indicated that Westerners speak so that they can’t be misunderstood³⁶, making the subtext of communication much less important than the message itself. The Chinese leave messages to be decoded by the listener, who is responsible for understanding the speaker in context. As the Chinese say, “Draw a picture, but you don’t have to draw it too clearly.”³⁷

When applied to the relationship between teacher and student, indirect communication has a definite impact on the teaching of church fellowship. Westerners may think something was understood clearly although it was not, or the teacher may hear the students agree with him when they do not. “They are not looking to openly challenge or defy what someone has said. It is more polite and respected in a Chinese mind to accept, at least outwardly, what is being said even if inwardly you don’t believe or agree.”³⁸

Face

Saving face is a huge concept that affects relationships and communication in China. “Chinese people are concerned about saving face. It is very difficult to raise personal questions sincerely and amicably.”³⁹ So a good Chinese student, in an effort for harmony, will not raise questions of the teacher because if the teacher cannot answer or does not answer well, the teacher loses face.

³⁵ Greenlee and Stück, 498.

³⁶ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 3, 2017.

³⁹ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 7, 2017.

At the same time, a Western teacher may encourage questions from the students because he knows the students do not fully grasp the topic. As church fellowship is a doctrine difficult to grasp and espoused by few in China or the world, this Chinese penchant not to reveal personal thoughts or raise questions for clarification makes the teacher's work vital.

The research reflects this notion as well. "The most difficult task of all is to get Chinese students to let the professor know when they do not understand what is being taught. As one Western educator said, 'The ultimate goal is to have Chinese students say, "I don't know," and not feel ashamed to say it.'"⁴⁰ As modern China changes, this tendency has begun to diminish slowly. Cultivating a classroom atmosphere where students feel free to ask questions takes time and patience. A Western teacher may decide to praise any student who raises a question, as "being complimented in public in a collectivistic cultural setting can be many times more important than it would be in an individualistic society."⁴¹

Teaching Methodologies

Questions

Due to the nature of indirect communication in China, direct questions may not always be the most effective method to gauge the learning of Chinese students. Closed questions, such as "yes-no" questions in particular, have proven ineffective in Asia. "Yes-no questions are too direct and put too much pressure on the Chinese recipient to say 'yes' in order to maintain group harmony and not make the American lose face; therefore, they may not elicit accurate answers."⁴²

⁴⁰ Greenlee and Stück, 499.

⁴¹ Ibid., 498.

⁴² Ibid.

Asking appropriate questions, however, may have a much more positive effect, especially in the small group setting that often accompanies teaching church fellowship. Appropriate questioning methods include “asking open-ended questions, asking more than one question about the same topic, asking the same question in different ways, and asking the same question at different times during the class period.”⁴³ The interviews also corroborate this recommendation; “open questions” was rated quite high as a useful method for teaching church fellowship. One interviewee also indicated that open questions allow both parties to explain the question freely.⁴⁴

Asking a variety of questions at different times throughout a lesson gives a diverse group of students the opportunity to process the information in different ways. Students may be more intellectually stimulated at various times during class; some students may respond better to a specific kinds of questions. In the end, asking only one type of questions can also fatigue or even bore the students, as an overly predictable pattern from the teacher can become monotonous. One interviewee provided various questions currently used by some to teach “Church & Fellowship,” in China. The lesson is included in Appendix 1.2.

Case Studies

A case study extends a situation and requires the student’s evaluation. Although the literature did not mention case studies as a potential tactic for teaching in China, the interviews indicated strongly that these can be used. In some ways, a case study adds a level of reality not present in other kinds of reinforcement, as they include true-to-life details in an extended example. The teacher will likely be able to share stories that illustrate how to hold on to the principle of

⁴³ Greenlee and Stück, 500.

⁴⁴ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 5, 2017.

fellowship using case studies. “There is pedagogical value and [case studies] also give the Spirit an opportunity to work on them when you give them a situation to puzzle out. That is meditating on the Word, and that is what the Holy Spirit uses to create faith.”⁴⁵

Mindful of the Chinese concept of face and of their fear of losing it, a teacher will likely not want to use any real examples that could possibly be known by the student, as this could cause embarrassment. Additionally, the teacher will need to approach examples with humility, as church fellowship does not mean teaching an attitude of superiority or total separation. As one interviewee pointed out, people might be more willing to listen to church fellowship when the teacher approaches the subject with humility.⁴⁶

Written Summaries

The literature also suggested written summaries could be employed successfully to draw out the Chinese students’ understanding of teaching.⁴⁷ Interviews, however, indicated writing was the least popular of the suggested methods with one notable exception; the interviewee who rated written summaries highest in their usefulness is himself Chinese. A few conclusions may be surmised from these data. For a Westerner teaching church fellowship in China, writing may not be an effective method unless the student has reached a high proficiency in English composition or the teacher has a firm grasp of reading Chinese. Fear of improper English grammar may keep a Chinese student from writing any responses if they are requested to write in English. The fact that a Chinese would be willing to use this method with other Chinese provides further evidence that language may be a barrier that keeps writing from being an appropriate method.

⁴⁵ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 6, 2017.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Greenlee and Stück, 499.

Another factor may be the somewhat informal setting in which many of these classes ordinarily take place. A class at a seminary would undoubtedly be much more formal, but many times the teacher takes up the topic of church fellowship in a one-on-one Bible information course or in a small group Bible study. Assigning anything that resembles homework may deter visitors or students from returning to the course. As such, the particular setting further limits the usefulness of written summaries to a very narrow category. More important than employing written summaries is giving students the opportunity to express church fellowship in their own words.

Repetition

Traditionally, Chinese have adopted the old adage “repetition is the mother of learning” in education. For centuries, Chinese students have taken a more passive role in education, relying on rote memorization to learn the subject material. Greenlee and Stück note that Chinese students have generally followed the Confucian principles of education. These involve committing considerably more to memory than Western students often do. This tendency has at times led to a more passive role of students in Chinese education, which at times means the Chinese have room for growth in the areas of internalization, in-class dialogue, and application.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Chinese students are not completely passive learners. The methods noted in the sections above will help bring out application; in-class dialogue goes together with good relationships between teachers and students, as well as giving face to those who participate.

⁴⁸ Greenlee and Stück, 499.

Internalization, however, belongs to the work of the Holy Spirit. One of the strengths of repetition as a teaching technique is to allow students time for appropriation. As they hear the Word again and again, the Holy Spirit continues to work.

The interviews all supported the use of repetition as a tool for teaching church fellowship, although it seems not all agree what that means. Most indicated by this they understood the teacher repeating or even teaching the information⁴⁹; at least one suggested this meant allowing the students to repeat the material through summarization.⁵⁰

When teaching church fellowship, the teacher will want to repeat church fellowship often. He does not need to bring up church fellowship in every lesson, though. Church fellowship is an important doctrine because God teaches it in his Word. It is not the teaching on which the church stands or falls, though. Still, wherever the text allows for appropriate application of church fellowship, the teacher should discuss it. Such repetition undoubtedly allows opportunities to reinforce church fellowship, which may be key when considering the Chinese propensity not to disclose to the teacher what the student actually thinks. Repeated proclamation of God's Word is key to teaching church fellowship. In this regard, too, one interview suggested that it would be better to handle teaching church fellowship as it comes up in Scripture rather than separating teachings dogmatically, as Chinese people do not think in those terms.⁵¹

Qualities of a Teacher

⁴⁹ E.g., anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017; anonymous interview, personal communication, November 3, 2017

⁵⁰ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 3, 2017.

⁵¹ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 30, 2017.

A Westerner may quite possibly have a grasp on a number of qualities admired by the Chinese and still fail to consider others or even to appreciate specific aspects of those qualities. Two case studies will introduce the qualities of a teacher and illustrate the necessity of understanding Chinese expectations of a teacher. The ensuing discussion shows how paradoxical these expectations may seem.

CASE STUDY ONE: An American professor spends a semester as a visiting professor in Hong Kong. He knows little of the culture before his arrival only days before he begins teaching. When classes begin, he resorts to his usual classroom methods. Although he is an expert in his field, his students in the United States have always appreciated his self-deprecating sense of humor. He understands Eastern peoples generally value humility more than Americans do, so he admits that he has not learned all there is to know about his subject. By the end of the first week, some of his students have stopped attending class, while others remain in class but are clearly no longer engaged.

CASE STUDY TWO:

If a first-rate Chinese carpenter went to a furniture company to find work, the interview would probably be something like this:

Employer: Have you done carpentry before?

Carpenter: I don't dare say I have. I have just been in a very modest way involved in the carpenter trade.

Employer: What are you skilled in, then?

Carpenter: I won't say "skilled." I have only a little experience in making tables. (He may have been making all kinds of tables for the past twenty-five years.)

Employer: Can you make something now and show us how good you are?

Carpenter: How dare I be so indiscreet as to demonstrate my crude skills in front of a master of the trade like you?

By this time the employer might just be fed up and say, "I'm sorry but we don't take novices" and show him the door. But if the employer is more subtle and persistent, the carpenter would probably respond: "If you really insist, I'll try to make a table. Please don't laugh at my crude work." With that he commences to work on a table, saying a few

more times, “Please don’t laugh at my crude work...,” and gives the final touches to a perhaps beautiful piece of art in the shape of a table.⁵²

APPLICATION: The difference between the two above situations may not be easily distinguishable. At first glance, it seems both the teacher and the carpenter are trying to reflect an air of modesty. But the situations are quite different. The carpenter is looking for a job; he understand the interviewer as an authority figure. For example, he calls the interviewer “a master of the trade,” while he himself only has crude skills in the carpentry trade. The professor, on the other hand, is in a position of authority by the nature of his job, but in his student’s eyes, he does not live up to his position. Even though he may be both a great expert and an extraordinarily humble man, his students want to hear and see the former rather than the latter in him; otherwise they would seek out another teacher who is more qualified to educate them. Although it is true that humility is valued in Eastern cultures, in China a teacher is expected to rule his or her classroom much more than he or she would in a Western setting.

Authority

Authority is an aspect of teaching particularly relevant in China. A greater power gap exists between a teacher and his students in China than that in the United States. This is due, in no small part, to China’s deep history of one central political authority—whether an emperor or the Communist Party. This coincides with the traditional Confucian view a hierarchical structure of unequal relationships establishes stability.⁵³

⁵² Wei, Yao. “The Importance of Being KEQI: A Note on Communication Difficulties.” *Communicating with China*. Ed. Robert Knapp. (1983): 71-76.

⁵³ Greenlee and Stück, 495.

The Western teacher has an advantage in the fact that Chinese students have traditionally assumed their teacher is an authority figure. “In Chinese society, generally speaking, professors must all be obeyed. Respect and obedience, unlike in the West, is to be given to the position itself rather than the Western custom of respecting the individual person or the individual’s personal leadership characteristics.”⁵⁴ Yet in modern China, the traditional view of a teacher’s authority is quickly shifting. A teacher can lose the respect of his or her students in a Chinese classroom. Many may acknowledge that they should listen to their teacher, but “the students often do not really feel or internalize that respect.”⁵⁵ As such, respect for the teacher is still the expectation in China, but he or she will need to earn continued respect. Some teachers may struggle with maintaining authority in a Chinese classroom. Both a cultural sensitivity and a firm grounding in the Word of God can help the teacher overcome the challenge of authority.

Chinese culture has traditionally assumed the authority of older members of society. “Age is one of the most common sources of seniority and status in the Chinese university.”⁵⁶ Younger teachers will likely experience greater difficulty in cultivating respect in a Chinese setting. This does not mean that a younger teacher will be unable to teach such an audience, but merely that he or she may experience difficulty. In order to effectively hold the students’ attention, such a teacher ought to pour extra effort into preparation. Experience dictates that a well-prepared lesson boosts the teacher’s own confidence while also demonstrating to the students that the teacher has a goal in mind.

⁵⁴ Greenlee and Stück, 496.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

While cultural understanding, age, and preparedness may aid the teacher of God's Word, they are not his primary authority. Instead, his authority comes from Scripture. This concept runs contrary to every culture in the world, where authority is derived from experience, ability, or some other factor. Rather, Jesus attaches his own authority to teaching the Bible, as Matthew 28:18-20 say, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." The Lord opens this address by explaining his own authority to give this command. Because he has that authority, teachers themselves are to teach disciples to keep everything he commanded. That includes church fellowship. This statement alone establishes unity for Christians must come on the basis of everything Christ commanded. However, lest someone limit relevant Scripture to the words and teachings of Christ in the Gospels alone, Jesus reminds Christians he has received this authority from his Father in John 14:10, "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." So everything Christ has commanded is everything God has spoken.

To teach God's Word in all its truth and purity also fulfills the burden of Christian love a teacher has for both the students and the Bible. One interview made a major point of this. "Go back to the Bible. If they are real Christians, they will have to submit to the Bible. If we say what Lutherans say, they will say, 'That is your teaching; we have our teaching.' Instead, go back to teaching the Bible."⁵⁷ In this way, rather than saying, "This is what the church teaches," the

⁵⁷ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 30, 2017.

teacher of God's Word can say with confidence, "Thus says the LORD." The teacher merely shows that everything he teaches comes from Scripture. The students can draw the conclusion that the Lutheran teaching agrees with Scripture for themselves.

The concept of authority applies also to reinforcing church fellowship in the life of the Church. When an individual or congregation fails to properly apply the doctrine of church, the teacher will need to appeal to the authority of the Word of God in order to correct the erring party. Inconsistencies will be referred back to Scripture, where the students can see for themselves such passages as Romans 16:17, "Watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them." Thus the teacher lays the truth before the heart of the students, asking them to examine the issue in light of Scripture's clear testimony.

Easy and difficult applications of church fellowship alike may be easier to accept who the teacher has formed a bond with his or her students. Students may also be more likely to respect a teacher who has garnered good rapport with them. Relationships will only aid the teacher in his or her attempts to establish authority. Personal relationships will be discussed in the following section.

Personal Relationships

Another important quality of the teacher is his role and relationship with the students. Whereas in Western culture the norm is that a teacher will see his or her students almost exclusively within the confines of class time, such an understanding may not be acceptable in China. Instead, "in exchange for the student's extreme loyalty, the professor is expected to reciprocate with an almost godfather role—sometimes expected to take on all kinds of extra non-curricular

responsibilities for the student's personal life and private welfare, even to extreme, and rare, requests, such as personal financial loans."⁵⁸ For example, in China it may not be seen as unusual for a teacher to recommend someone as a potential spouse for his or her student. In the Western world, this would be crossing professional boundaries.

For Americans in particular, the demand of this expanded relational role on the teacher's time may cause consternation. One interviewee wrote:

It is not the communication so much as the "wasted" time that can be frustrating for me. For example, when there is a meeting everyone will always go out to eat afterwards, and I am expected to go. If I do not go because I think it is an inefficient use of time I am looked at as being rude or selfish. Often I am asked to be involved in something during what is in the United States to be my personal time. However, the concept of personal time barely exists in this context. And so if I refuse to do something that is seen as offensive.⁵⁹

Furthermore, another interviewee indicated:

The longer I was in China, the more I came to understand and emphasize the need for ... time together. My relationship with the church leaders, for example, and the communication that we had, always suffered when we didn't have personal time together just "doing life"—spending the evening eating [barbecue], going shopping, spending time at the market getting materials for the classroom or worship space.... My gut reaction was to often view these joint projects as not so valuable or even as "wasted time." The more I valued these, the less communication issues I had.⁶⁰

Developing a relationship with the students is key for teaching a proper understanding of any matter in China; this is heightened in the area of church fellowship, where relationships with other Christians are at the center of the issue. Although Westerners may initially perceive time spent with the group as a challenge, in Chinese culture relationships often have greater weight

⁵⁸ Greenlee and Stück, 496.

⁵⁹ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 25, 2017.

⁶⁰ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 4, 2017.

than whether a person is correct or not.⁶¹ This does not mean that Chinese Christians care little for what is right and true in God's Word, but that they care also to apply the truth lovingly.

Expertise

Chinese students look for a teacher who has authoritative answers, not necessarily one who challenges them to think critically. "In Chinese culture the ideal educator is a benevolent autocrat, much like the father of a small child who may be kind but in the end 'always knows best.' Students expect to be told what to do ... without questions, speaking up, or discussion."⁶² An apparent lack of participation on the part of the students may frustrate Westerners if they do not understand the setting in which Chinese students are accustomed to learning. "There are two major reasons Chinese students do not engage in interactive learning. The primary reason is due to their high authority, hierarchical society in which lower-status students are passive recipients of one-way communication from higher-status teachers or professors."⁶³

Being an expert in Chinese culture will aid anyone who wants to teach Chinese students. The teacher of God's Word will recognize that his expertise is not in culture, but in Scripture. If a teacher desires to teach everything commanded by Christ, they must first become intimately familiar with the Scriptures. In a Chinese context, this means they must know the Scriptures thoroughly; otherwise, a Chinese may challenge what authority they have to teach this or that doctrine. Whereas a Western teacher may humbly admit not having a complete grasp on everything pertinent to the subject material in a plea to the students to become lifelong learners,

⁶¹ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

⁶² Greenlee and Stück, 495.

⁶³ Ibid., 499.

this undermines the teachers authority in China. One of the interviews sheds light on this kind of thinking:

Sometimes [Western] people will begin a class by saying something like, ‘I am not an expert. Just like you I am learning. I hope we can learn together.’ I started out saying these types of things. But I was pulled aside three separate times and told that I should not say that. It makes me look like a fool and it makes the students concerned that they have picked a bad school. I think that ... works in a middle-class American context but has a very different effect in China. You do not look humble; you look like an unqualified idiot who does not even bother pretending to know what he’s talking about.⁶⁴

Other Qualities of the Teacher

Anyone who desires to teach God’s Word to the Chinese or anyone desires a noble task (1 Ti 3:1), but in humility the teacher will also remember that God’s Word, not the individual, has the power to authenticate its own message. Thus the teacher has many attributes to pray for. The interviews addressed general qualities that are useful for a teacher to demonstrate when educating the Chinese on church fellowship. Practicing church fellowship often requires great wisdom. The teacher will also need to demonstrate wisdom, humility, and patience as students wrestle with the principle. This is, in part, because “people may agree with you and believe you are right, but will still revert to old patterns.”⁶⁵ The teacher will do well to ask God for patience and to pray that the Holy Spirit enlightens the students as he works through the Word. All this must be tempered with a spirit of love. Of these attributes, three may be identified as key: patience, wisdom, and love. Scripture praises the same qualities, and any teacher would undoubtedly benefit from them.

⁶⁴ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 25, 2017.

⁶⁵ Anonymous interview, personal communication, November 2, 2017.

The first quality noted in interviews is patience. Because the Chinese are relatively new to the Bible, much less to church fellowship, the teacher needs to remember that God's Word works, but this may take some time. The Holy Spirit will work an understanding of this doctrine when and where he wills. Paul exhorts, "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Ti 4:2).

Additionally, students respect a teacher who demonstrates sincere love for the students and for the subject material. Students are more than likely willing to forgive a few failures from a teacher who demonstrates genuine care and concern for them. Love for God's Word will also spur on the students to take its teaching for their own. John writes, "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love" (2 Jn 1:6). Love fulfills God's commands. Christian love compels the teacher to teach others to walk in the truth.

Finally, this calls for wisdom. Knowing how to demonstrate love for the students without crossing borders is difficult in and of itself; with the added difficulty of communicating across cultures, teaching becomes much harder. The teacher must trust God who promises to give every good and perfect gift (Jas 1:17) to those who ask in the name of his Son (Jn 16:23). James encourages this prayer: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (Jas 1:5).

Conclusion

Overview

Education in China is not the same as education in the West. Their long cultural history and short but well-tested church history ensure that the context there is very different from the Western

world. Greenlee and Stück's well-written article on the subject of Westerners teaching Chinese students provided much of the framework for this paper. Based on the research, interviews were conducted with those who have experience working with the Chinese. Input drawn from these sources formulate the bulk of this paper.

The findings of this paper may be summarized in a paradox: Chinese people are just like all other people, and Chinese people are unlike any other people. Since God saw in paradise that it was "not good for the man to be alone" (Ge 2:18), people have longed for personal relationships with others. The Chinese are no different. In fact, their culture emphasizes people's need for relationships and cherishes them. This can be utilized to the advantage of anyone who desires to teach church fellowship to the Chinese. Their collectivist culture highlights the similarity of people; in many ways, the Chinese are just like any other people. The greatest similarity is their need for a Savior. A relationship with him, along with careful instruction in the Word, will lead some to a proper understanding of church fellowship. To get there, a teacher will need great patience and love as he carefully explains what the Lord says and develops a personal relationship with his students.

At the same time, Chinese culture is a unique, collectivist culture that distinguishes "we Chinese" from the rest of the world. They think in exclusive terms with regard to outsiders. They also think inclusively within the group. Similarly, they often view systems as a whole. These viewpoints each correspond to an aspect of church fellowship. Fellowship is exclusive by nature; it excludes those whose confession of Scripture is not the same. At the same time, fellowship is inclusive; it fosters harmony and unity for those on the inside. Emphasizing the blessings that come from doctrinal unity may quickly be understood by Chinese people. Another positive is

that, because the Chinese often have little to no previous background in the Bible, they may be more likely to accept a teacher who presents it as a harmonious whole. As a result, teaching church fellowship might be easier in China than other places around the world.⁶⁶

To teach the truth to Chinese people in their context, some methods are more helpful than others. The research and interviews indicated open questions, case studies, and repetition are all good ways of engaging Chinese students. Written summaries may also be appropriate, depending on the circumstances of the lessons. Questions allow the students to express what they understand about church fellowship; this also gives the teacher the chance to evaluate and lovingly correct any errors students may have. Such communication may need to be indirect so as to avoid a loss of face. Case studies are an extension of questions that allow students to evaluate true-to-life situations. Repetition repeats or rephrases key concepts. Then students can consider this teaching over again.

The teacher will do well to speak authoritatively, recognizing his authority is not assumed, but founded in the Word of God. Establishing rapport with the students earns their trust and respect. They may be willing to hear more graciously when the teacher demonstrates sincere concern for them. This is especially true in China, where teachers often have a more active role in the lives of their students. The teacher who demonstrates expertise in and commitment to the Scriptures likewise wins the Chinese Christian's loyalty. The teacher needs to show everything comes from the Word of God. All these things ought to be tempered with patience, wisdom, and love. Students may need time to grasp church fellowship. The teacher will need to look for

⁶⁶ Anonymous interview, personal communication, October 25, 2017.

opportunities to teach it and always demonstrate the love inherent in treating Scripture as a whole.

For Further Research

Foremost on the list of things that could be researched more is how to develop a relational model of church fellowship. Much is also unaccounted for in the specific field of educating the Chinese. Specifically, the variety and use of questions could be pressed. Another potential topic is the effect of globalization on education in China. The influence of the Chinese Communist Party and the Cultural Revolution on modern Chinese Christianity could also be an area for consideration. Finally, additional research could go into exploring how to teach the Bible to Christians book by book while still covering the full counsel of God.

The Shepherd's Clear Voice

Sheep listen to the voice of their shepherd. The sheep in China need that their Shepherd as much as the flock around the world. They must learn to listen to the Savior alone and drown out the voices of any who claim to be shepherds but are not. The goal of teaching church fellowship is to point these sheep to the true Shepherd alone and to tune out the voices of any who would take them away from anything other than the voice of their Savior who speaks in his Word. These other sheep may require special time and patience as their relationships with the Holy Christian Church and the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference grow, but the Holy Spirit must accomplish this as teachers faithfully proclaim the Word. He is blessing the growth of the Church in China—both inside and outside of Lutheranism. He certainly will also bless faithful teachers who wish to teach the so-called “difficult” doctrine of church fellowship. The Shepherd will lead

his sheep throughout the world to follow his voice, and his alone, until they all reach full unity in heaven.

APPENDIX 1.1
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your greatest challenge in communicating with Chinese as one coming from a highly individualistic culture? Why is it such a challenge?
2. What do you consider your greatest blessing in communicating with the Chinese? Why?
3. What special challenges arise when teaching the doctrine of church fellowship to the Chinese?
4. Rate your use of the following methods when teaching church fellowship to Chinese (1-10, with 10 being most frequent):
 - a. Open questions
 - b. Repetition
 - c. Written summaries (on the part of the learner)
 - d. Other (explain)
5. What qualities must a teacher demonstrate in a Chinese setting, especially when teaching “difficult” doctrines?
6. What effect do the following have on American teachers in China?
 - a. Chinese high context culture, in which relationships often determine the meaning of what you say.
 - b. Chinese collectivism
 - c. Chinese (top-down) hierarchical structure
 - d. American low context culture, in which the speaker must make himself clear
 - e. American individualism
 - f. American egalitarianism
7. Acknowledging the Spirit, who promises to work where his Word is proclaimed, what other methods and principles have you employed when teaching church fellowship to the Chinese? How effective have those methods and principles been?

8. What advice would you give to those who wish to relate the doctrine of church fellowship while remaining sensitive to the peculiarities of Chinese culture?

APPENDIX 1.2

Church and Fellowship Bilingual Study

Church & Fellowship 教会和团契生活

So far in Faith Builders we have discussed many aspects of the Triune God; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the 3rd Article of the Apostle Creed that talks about the Holy Spirit we confess with generations of Christians before us:

在信心建立中我们已经讨论过三位一体上帝的许多方面了，即圣父，圣子和圣灵。在使徒信经中的第三条，谈论了在我们之前世代代的基督徒们对圣灵的承认：

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

我信圣灵，我信圣而公之教会，我信圣徒相通，我信罪得赦免，我信身体复活，我信永生。阿门！

In our lesson on the Lord's Supper we already began talking about the special relationship Christians have. They have a special communion and fellowship. With the Lord's Supper we learned from God's Word that that those with the same faith come and gather together to receive God's gifts.

在我们对圣餐的学习中，我们已经开始讨论基督徒们之间的特殊关系。他们之间存在特殊的圣徒相通以及团契生活。在圣餐的学习中我们从上帝的话语中了解到，有着同样信仰的人来聚到一起，接受上帝的礼物。

It would be inappropriate and even dangerous to their faith to invite certain people to come to the Lord's Table to receive his body and blood. We learned that we would not invite a person who was either unable to examine themselves—was currently living in unrepentant sin—or was not in doctrinal agreement with us. That final reason will be our focus in this lesson.

对于邀请特定的一些人来圣餐台前接受耶稣的身体和血，可能会对他们的信心来说不是很合适，甚至是危险的。我们了解到，我们不会邀请那些不能够审视自己——即目前活在执迷不悟的罪之中的人——亦或是和我们在教义上有分歧的人。这节课我们将会集中对这最后一点理由的学习上。

As we go forward in this study we will see that Fellowship applies to all forms of worship or any other acts that would express a common belief. Scripture teaches that Fellowship is a “unit” concept. In our study we will answer the following questions:

在我们继续这次学习前，我们将会看到团契生活应用于所有形式的敬拜，或是所有能够传达共同信仰的行为。圣经教导我们团契生活是一个“团体”概念。在我们的学习中，我们将会回答下列问题：

What is the “Holy Christian Church”?

Is the Church visible or invisible?

What warnings does God give about who we join with?

Why does God want us to gather (fellowship) together?

What are the blessings of joining together in unity with Christians?

什么是“圣而公之教会”？

教会是否有形？

对于我们加入到一起的人，上帝给出了怎样的警示？

为什么上帝想要我们（团契生活）聚在一起？

和基督徒团结在一起会有怎样的祝福？

WHAT IS THE “HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH”?

什么是“圣而公之教会”？

Look at the following passages to define the “Holy Christian Church”.

查看下列经文来对“圣而公之教会”下定义。

Hebrews 10:10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

希伯来书10:10 我们凭着这旨意，借着耶稣基督一次献上他的身体，就已经成圣。

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

以弗所书5:25-27 你们作丈夫的，要爱妻子，好像基督爱教会，为教会舍己，为的是要用水借着道把教会洗净，成为圣洁，可以作荣耀的教会归给自己，什么污点皱纹等也没有，而是圣洁没有瑕疵的。

Galatians 3:26-28 *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

加拉太书3:26-28 你们因着信，在基督耶稣里都作了神的儿子。你们所有受洗归入基督的人，都是批戴基督的，并不分犹太人或希腊人，作奴仆的或自由人，男的或女的，因为你们在基督耶稣里都成为一体了。

1 Peter 2:9, 10 **But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

彼得前书2:9, 10 然而你们是蒙拣选的族类，是君尊的祭司，是圣洁的国民，是属神的子民，为要叫你们宣扬那召你们出黑暗入奇妙光明者的美德。“你们从前不是子民，现在却是神的子民；从前未蒙怜恤，现在却蒙了怜恤。”

1. According to the underlined portion of those passages, what does it mean to be holy?
根据上述经文的划线部分，成圣是什么意思？

2. According to the italicized portion of those passages, what does it mean to be Christian?
In other words, how have we been made holy?
根据上述经文的斜体部分，成为基督徒意味着什么？换句话说，我们是怎样成为圣洁的？

Acts 11:21,26 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

使徒行传 11:21,26 21 主与他们同在，信而归主的人就很多了。门徒称为“基督徒”是从安提阿起首。

Note: A believer in Jesus is called a Christian. Another name for a Christian is a disciple. A disciple is a follower. As a believer in Jesus, a Christian follows Jesus and his teachings. The life of a Christian can be called a life of Discipleship. Through the work of Christ, a believer's salvation is complete (justification). However, during this life, a Christian never stops growing and learning concerning the Christian life in word and action (sanctification).

注意：耶稣的信徒被称为基督徒。基督徒的另一个名字是门徒。门徒是追随者。作为耶稣的信徒，基督徒遵循耶稣

3. According to the bold portion of those passages, by making us holy, what new name do we have?

根据上述经文的粗体部分，通过成圣，我们有了什么新名字？

The proper name Holy Christian Church can be broken down as follows:

圣而公之教会可以如以下来理解：

HOLY — made sinless and pure

圣——使无罪并无玷污的

CHRISTIAN — having faith / trusting in Christ for Salvation

基督——有信心/相信基督的拯救

CHURCH — group of people

教会——一群人

The Holy Christian Church, therefore, properly consists of those people who are sinless and holy before God through faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Christian Church is all believers everywhere. 因此，圣而公之教会是由在上帝前无罪且圣洁的人组成的，经由在基督耶稣里的信心。圣而公之教会就是无处不在的信徒们。

IS THE CHURCH VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE?

教会是否有形？

If there is one Holy Christian Church is it visible or invisible? Look at the following passages:

如果只有一个圣而公之教会，那么这是否有形？请看下列经文：

1 Samuel 16:7 ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

撒母耳记上16:7 但耶和华对撒母耳说：“不要看他的外貌和他高大的身材，因为我不拣选他。耶和华看人不像人看人，人是看外表，耶和华是看内心。”

Galatians 3:26-28 *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

加拉太书3:26-28 你们因着信，在基督耶稣里都作了神的儿子。你们所有受洗归入基督的人，都是批戴基督的，并不分犹太人或希腊人，作奴仆的或自由人，男的或女的，因为你们在基督耶稣里都成为一体了。

Ephesians 2:19-22 ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ *In him the whole building is joined together* and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² *And in him you too are being built together* to become a dwelling in which God lives *by his Spirit*.
以弗所书2:19-22 这样看来，你们不再是外人和客旅，而是与圣徒一同作国民，是神家里的人了，并且建造在使徒和先知的根基上，基督耶稣自己就是奠基石。整座建筑都靠着祂连接配合，渐渐增长成为在主里面的圣所。你们在他里面也一同被建造，成为神借着圣灵居住的所在。

4. According to 1 Samuel 16:7 does God consider the visible or invisible things when He looks at men?

根据撒母耳记上16:7，当耶和华看人时，考虑的有形还是无形的事物？

5. According to the italicized portion of those passages, what does membership to this invisible Church depend on?

根据上述经文的斜体部分，这个无形的教会的成员所依靠的是什么？

6. Therefore, will there be any hypocrites (unbelievers) in this invisible Church?

因此，这个无形的教会中会有任何伪善者（非基督徒）存在吗？

Since membership in this Holy Christian Church is solely and exclusively a matter of faith in Jesus Christ, and since faith in Jesus Christ can only be seen by God, the Holy Christian Church is an invisible church.

由于这圣而公之教会中的成员是仅仅对在耶稣基督里有信心的人，并且由于在耶稣基督里的信心只有耶和华可以看到，因此这圣而公之教会是无形的教会。

This is why we say in the creeds that we believe it exists. We cannot see it, but we know that there are people around the world who in their hearts trust in Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life. The Holy Christian Church crosses all cultural, linguistic, and denominational lines. We are including ourselves in the Holy Christian Church and indeed joining together with every other Christian in the world when we confess the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

这也就是为什么我们在信经中说我们相信其存在。我们看不见，但是我们知道在世界上，有人在心底相信因耶稣而罪得赦免以及永生。圣而公之教会跨越文化、语言以及宗派的界限。我们将自己包括在圣而公之教会之中，当我们承认使徒信经和主祷文的时候，我们确实和世界上的其他基督徒们连接配合。

Hebrews 10:23-25 “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. **Let us not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but **let us encourage one another** - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

希伯来书10:23-25 “又应该坚持我们所宣认的盼望，毫不动摇，因为那应许我们的是信实的。我们又应该彼此开心，激发爱心，勉励行善。我们不可放弃聚会，好像有些人的习惯一样；却要互相勤勉。你们既然知道那日子临近，就更应该这样。”

Romans 1:7 “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints -”

罗马书1:7 “我写信给各位住在罗马，为神所爱，蒙召作圣徒的人-”

1 Corinthians 1:2 “To the church of God in Corinth,”

哥林多前书1:2写信给在哥林多神的教会，

Galatians 1:2 “To the churches in Galatia:”

加拉太书1:2 写信给加拉太的众教会：

7. According to the bold portions of those passages, what does God want Christians to do together? (what do the specific location names add to your answer?)

根据上述经文的粗体部分，上帝想要基督徒们做什么？（具体的地点可以为你的答案加些什么？）

Acts 2:42, 47 “They (first Christian church) devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... And *the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*”

使徒行传2:42,47 “他们（第一个基督教会）恒心遵守使徒的教训，彼此相通、擘饼和祈祷...主将得救的人，天天加给教会。”

8. According to the underlined portions of these passages what should Christians do and focus on as they gather together?

根据上述经文划线部分，基督徒们应该做什么？当他们聚集到一起时，应该关注什么？

9. According to the italicized portion, what is the result of focusing on these things, especially to the teachings of the apostles? (notice who is given the credit)

根据斜体部分，关注在这些事情上的结果是什么？尤其是针对使徒们的教导而言？（注意这应该归功于谁？）

2 Timothy 3:15-17— and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

提摩太后书 3:15-17 并且知道你是从小明白圣经，这圣经能使你因信基督耶稣有得救的智慧。圣经都是神所默示的[a]，于教训、督责、使人归正、教导人学义都是有益的，叫属神的人得以完全，预备行各样的善事。

10. According to 2 Timothy 3:15-17 What does God promise that His word does?

根据提摩太后书 3:15-17，上帝应许神的话语做什么？

Definition - The Marks of the Church - Wherever the pure Gospel can be found in Word and Sacrament (the Means of Grace) there we know that God is working. We know this because through the Means of Grace the Holy Spirit works to create and strengthen faith.

定义—教会的记号—在话语中以及圣礼中（恩典）任何我们能找到真正福音的地方，我们都能知道神在运行。我们知道这点是因为通过恩典，圣灵作工来创造和增强信心。

The Church is invisible by faith. Yet God wants us to gather around the Means of Grace.

Therefore there are many visible churches around the world. Does that mean that everyone who goes to church, sings a song at a gathering, or listens to God's Word in a Bible study belongs to this invisible Church?

教会因着信心是无形的。但是上帝想要我们在恩典之中聚集到一起。因此，世界上才有很多有形的教会。这意味着每个去教会，在聚会上唱歌或者在圣经学习中聆听神的话语的每个人都属于这无形的教会吗？

WHAT WARNINGS DOES GOD GIVE ABOUT CHURCH FELLOWSHIP?

关于教会，上帝给出了怎样的警告？

Matthew 7:21-23 ²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

马太福音7:21-23“不是每一个对我说：‘主啊，主啊！’的人，都能进入天国，唯有遵行我天父旨意的人，才能进去。到那日，必有许多人对我说：‘主啊，主啊！难道我们没有奉你的名传道，奉你的名赶鬼，奉你的名行过许多神迹吗？’但我必向他们声明：‘我从来不认识你们；你们这些作恶的人，离开我去吧！’”

11. Will all those who preach (prophecy) and do actions similar to what Jesus and the apostles did (even miracles) be saved?

那些像耶稣和使徒们一样去传道和做事（甚至是行神迹）的人都得到拯救了吗？

Why is this? What are the most important factors then when looking at visible churches on earth?

First read the following passages to see what the church is to teach:

为什么？当我们查看有形教会的时候，最重要的因素是什么？首先阅读下列经文，来看教会教导了什么：

John 17:14,17 ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by **the truth; your word is truth.**

约翰福音17:14,17¹⁴我把你的道赐给了他们；世人恨他们，因为他们不属于这世界，像我不属于这世界一样。¹⁷求你用真理使他们成圣；你的道就是真理。

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

马太福音28:18-20 耶稣上前来，对他们说：“天上地上一切权柄都赐给我了。所以，你们要去使万民作我的门徒，奉父子圣灵的名，给他们施洗（“奉父子圣灵的命，给他们施洗”或译“给他们施洗，归入父子圣灵的名”），我吩咐你们的一切，都要教导他们遵守。这样，我就常常与你们同在，知道这世代的终结。”

John 15:18-19 ¹⁸ “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you

belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. **That is why the world hates you.**

约翰福音15:18-19 “如果世人恨你们，你们要知道他们在恨你们以先，已经恨我了。你们若属于这世界，世人必定爱属自己的；但因为你们不属于世界，而是我从世界中拣选了你们，所以世人就恨你们。”

12. According to the bold portions of these passages, where does the truth come from?

根据上述经文的粗体部分，真理来自于哪里？

13. According to the underline portions of these passages, will all people believe and listen to this word and truth?

根据上述经文的划线部分，所有人都将会相信并聆听这话语这真理吗？

Some people will hate the truth (the Word of God) and try to change it. Will this happen inside visible churches? Is there false teaching in visible churches that we see in the world today? Why or why not? Read the following passages:

有些人会恨真理（上帝的话语）并试图去改变它。这会在有形的教会里吗？如今我们在世上见到的有形教会中，也存在这种错误的教导吗？为什么？阅读下列经文：

2 Timothy 4:2-3 ² Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, *to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.*

提摩太后书4:2-3 务要传道；无论时机是否适合，都要常作准备；要以多方的忍耐和教训责备人、警戒人、勤勉人。因为时候快要到了，人必容不下纯正的道理，反而耳朵发痒，随着自己的私欲，增添许多教师。

Romans 8:5-8 ⁵ *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires;* but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ *the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.* ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

罗马书8:5-8 随从肉体的人，以肉体的事为念；随从圣灵的人，以圣灵的事为念。以肉体为念就是死，以圣灵为念就是生命、平安；因为以肉体为念就是与神为仇，既不服从神的律法，也的确不能够服从；属肉体的人不能得神的喜悦。

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen,

masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ **It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.** Their end will be what their actions deserve.

哥林多后书11:13-15 这样的人是假使徒，是诡诈的工人，装成基督的使徒。这并不稀奇，因为撒旦自己也装作光明的天使，所以，撒旦的奴仆装成公义的仆役，也不必大惊小怪。他们的结局并按他们所作的而定。

14. According to the underline portions of these passages, will the truths of God's Word found in the Bible always be tolerated?

根据上述经文划线部分，人们总是会容得下圣经中上帝话语的真理吗？

15. According to the italicized portions of these passages, why will people not want to hear the truth?

根据上述经文的斜体部分，为什么人们不想要听到真理？

16. According to the bold portion of these passages, what will people do to suit their desires and to avoid the truth?

根据上述经文的粗体部分，为了迎合人们的私欲并避免真理，人们会做什么？

Galatians 1:6-9 ⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

加拉太书1:6-9 我很惊奇，你们这么快就离开了借着基督的恩呼召你们的那一位，去归向别的福音。其实那并不是另一个福音，只是有些搅扰你们的人，想把基督的福音改变了。但无论是我们，或是从天上来的使者，如果传给你们的和我们以前传给你们的福音不同，他就该受咒诅。我们已经说过，现在我要再说，如果有人传给你们的和你们以前所领受的福音不同，他就该受咒诅。

17. According to the bold portions of the passage will people try to change the Gospel of Christ?

根据上述经文的粗体部分，人们会改变福音吗？

Note: Paul refers to the false teachings as a “different gospel.” The teachings will have similarities to the True Gospel and will deceive many, but it will be missing the heart of the Gospel.

注意：保罗将错误的教导称为“不同的福音”。这个错误的教导和真正的福音教导会有相似之处并且会蒙骗很多人，但是却忽略了福音的核心。

18. According to the underlined portions of the passage, what is the end result of this and any false teaching that leads someone away from the grace of Christ?

根据上述经文的划线部分，这会导致什么最终后果？使人远离基督恩典的错误的教导的后果又是什么？

Among the visible churches of the world there are false teachings. Some teachers will appear to come from God, but will have clear false motives. Others may even think they are teaching what the Bible says but will be lead astray by other false teachers or by our sinful influences, such as our flesh (human reason), the world (sinful cultures) or the devil. Every denial of the true Word of God is a denial of Christ, since it is his Word which is being denied. Christians should take care to connect themselves with a church which is consciously striving to teach everything Christ commanded.

在世界上的有形教会中，存在着许多错误的教导。一些教士看起来好像是和神接近的，但却有着明显的错误的动机。其他人甚至会认为他们在教导圣经所说的，但是却被其他错误的教导引入歧途或是带来有罪的影响，比如我们的肉体（人类的理性），这个世界（有罪的文化）或者是恶魔。每个对上帝话语的否定即是对耶稣的否定，因为否定的就是耶稣的话语。基督徒应该务必要将自己和有意识去教导耶稣命令我们行的事的教会联系起来。

For a diagram of the visible and invisible church please see Appendix XII.

关于有形和无形教会可查看附录十二。

WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO GATHER (FELLOWSHIP) TOGETHER?

为什么上帝想要我们（团契生活）聚在一起？

Note: Here the word “fellowship” means “to have a common share” or “being in agreement.”

Earlier in Question 8 we looked at Acts 2:42,47 to see some examples of what Christians do when they gather together. Some examples included: Studying God’s Word, fellowship, the

Sacraments and prayer. But now we need to ask the question, with whom should we join together in these activities? Read the following passages to see what else Christians should do as they study the scriptures together:

注意：在这里，“团契生活”（fellowship）这个词意味着有着共同的分享，或是意见一致。早些时候再第八个问题中，我们查看了使徒行传2:42,47，看到了当基督徒们聚在一起的时候，他们所做的事的例子。其中一些包括：学习上帝的话语，团契生活，举行圣礼和祷告。但是现在我们需要问一个问题，这些活动中我们应该和谁一起做？阅读下列经文来查看当基督徒在一起分享经文时，他们还有要做什么事：

1 John 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

约翰一书4:1亲爱的，不要每个灵都信，总要试验那些灵是否出于神，因为有许多假先知已经来到世上了。

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures every day** to see if what Paul said was true.

使徒行传17:11 这里的人，比帖撒罗尼迦人开明，热切接受主的道，天天考查圣经，要知道所听的是否与圣经相符。

1 Timothy 4:16 ¹⁶ **Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them**, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

提摩太前书4:16 你要谨慎自己，留心自己的教训。在这些事上有恒心，因为你这样做，不但能救自己，也能救那些听你的人。

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to **watch out** for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way **that are contrary to the teachings you have learned. Keep away from them.**

罗马书16:17 弟兄们，我劝你们要提防那些离间你们、绊倒你们、使你们违反你们所学的教义的人。你们也要避开他们。

19. According to the bold portions of the passages what is one reason we join together?

根据上述经文的粗体部分，我们聚集在一起的其中一个理由是什么？

20. According to the underlined portions of the passages what is the result of examining the Scriptures and testing what is taught?

根据上述经文的划线部分，考查圣经来试验所传授的内容的结果是什么？

21. According to the italicized portions of the passages, what should we do with those who teach differently and bring a different Gospel?

根据上述经文的斜体部分，当我们和那些有着不同教导并带来不同的福音的人在一起时，我们应该怎么做？

How united should visible Christians be? What should they base their unity on? Read the following passages:

有形教会的基督徒们需要有多团结？他们的团结应基于什么？阅读下列经文：

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

马太福音28:18-20 耶稣上前来，对他们说：“天上地上一切权柄都赐给我了。所以，你们要去使万民作我的门徒，奉父子圣灵的名，给他们施洗（“奉父子圣灵的名，给他们施洗”或译“给他们施洗，归入父子圣灵的名”）我吩咐你们的一切，都要教导他们遵守。这样，我就常常与你们同在，直到这世代的终结。”

1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of **you agree with one another** so that there may be **no divisions** among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.”

哥林多前书1:10 “弟兄们，我凭着我们主耶稣基督的名，劝你们大家要同心，在你们中间不要分党，只要在同一的心思、同一的意念上团结起来。”

John 17:20-21 I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ **that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.**

约翰福音17:20-21 我也为那些因他们的话而信我的人求，使他们都合而为一，像父你在我里面，我在你里面一样。

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

雅各书1:22 你们应该作行道的人，不要单作听道的人，自己欺骗自己；

22. According to the underlined portions of the passages, what should we base our unity on?

根据上述经文的划线部分，我们的团结应基于什么？

23. According to the bold portions of the passages, how united in that doctrine should we be?
 根据上述经文的粗体部分，在教义里面我们应该要有多团结？

In the Old Testament the true prophets of God were in constant struggle with false prophets and unfaithful priests. These false prophets corrupted the true faith and modified God's Word in order to be more like the pagan religions and immoral worldly cultures that surrounded them. Over half the entire New Testament is written to defend a church who was in danger because of false teaching. The world in which we live has become quite religiously tolerant. Those who point out the errors of other religious groups are labeled as unloving and judgmental. Yet, our Lord has clearly told us that there are no such things as "little false teachings," that there will be those who teach falsely, and that we are to expose false teachings for what they are and to stay away from them.

在旧约中，上帝真正的先知们不断地与错误的教导以及虚假的祭司们作斗争。这些骗人的先知破坏真正的信心并且妄改上帝的话语，只是为了能够更像他们周围的那些异教以及不道德的世俗的文化。整本新约超过一半的部分是为了那些因为错误教导而处于危险之中的教会去辩护的。我们现在所处的世界对宗教已经比较包容了。那些指出其他宗教团体错误的人被贴上标签，认为是不友善的甚至是苛刻的。然而，我们的上帝很清楚地告诉我们，没有什么“有点错误的教导”，但是有想要进行错误教导的人，因为这些人，我们将会处于错误教导之中，我们应该做的，是远离他们。

So how can we know what is truth and what is falsehood? We cannot see into a person's heart like God can. Christians should not judge the hearts of others, yet God calls us to test the spirits and to examine what is taught. In order to do this, we are to test a church's published statements, declarations and professions by comparing them with the clear truths of God's Word. In this regard, the responsibilities for the individual Christian are weighty. In an age of non-denominationalism, examining the beliefs of a Christian group can at times be impossible. Yet, it is agreement on Bible teachings which establishes fellowship.

那么，我们如何得知什么是真理，什么又是谎言呢？我们不能像上帝一样看到一个人的心。基督徒不应该评断其他人的内心，而上帝却提醒我们去测试神灵，检验所教授的东西。为了做到这点，我们通过将他们与上帝明确的真理相比较，来检验一个教会公开的声明，宣告和和宣誓。从这点来看，每一个基督徒的责任都很重大。在一个“非宗派主义”的时代，检验一个基督徒团体的信仰不管在什么时候都是不可能的。但是，在圣经教导上的一致性建立了团契关系。

Think of the teachings of the Bible, the true Word of God as pure clean water. We want to drink the purest water possible to keep you healthy and make you strong. If water has dirt or

bacteria in it, it may still give you nourishment, but for others it may be very harmful and make them sick.

试图将圣经的教导，上帝真正的话语看做纯净的水。我们想要饮用尽可能干净的水来保持健康，强身健体。如果水里有污物或者细菌，它仍能给你营养，但是对他人来说，却是非常有害且能使他们生病。



It is easy to see extremely dirty water (1) that you never would want to drink, when you compare it to pure water (3). In the same way it is easy to see churches that are filled with many bad teachings. But it is harder to tell the difference between churches that have only a few errors (2) with pure teaching (3). As Christians who examine the scriptures we want to purify our teachings from any errors like we want to purify our water so that we can find the truth which will keep us spiritual healthy.

我们很容易将非常脏的水（1）看作是绝不会想要去饮用的东西，尤其当你和纯净水（3）相比较时。同样地，看到教会里充满许多错误的教导很容易，但是说出只有一点儿错误（2）的教会和有着正确教导（3）的教会之间的区别却很难。正如检验经文的基督徒们，我们想要像净化水一样去纠正错误的教导，这样我们就会明白真理是让我们拥有健康的属灵生命。

So what should Christians do when they see false teachings? Please read the following passages:

那么，当基督徒们见到错误的教导时？应该做些生命？请阅读下列经文：

2 John 1:10-11 ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

约翰二书 1: 10-11 若有人到你们那里，不是传这教训，不要接他到家里，也不要问他的安；因为问他安的，就在他的恶行上有份。

Revelation 2:12,14-16 ¹² "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ...¹⁴ Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ **Repent** therefore! ...

启示录 2:12,14-16 ¹²你要写信给别迦摩教会的使者说，那有两刃利剑的说：...¹⁴然而，有几件

事我要责备你，因为在你那里，有人服从了巴兰的教训；这巴兰曾教导巴勒将绊脚石放在以色列人面前，叫他们吃祭偶像之物，行奸淫的事。¹⁵你那里也有人照样服从了尼哥拉一党人的教训。¹⁶所以你当悔改！

24. According to the underlined portions of these passages, what happens when you are known publicly to associate with and support those who have false teachings?

根据上述经文划线部分，当你和那些有着错误教导的人有联系并支持他们时，会发生什么？

25. According to the bold portions of these passages, what does God ask those who support and encourage false teachings to do?

根据上述经文粗体部分，上帝让那些支持和鼓励错误教导的人去做什么？

The toleration or support of false teachers is a grievous sin against the LORD. If God has helped lead us to the truth in his Word in what manner should we lead others to the truth? Please read the following passages:

对错误教导的容忍或是支持是反抗上帝的严重的罪。如果上帝已经带领我们进入他的道的真理之中，我们应该用怎样的方式将他人带领到真理之中呢？请阅读下列经文：

1 Corinthians 8:1-3 Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

哥林多前书8:1-3 知识会使人自高自大，唯有爱心能造就人。

1 Peter 3:15-16 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

彼得前书3:15-16 有人问你们心中盼望的缘由，就要常作准备，以温柔敬畏的心回答各人；存着无亏的良心，叫你们在何事上被毁谤，就在何事上可以叫那诬赖你们在基督里有好品行的人自觉羞愧。

26. According to the bold portions of these passages, how should we correct others when they are teaching false doctrine?

根据上述经文的粗体部分，当其他人在教导错误的內容是，我们应当如何改正他们？

We should always teach with love, gentleness and respect. Read the following passages:

我们应当存着温柔敬畏和爱去作教导。阅读下列经文：

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

提摩太后书3:16-17 圣经都是神所默示的（或作“凡神所默示的圣经”），于教训、督责、使人归正、教导人学艺都是有益的，叫属神的人得以完全，预备行各样的善事。

Ephesians 4:2-3 ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

以弗所书4:2-3 凡事谦虚、温柔、忍耐，用爱心互相宽容。用和平彼此联络，竭力保守圣灵所赐合而为一的心。

27. According to the underline portions of these passages, what is the first step to take when someone has a misunderstanding about scripture?

根据上述经文划线部分，对圣经有误解时，应该做的第一件事是什么？

Titus 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have *nothing to do with him.*

提多书3:10 分门结党的人，警戒过一两次，就要弃绝他；

Matthew 18:15-18 ¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, *treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.* ¹⁸ “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

马太福音 18:15-18 “倘若你的兄弟得罪你，你就出去，趁着只有他和你再一处的时候，指出他的错来，他若听你，你便得了你的弟兄；他若不听，你就另外带一两个人同去，要凭两三个人的口作见证，句句都可定准。若是不听他们，就告诉教会；若是不听教会，就看他象外邦人和税吏一样。我实在告诉你们，凡你们在地上所捆绑的，在天上也要捆绑；凡你们在地上所释放的，在天上也要释放。”

28. According to the underline portions of these passages, how should one go to a brother who is dividing the church by what he teaches or does?

根据上述经文的划线部分，应如何对待那些按着自己教的或是做的来想要分裂教会的弟兄？

29. According to the bold portions of these passages, what will cause the two groups to be divided?

根据上述经文的粗体部分，什么会导致两个团体分裂？

30. According to the italicized portions of these passages, in the end after sharing the truth in love with patience and humility, how should the divisive person be treated?

根据上述经文斜体部分，用爱、耐心以及谦逊来分享真理之后，应如何对待试图去分裂的人？

Not all who teach or believe false teachings are in the same category however. Some are considered **weak brothers** while others are **persistent errorist**.

然而，并不是所有教导或相信错误教义的人都属于同一类。一些是信心较弱的弟兄，而另一些人，是一贯的错误主义者。

A weak brother -- A person who has lacked correct instruction on God's revealed teachings or someone who has spent very little time learning about the truths of Scripture. A weak brother is trying to understand the truth and is willing to listen and be taught.

信心较弱的弟兄——指在上帝显现的教义上缺乏正确指导的人，或是那些没有花很多时间学习话语的人。信心较弱的弟兄在试图去理解真理，并愿意聆听和学习。

If people are **willing to be instructed (a weak brother)**, we will not avoid them. Many of Paul's inspired letters were written to correct congregations who had strayed in respect to one or more teaching. Even Jesus' disciples held false ideas concerning his kingdom right up to the time of his ascension (see Acts 1:6), but Jesus did not avoid them. **It is our loving duty to patiently instruct people who are willing to be instructed.**

如果人（信心较弱的弟兄）愿意接受教导，我们将不会躲避他们。保罗的很多启发人心的信件都是为了纠正因为一种或多种教导而偏离正道的会众。甚至是耶稣的使徒也有过错误的想法，以为他的国会在耶稣升天的时候到来（见使徒行传1：6），但是耶稣也没有躲避他们。这是我们的爱的责任去耐心地教导那些希望如此的人们。

A persistent errorist -- Others may have studied the Bible for a long time. They believe and teach their false teachings to many others, even after being shown the truth from God's Word. A persistent errorist has clearly and repeatedly rejected the true teachings of the Bible.

一贯的错误主义者——那些可能已经学习圣经很长时间的人。他们相信并将他们错误的教义告诉其他人，甚至是在看到来自上帝话语的真相之后。他们已经很明显且不仅一次地拒绝圣经真正的教导。

We hope to speak privately and personally before an issue becomes public. However some situations require us to act in different ways. Please read the following passages:

我们在问题公之于众之前能够私下解决。然而，一些情况需要我们用不同的方式作出回应。请阅读下列经文：

Galatians 2:11-14 ¹¹ When Peter came to Antioch, I **opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.** ¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy **even Barnabas was led astray.** ¹⁴ When I saw that **they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel,** I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

加拉太书2：11-14 后来矶法(彼得)到了安提阿，因他有可责之处，我就当面抵抗他。从雅各那里来的人未到以先，他和外邦人一同吃饭；乃至他们来到，他因怕奉割礼的人，就退去与外邦人隔开了。其余的犹太人也都随着他装假，甚至连巴拿巴也随伙装假。但我一看见他们行得不正，与福音的真理不合，就在众人面前对矶法说：“你既是犹太人，若随外邦人行事，不随犹太人行事，怎么还勉强外邦人随犹太人呢？”

31. According to the underlined portions of these passages, why should we correct others publicly (face to face first if possible and in sometimes front of others)

根据上述经文的划线部分，为什么我们应该公开地纠正他人？（可以的话，先是面对面，有时候会在其他人面前）

If people are not willing to be instructed, but instead **they defend and teach their error**, we dare not do anything that would indicate we are tolerating or minimizing their error. In a public setting, we also need to be concerned about how our actions influence others.

When Christians gather together they pray, sing songs, preach, teach, practice the sacraments and do acts of service. When doing these activities together it shows an outward unity. It is extremely hard to show your disagreement with an error and

how serious a false teaching is when you outwardly express unity. Taking a firm stance on scripture and demonstrating this is not only carried out in words but also expressed clearly in action. This opens the door for genuine and loving discussions on what the truth of God's Word is. This leads us to the teaching of Church Fellowship. For a review of these Biblical principles please see Appendix XIII.

如果人们不愿意得到教导，取而代之的是，他们辩解并教导他们的错误，我们不敢做任何暗示我们会忍受或是减少他们错误的事。在公众场合，我们也需要思考我们的行为会如何影响他人。当基督徒们聚集在一起，祷告、唱歌、传道、教导、练习圣礼并履行服务行为。在做这些活动的时候，展现除了向外的团结。当你再对外表现团结的时候，对一个错误以及错误教导的严重性表达你的分歧是非常困难的。在经文中找到坚定的立场，并展示着不仅是以文字形式实行，还会在行动中清楚表明。对于什么是上帝话语的真相的真诚有爱的讨论打开了一扇大门。将我们带领到教会团契生活的教导。对这些圣经原则的复习请查看附录十三。

We must stand against false teaching in a humble and loving way to teach and defend the truth so others are not lead astray. This principle of non-toleration of false teachers also applies in a private setting. In that setting, however, we need to try to determine why our fellow Christians are holding to a false teaching. Do note:

我们必须以谦逊有爱的方式来站在错误教导的对立面，来维护真理，这样其他人才不会被引导偏离正道。对于错误教导的零容忍的原则也可以在私人场合中应用。但是，在这种情况下，我们需要试图查明为什么我们的基督徒弟兄们为错误教义所坚持。注意：

- 1) It is unloving to refrain from any activity with people without giving them an adequate and clear explanation for our actions.

对我们的行动不做出清晰完全的解释就阻止和人们的活动是无爱心的。

- 2) When we talk about our Lord, His Word and the great things He has done for us, this "division" often happens naturally over time.

当我们在谈论我们的主，他的话语以及他为我们所做的伟大的事时，这种“分裂”常常随着时间自然发生了。

Living these Biblical principles often leads to being misunderstood. Other people often view the application of these Biblical principles as saying one is better than another. This is not true nor the intent. There are three additional Biblical reasons why we avoid those who mix errors with God's Word. Please read the following passages and give a reason after each group of passages.

实践这些圣经原则通常会产生误解。一些人经常将这些原则的应用认为是一个比另一个要好。而这不是真的，也不是意图所在。为什么我们会回避那些将错误和上帝话语混合在一起的原因有三个圣经的解释。请阅读下列经文，并在每段经文后给出原因。

2 Corinthians 13:8—For we cannot do anything against the truth, but **only for the truth.**

哥林多后书13: 8 我们凡事不能敌挡真理，只能扶助真理。

Galatians 5:7-9—You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and **kept you from obeying the truth?** That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. **“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough”.**

加拉太书5: 7-9 你们向来跑得好，有谁拦阻你们，叫你们不顺从真理呢？这样的劝导不是出于那召你们的。“一点面酵能使全团都发起来。”

1 John 5:3 For **loving God** means that we carry out His commandments. And His commands are not burdensome.

约翰一书5: 3 我们遵守神的诫命，这就是爱他了，并且他的诫命不是难守的。

Reason # 1— Out of love for _____

理由1——出于对_____的爱

Galatians 5:7-9—You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. **“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough”.**

加拉太书5: 7-9 你们向来跑得好，有谁拦阻你们，叫你们不顺从真理呢？这样的劝导不是出于那召你们的。“一点面酵能使全团都发起来。”

2 Timothy 2:17-18—Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they **destroy the faith of some.**

提摩太后书2: 17-18 他们的话如同毒疮，越烂越大，其中有许米乃和腓理徒，他们偏离了真理，说复活的事已过，就败坏好些人的信心。

Reason # 2— Out of love for _____

理由2——出于对_____的爱

James 5:19,20—My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: **Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**

雅各书5: 19, 20 我的弟兄们，你们中间若有失迷真道德，有人使他回转；这人该知道叫一个罪人从迷路上转回，便是救一个灵魂不死，并且遮盖许多的罪。

1 Timothy 2:3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

提摩太前书2: 3 这是好的，在神我们救主面前可蒙悦纳，他愿意万人得救，明白真理。

Reason # 3— Out of love for _____

理由3——出于对_____的爱

Therefore we can summarize the teaching of **Church Fellowship** like this:

因此，我们可以总结出，团契生活的教导是这样的：

God wants his people to _____ with churches that *hold to his Word*.

上帝想要他的子民与遵守他的话语的教会_____。

God wants his people to _____ churches that *compromise his Word*.

上帝想要他的子民与对他的话语有危险的教会_____。

WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP?

团契生活的幸事是什么？

Colossians 3:12-17 “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

歌罗西书3: 12-17 “所以，你们既是神的选民，圣洁蒙爱的人，就要存（原文作“穿”。下同。）怜悯、恩慈、谦虚、温柔、忍耐的心。倘若这人与那人有嫌隙，总要彼此包容，彼此饶恕；主怎样饶恕了你们，你们也要怎样饶恕人。在这一切之外，要存着爱心，爱心就是联络全德的。又要叫基督的平安在你们心里作主；你们也为此蒙召，归为一体，且要存感谢的心。当用各样的智慧，把基督的道理丰富地存在心里（或作“当把基督的道理

丰丰富富地存在心里，以各样的智慧”），用诗章、颂词、灵歌，彼此教导，互相劝诫，心被感恩，歌颂神。无论作什么，或说话或行事，都要奉主耶稣的名，借着感谢父神。”

Acts 1:14—They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

使徒行传1: 14 这些人同着几个妇人，和耶稣的母亲玛丽亚，并耶稣的弟兄，都同心合意地恒切祷告。

Psalms 78:4-7—We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

诗篇78: 4-7 我们不将这些事向他们的子孙隐瞒，要将耶和華的美德和他的能力，并他奇妙的作为，述说给后代听。因为他在雅各中立法度，在以色列中设律法，是他吩咐我们祖宗，要传给子孙的，使将要生的后代子孙，可以晓得；他们也要起来告诉他们的子孙，好叫他们仰望神，不忘记神的作为；惟要守他的命令。

1 Corinthians 10:17 “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.”

哥林多前书10: 17 “我们虽多，仍是一个饼，一个身体，因为我们都是分受一个饼。”

32. According to the underlined portions of these passages, what blessings do we have in joining together with people on the basis of a unified faith?

根据上述经文的划线部分，我们和有着同一信仰的人聚在一起所带来的幸事有哪些？

Don't forget that the same blessings above are not only blessings that we receive from our fellow believers BUT they are blessings we **give** to them also. We sometimes forget how important our presence and prayers are to others!!

不要忘记这同样的幸事不仅是来自我们的弟兄姊妹的信心，也是我们给予他们的祝福。我们有时候会忘记自己的存在和为他人的祷告是多么重要！

God makes it clear (1 Corinthians 12) that **everyone** has special spiritual gifts to offer God in the church. **The ‘body of believers’ is put together by God and he desires that we all respect**

each others' gifts and that we all use ours for the good of the church. The church suffers when one of two things happens (and many times both happen at the same time):

上帝已经说得很清楚（见哥林多前书12章），在教会中，每个人都有献给主的属灵的恩赐。“信徒的身子”是由耶和華安置在一起，祂希望我们都能够尊重彼此的恩赐，并能够将自己的恩赐对教会做出贡献。当下列两件事中的其中一件发生时，教会的运作会受到妨碍（很多时候，两件事会同时发生）：

1) When we don't acknowledge someone else's gifts or treat them as if their gifts aren't as important as another person's gifts

当我们不承认或不重视其他人的恩赐天赋

2) When we fail to recognize and/or use our gifts.

当我们不能认识到或是使用自己的恩赐天赋

The benefits of being part of a church can be summarized in these words:

成为教会一员的好处可以用下列话语来总结：

Church is an experience where my faith is strengthened by connection with God's inspired Word. Other believers (typically pastors & Bible teachers) explain God's Word to me. I'm inspired with that Word (often through musical means). Other believers support me in my struggles (typically through social fellowship). And finally, church gives me an opportunity, not to watch, but to serve my fellow believers, who also serve me, as we have all been served by Christ. And we raise a common voice to tell of what our Savior Jesus has done for us, which we call "praising Him." Plain and simple, I can't get all that by myself at home.

教会生活是当我的信心与上帝鼓舞人心的话语相结合的经历。一些信徒（典型的有牧师以及圣经导师）为我解释上帝的话语。我能够从话语中得到获得属灵的灵感（通常是来自音乐的方式）。其他信徒在我挣扎时支持我（典型的有通过团契方式）。最后，教会给予我机会，不是作为旁观者，而是去服务与我一起的其他信徒们，同时，他们也在对我提高服务，正如我们侍奉基督。并且，我们有同一个声音，来宣扬我们的救世主耶稣为我们所做的事，也就是我们所说的“赞颂”。简单来说，这所有都是我自己一个人在家里无法完成的。

Note that all of these actions may not be used in your situation:

注意不是所有的行为都适用于你的情况：

Church membership has become less known in today's "non-denominational" setting. Being a member of a Christian congregation is making a statement. It is saying, "The beliefs of this group of believers and denomination are my beliefs." In our Lutheran churches, we express this truth when we approach the matter of membership in a local church. For an adult, baptism does not make a person a member of a specific church. Baptism connects them to the body of Christ.

For more information on this please read **Appendix XIV: The difference between Adult Baptism and Church Membership.**

教会成员在今日的“非教派”背景下不再那么知名。成为一名基督教会的成员即做出声明。“这个教派和信徒组成的团队的信仰即我所信。”在路德宗教会中，当我们在当地教会中提到成员的问题时，我们会传达这样的真理。对于一个成年人来说，受洗礼并不会使一个人成为一个特定教会的一员。洗礼将他们与耶稣的身体相连结。更多信息请阅读附录十四：成人受洗和教会成员的区别。

When individuals either join our local church or move to another, we follow procedures designed to express what the person professes to believe.

当个体不管是加入当地教会，或是去往另一个教会，我们会遵从以下步骤来表达个人所宣称的信仰。

Adult Confirmation: If a person has come to our congregation from a different denomination or from an unchurched background, a Bible Information Class is offered to the individual.

Following the completion of the Bible Information Class, if he/she is found to be in agreement with our church's teachings, the person is welcomed into membership by public confession of faith. Following this, the member is invited to partake in the Lord's Supper.

成人坚信礼：如果一个人从一个不同的教派或是没有教会背景，来到了我们的教会的话，可以给予圣经信息课程。完成这项课程之后，他就可以决定是否与我们的教会的教导相一致。如果是一致的话，那么欢迎他通过成人坚信礼成为教会一员，并收到邀请参加圣餐。

Transfer: When an individual comes to our congregation from another Lutheran church that is in agreement with our church, we recognize that his/her beliefs are the same as those of our congregation. Accordingly, we accept a transfer of membership from the former congregation to our congregation.

调动：当一个人是来自另一个与我们教会教导相一致的路德宗教会，我们视他的信仰与我们一样。相应地，我们也接受来自前教会的成员来到我们教会。

Release: When an individual leaves our congregation with plans to join a congregation outside of churches that agree with our doctrine, we grant that person a release, indicating that he/she is seeking membership in a congregation with which we are not in religious fellowship. Along with that release we give a stern yet heartfelt warning against the spiritual dangers they will face in that congregation that holds to false teachings.

离开：当一个人离开我们的教会并计划加入与我们教义不一致的教会时，表明他寻找的教

会中和我们不是在同一个宗教团契生活中的。随他离开时，我们对于他们将会遇到的属灵上的危险给出了严厉但却诚挚的警告，即会面临错误教导的危险。

The word “synod” is sometimes an unfamiliar word that is easy to mispronounce. And it is understandable because it isn’t a word most people use in everyday conversations. But to us in the Lutheran church it is a very meaningful word. That is because the word “synod” comes from a combination of two Greek words which mean “walking together”. In a synod we are joined together in church fellowship with fellow Christians in our country and around the world as we make our walk together through the difficulties of this world to our Savior’s arms in heaven. “教会会议会众”这个词在英文中比较难发音，不是人们熟悉的词，因为人们会在日常对话中用到。但对于我们，在路德宗教会中，这却是个有着不同意义的词。因为“教会会议会众”（synod）这一词源于两个意为“一同行走”的希腊单词的组合。在教会会议中，我们和我们国家以及世界上的基督徒们，聚集在教会的团契中，正如我们一同走过这俗世的困难，直到天堂我们救世主的臂弯之中。

Popular Denominations today:

Lutheran (路德宗), Reformed (改革宗), Presbyterian (长老会), charismatic (灵恩派), Catholic (天主教), Baptist (浸礼会/浸信会)

TAKING IT DEEPER

深入思考

- A. Agree or Disagree — The Holy Christian Church refers to all those who go to a church or a Bible study.
同意与否——圣而公之教会指代所有那些去教会或圣经学习的人。
- B. Agree or Disagree — We cannot see who belongs to the Holy Christian Church because we cannot see into people’s hearts.
同意与否——我们不能看出谁是属于圣而公之教会的，因为我们看不到人们的内心。
- C. Agree or Disagree — Everyone in the Invisible Church is going to heaven
同意与否——在无形教会中的每个人都会去天堂。

- D. Agree or Disagree — The Holy Christian Church and visible churches are the same thing.
同意与否——圣而公之教会和有形教会是相同的。
- E. Agree or Disagree — If someone belongs to the Holy Christian Church we can always practice fellowship with them.
同意与否——如果某个人属于圣而公之教会，我们总是可以与他组成团契。
- F. Agree or Disagree — Long term attending at a church expressing a type of agreement and fellowship.
同意与否——长期参加教会表达一种协议和团契。
- G. Agree or Disagree — It is the responsibility of each individual or family to check the teachings of the church they are attending and to see if they are in agreement or not.
同意与否——每个人或每个家庭有责任检查他们所参加的教会的教义，并看看他们是否同意。
- H. Agree or Disagree — We can view God's Word as a buffet line, picking and choosing what we want to believe and agree upon.
同意与否——我们可以将上帝的话语看作是自助线，可以挑选我们想要相信并且同意的。
- I. Agree or Disagree — There are some portions of God's Word that are more important to agree upon than other portions of God's Word.
同意与否——上帝的话语中有些部分比起其他部分要更重要，更需要去认同。
- J. Agree or Disagree — Agreeing to disagree is no unity at all.
同意与否——求同存异中是没有团结的。
- K. Agree or Disagree — When we come across someone who is teaching false doctrine we should immediately keep away from them and want nothing to do with them.

同意与否——当我们遇到在教授错误教义的人时，我们应该马上远离他们，并和他们撇开关系。

- L. Agree or Disagree — It doesn't make a difference if I attend many churches or what the church believes. The most important thing is my personal faith. The church I attend doesn't not impact my faith in a large way.

同意与否——如果我参加许多教会或者教会相信的话是什么，这没什么区别。最重要的是我的个人信念。我参加的教会不会大大影响我的信仰。

- M. Agree or Disagree — We do not fellowship with those who do not believe as we do out of love for God's Word, our own souls, and the souls of those who are in error.

同意与否——我们出于对上帝话语的爱、我们的内心以及那些有错误的人的内心去相信，我们不和不相信的人组成团契。

- N. Agree or Disagree — Fellowship is predominantly a positive concept, a freedom to express a oneness in faith in prayer, worship, and the sacraments.

同意与否——团契生活主要是一个积极的概念，表达祷告信仰同一性的自由以及圣礼。

- O. Apply it: Since we cannot and should not judge someone's heart, how do we know who we can and should join together in with fellowship?

如何应用：既然我们无法也不应该评断别人的内心，那我们如何得知我们可以并应和他人组成团契？

- P. Apply it: When we meet other Christians, what can we rejoice in? What should we talk about? If there are differences what steps should we take? What activities can we share in?

如何应用：当我们遇见其他基督徒时，我们可以欣喜什么？我们应该谈论什么？如果有存在差异，我们应该采取什么步骤？我们可以分享什么活动？

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