The Influence of Christian Churches on Chinese Students

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**Introduction**

Many Chinese students are not familiar with Christianity. As a Chinese student interested in Christianity, I had the experience of going to the Greater Lafayette Chinese Alliance church during my first semester at Purdue University. After witnessing the rapid population increase of this Christian community, I decided to study about why Chinese students are easy to be attracted by Christian churches. Three articles helped me to answer my question. While DeMar (2009) introduced the significant contributions of Christians that generate strong impacts to the world, Lacina (2002) analyzed the problems international students met in their social life in the U.S. and points out that religion difference is an important aspect to consider. Furthermore, Yang (1998) focused on why Chinese people in the U.S. are easy to convert to Christianity.

**Literature Review**

To prove that Christianity have powerful influence on people, the work of DeMar (2009), *the impact of Christianity on the world* gives several examples of great Christians who did outstanding contributions to the world. The article supports the idea that “the history of Western civilization is the history of the development and implementation of the Bible to all of life” by the facts of history that Christian scientists, explorers, philosophers, artists, inventors, and writers have been the authorities in their fields (para.5). According to the book 1,000 Years, 1000 People: Ranking the Men and Women Who Shaped the Millennium (as cited in DeMar, 2009, para 7), six out of ten entries who were considered had changed the world were Christians. In DeMar (2009)’s opinion, from helping the poor, widows, and orphans to the development of science, the abolition of slavery, and the development of art and music, and so much more, the Christian worldview has been the instrumental document (para 17). I think the fact of history has proved that Christianity has a certain influence on people so that Christians are able to be contributive in various fields.

It’s clear that Christianity have the power to influence people, it also have a close relationship with international students studying in the U.S. In the article *preparing international students for a successful social experience in higher education*, Lacina (2002) introduces the problems that international students may face in social life. She states that some students experience loneliness; others may have problems due to their unfamiliarity with U.S. customs and values (p.21). As Al-Sharideh and Goe (1998) also point out, international students may also experience a loss of social status because their social standing in their homeland may not be recognized as important in the United States (as cited in Lacina, 2002, p.21). Other than language diversity, the article illustrates that religion is an important element to consider when discussing cultural differences. “There appears to be no greater influence on cultural customs and practices than religion” (p.23). I agree with the article that the social environment is an important part of campus life. International students are considered as the minority of the campus, since Christian churches are conclusive communities that welcome both domestic and international students, it is common to see Chinese students grow interest in Christianity and Christian churches.

In order to explain the influence of Christian churches on Chinese people, it’s important to understand the specific reasons for Chinese people to choose church communities. Being more focused, the article *Chinese conversion to evangelical Christianity: The importance of social and cultural contexts* is based on the analysis of conversation among Chinese immigrants in various factors. Yang (1998) firstly introduces his personal experiences of going to the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington D.C. and indicates that a high convert rate of adults is a common characteristic in many Chinese-American churches. (p.240) According to the ethnographic search, “a majority of Chinese church members are adult converts from non-Christian family backgrounds. Most of them converted to evangelical Protestantism after coming to the United States” (p.240). The article gives a conclusion that social and cultural changes in China, institutional factors and the universal challenge of modernity have impacted Chinese to become Christian (p.254).

**Conclusion**

In my opinion, firstly, Christian churches have the capacity to influence Chinese students, the article of DeMar (2009) supports my idea by proving that Christianity has a great impact to the world, because there is a significant number of Christians who have done outstanding contributions to the world. Secondly, the Christian churches attract international students, especially Chinese students because of the characteristics of church communities and the factor of Chinese students’ religion backgrounds. Many Chinese students have the affection to Christian churches even if they don't have religion backgrounds. I agree with Lacina (2002) that some Chinese students have the feeling of being minority after leaving their home country, thus they are drawn into churches to avoid the feeling of being foreigners. Thirdly, Yang (1998) answers my question further by illustrating that that social and cultural changes in China, institutional factors and the universal challenge of modernity are the main factors of why Chinese are especially easy to be influenced by Christianity. The three articles focused on different problems, however, they answered my research question step by step.

References

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