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Policy Dilemmas in China's Church-State Relations: An Introduction

Containing religion's social and political influence has become a leading policy concern for China's leaders in recent years, and their methods of doing so have strained China's relations with the United States. The salience of religious policy within China is in part a result of unanticipated rapid growth in religious activity. When China's reform era began in 1978, religion appeared moribund. All religious venues had been closed or destroyed, and few visible signs of its survival remained. Yet by the turn of the century, China's government reported that more than 200 million religious believers worshiped in eighty-five thousand authorized venues, and estimates by outside observers are higher yet.[1]

As in previous eras, Buddhists are most numerous, with more than 100 million adherents, 320,000 nuns and monks, and sixteen thousand temples and monasteries nationwide. Tibetan Buddhism remains a vital force in Tibet and western Sichuan Province, as does Islam in the northwest region of Xinjiang, where the majority of China's 18 million Muslims and thirty-five thousand mosques are concentrated. Christianity's inclusion within China's religious revival is particularly surprising. Until recently, most outside observers viewed the Christian missionary enterprise in China as a failure, drowned in the sea of history. Yet by the end of the millennium, China's Catholic population had swelled from 3 million in 1949 to more than 12 million,[2] surpassing the number of Catholics in Ireland. China now has about five thousand officially authorized Catholic churches and meeting points and the same number of clergy, almost half of which are located in Hebei Province. Protestantism in China has grown at a faster

pace during the same period, multiplying from 1 million to at least 30 million adherents—with estimated figures as high as 45 million to 60 million—serviced by twenty thousand officially authorized clergy and more than thirty-five thousand registered churches and meeting points.[3] Protestantism's growth has occurred simultaneously in diverse regions, from the southeastern coastal areas to the densely populated central provinces of Henan and Anhui to the minority regions of China's Far Southwest and Northeast. China now has the world's second-largest evangelical Christian population—behind only the United States—and if current growth rates continue, China will become a global center of evangelical Christianity in coming decades.

A host of religious and quasi-spiritual groups and sects that the government does not recognize have also sprouted up in virtually every corner of Chinese society. Dozens of colorfully named religious sects—such as Eastern Lightning, Established King, and the Heavenly Soldiers Fraternal Army—have emerged in remote corners of China's vast rural hinterland, often cohering around charismatic leaders who preach doomsday messages and claim to be the "Supreme Savior" or the "returned Jesus," attracting up to hundreds of thousands of adherents.[4] Other movements have cohered around masters of *qigong* (a quasi-mystical traditional Chinese breathing exercise) and other traditional Chinese spiritual disciplines, also attracting large followings. The banned Falungong *qigong* sect, for example, claimed tens of millions of practitioners before the government launched its nationwide campaign to exterminate the group in 1999.[5]

Church-State Tensions

Unsurprisingly, relations between China's resurgent religious groups and the officially atheistic Communist Party state have been fraught with tension. As in other communist states, China's leaders sought first to eradicate religion (during the 1950s and 1960s) and then to co-opt and control it. The policy framework established after 1978 provides limited space for religious believers to practice their faith but also calls for comprehensive control measures to prevent religion from emerging as an independent social force. At the broadest level, the government has sought to constrain religious activity by conferring recognition on only five world religions (Buddhism, Catholicism, Taoism, Islam, and Protestantism). For each, the government erected a hierarchically ordered, monolithic "patriotic" organ-

ization—patterned after other Leninist mass organizations—and gave them sole representative authority over their respective religious adherents. Political authorities appoint loyalists or even Communist Party cadres to leadership positions within the religious organizations and give them authority over all religious venues, training seminaries, and clergy appointments.

Official regulations also stipulate tight government control over every aspect of religious existence, dictating acceptable forms and contents of religious services, the publication and distribution of materials for worship and training, and interaction with foreigners. Official control extends even to the realm of beliefs. Political authorities impose boundaries for acceptable religious doctrines, denouncing beliefs that emphasize evangelism, supernaturalism, or salvational doctrines that challenge the government's religious policies or contradict its projected symbolic order, which depicts all of Chinese society as unified under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule. In addition to enforcing the myriad regulations governing religion—undertaken primarily by the government's Religious Affairs Bureau and the police's Ministry of Public Security—the government takes proactive measures to ensure loyalty and compliance from religious figures, organizing frequent "patriotic education" campaigns for clergy and requiring religious leaders to participate in intensive propaganda courses that cover such topics as official religious policy, CCP history, and Marxist-Leninist ideology.[6]

Within these constraints, authorities allow limited yet meaningful religious participation. Buddhist and Taoist temples, for example, teem with worshippers, and most officially authorized Catholic and Protestant churches are filled to capacity on any given Sunday, as congregants endure the constraints imposed on their parishes in exchange for the opportunity to worship in public. Churches conduct a widening range of services, catering to the spiritual needs of youth, the elderly, married couples, and other religious demographic groups and many offer an array of social and welfare services.

The government's external constraints and internal manipulations conflict with religious groups' own norms of operation, beliefs, and values, however, and underlying scenes of packed churches, temples, and mosques are profound tensions between the state's demands for control and religious identities. Political authorities structure religious organizations according to their own interests—such as reorganizing Catholic dioceses without consulting church leaders and forcing associational Protestant groups into the highly bureaucratized Three-Self Patriotic Movement

(TSPM)—and, in doing so, alienate the faithful. The party-state's practice of limiting the number of religious sites is another point of contention, as many churches are packed beyond capacity, making for an uncomfortable worship experience, or are too distant for convenient access, or both. The appointment of unpopular figures to leadership positions within the "patriotic" religious organizations and to government-mandated Democratic Management Committees within individual churches, temples, and mosques is an enduring source of friction, creating divisions within religious groups and often leading to corruption, as co-opted leaders and their political backers siphon off the revenues and resources of the organizations they were appointed to represent.

The Communist Party's explicit policy of training and installing "patriotic" religious personnel to clerical positions is an even-greater source of conflict with religious believers. The method of ordination for Catholic bishops, for example, is a long-standing litmus test for clergy legitimacy among parishioners, who reject bishops who lack Vatican approval. Although the dividing line may not be as clear for Protestant pastors or Islamic imams, congregants are keenly aware that some of their leaders' loyalties to the regime trump their commitment to serving the faithful. Tensions are exacerbated when co-opted religious figures attempt to revise religious doctrines or reinterpret sacred tenets to conform to policy imperatives. For example, political authorities have long required official Catholic clergy to endorse its policies on abortion and birth control against church tradition. Similarly, senior figures in the official Protestant church have long denounced the core Protestant doctrine of "righteousness by faith" on grounds that it creates divisions between believers and unbelievers, in opposition to the conservative theological views of the vast majority of China's Protestants.[7]

Finally, official constraints on a wide range of religious activities conflict with religious norms and values. The government's stipulations that all religious activity must occur within approved venues and be led by authorized clergy run counter to the associational traditions of many religious forms; it also suppresses their evangelical identity, which favors itinerant evangelism. Concerned with religion's mobilizational power, authorities stipulate that all activities be conducted in an "orderly" manner, implicitly prohibiting all charismatic forms of worship and other popular practices. The government's long-standing prohibition of minors' receiving religious instruction is a source of tension with all believers who seek to raise their children within their own faith traditions.

At the heart of the tensions between religion and China's political authorities lies conflicting demands for loyalty. Religious faith commands an allegiance that transcends political authority, whereas the Communist Party's enduring imperative is to eliminate social and ideological competition. Religious beliefs and doctrines equip the faithful with conceptual resources to critically assess government policies and, indeed, Communist Party rule itself. Faith also endows believers with resources for resisting state demands: the promise of salvation for the faithful, clear behavioral guidelines, and feelings of solidarity with fellow believers offer powerful motivations to remain true to one's convictions in the face of official repression. For religious believers in China, these core incentives are reinforced by shared memories that contrast sharply with the party line. All religions suffered untold abuse and calamity under China's Communist Party rule, particularly during the rule of Mao Zedong (1949–76). Moreover, official abuses occurred with the active support of the "patriotic" religious organizations that now claim sole representative authority over their respective religious populations, even though many of the organizations' current leaders were in positions of authority during the repressive Mao era.

Resistance and Repression

Irreconcilable differences between the state's demands and religion's interests have compelled large numbers of religious believers in China to reject the government's system of religious control and operate outside official boundaries. Resistance is widespread among Tibetan Buddhists who remain loyal to the Dalai Lama and among Muslims in Xinjiang who refuse to subject themselves to the government's "patriotic education" campaigns.[8] The open defiance of thousands of Falungong adherents after China's leaders promulgated a nationwide ban on the group stunned political authorities and outside observers alike.

Perhaps most surprising, however, is the systematic and widespread resistance of the majority of China's Catholics and Protestants to their representative "patriotic" religious organizations. The Vatican and independent specialists estimate that the number of Catholics worshipping in "underground" churches in China is more than double the 4 million members in the official Catholic Patriotic Association. The ratio is similar for China's Protestants: an estimated 30 million to 45 million believers worship in illicit "house churches," compared with the 15 million members of churches under TSPM control.[9] Nor are their members isolated. The

Catholic Church's integrated clerical structure endows the underground church with considerable mobilizational capabilities. Although many Protestant house churches are relatively small and autonomous, large networks have also emerged across the country, in some cases claiming millions of adherents and having operations in virtually every province.

China's authorities have responded with a mixture of accommodation and repression. In many areas, unofficial religious groups have become a relatively institutionalized—though vulnerable—part of the social fabric. In areas of the country with long-standing traditions of lax governance—such as China's Far Southwest, Northeast, and southern coastal area—local authorities grant considerable leeway to autonomous religious groups. Many local party cadres and village leaders in the minority regions of southwestern Guizhou and Yunnan Provinces, for example, are religious believers themselves, and house churches operate openly in the southern coastal city of Wenzhou and among the minority Korean populations in China's northeastern province of Heilongjiang. Local authorities often turn a blind eye to house churches within their jurisdiction, provided that they remain small and autonomous and avoid contact with foreigners. In some locales, underground Catholic priests and those in the Catholic Patriotic Association hold services in the same church.[10]

At the same time, China's rulers regularly use force against religious groups that defy its policies and threaten its monopoly over social organization. Religious repression tends to be most harsh in areas where the state lacks sophisticated control mechanisms and autonomous religious activity is growing most rapidly or is linked with separatist movements. The widespread abuses of human rights in the religious and ethnic minority regions of Tibet and Xinjiang are well documented.[11] Among the majority Han population, the poor, largely rural, central province of Henan has logged the most accounts of religious persecution, followed by neighboring Anhui and Shandong Provinces.[12] Sporadic arrests of unauthorized religious leaders are also common in large, politically sensitive cities, such as Beijing and provincial capitals, although the state's comprehensive methods of coercion in such areas usually obviate the need for extreme measures.

Regional disparities aside, nationwide trends in recent years suggest an overall rise in government repression of unauthorized religious groups.[13] The crackdowns come amid government concerns of broader social unrest. Urban unemployment now exceeds 11 percent, and more than 125 million rural workers are underemployed.[14] Official corruption is endemic, consuming a staggering 13 to 17 percent of gross domestic product.[15] The

pervasive wielding of political power for private economic gain has transformed China from a highly egalitarian society into one of the world's most unequal in less than three decades.[16] These trends have eroded the regime's legitimacy and fueled social discontent, resulting in a dramatic rise in mass protest in both rural and urban areas.[17] To counter growing civil unrest, authorities launch periodic "strike hard" anticrime campaigns targeting a wide range of criminal offenses. Religious believers in unauthorized groups are often included in the dragnet along with political and labor dissidents and common criminals.

A spike in official abuse also came with the government's campaign to eradicate the Falungong. When Falungong adherents resisted, the party-state mobilized its machinery of repression, resulting in an increasingly brutal crackdown with tens of thousands of arrests, widespread psychological and physical abuse, and, according to foreign human rights reports, hundreds of deaths.[18] With the campaign against the Falungong winding down, political authorities have turned their attention to other religious groups that are capable of mobilizing large numbers of adherents, using vague definitions of "cult" to denounce them and to justify harsh repression of them. Internal documents issued by the Ministry of Public Security detail the government's designs to develop a nationwide communications system to track, infiltrate, and ultimately crush independent social and religious networks.[19] The documents offer detailed instructions to local police to compile personality profiles of leading religious figures, improve intelligence networking with other government agencies, mobilize reconnaissance teams to infiltrate religious groups, coerce the groups' own members to spy for them, and, ultimately, to arrest all members "in one blow."

A widening gulf between state demands and religious allegiance may give rise to more open conflict. In China's religious landscape, the most volatile terrain is where religious beliefs link with competing political agendas. This is most visible in the autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang, where religious identities are strong and political separatist movements are active. China's leaders have long viewed Buddhist monasteries in Tibet as closely allied with proindependence activism. The same holds true for Muslim mosques in Xinjiang (particularly among the Uighur minority), which are purportedly linked with separatist movements that seek to create an independent "East Turkistan." More recently, millenarian sects espousing explicitly revolutionary agendas have arisen throughout rural China. For example, one group known as the Heavenly Soldiers Fraternal Army practiced shamanistic rituals of spirit possession and exorcism and

"pledged to fight for a new, divine regime free from social classes, authorities, grades and ranks, and the like." The sect was able to recruit thousands of followers from more than one hundred villages in southwestern China before authorities took action against it.[20]

Religious Revival and Political Change: Comparative Perspectives

History suggests that China is approaching a critical juncture in church-state relations. The Cultural Revolution taught China's Communist Party that religion cannot be eradicated by force. After three decades of rapid religious growth—much of it unsanctioned by the state—China's rulers are now realizing that they are unable to control and contain religion by government dictate. Nor do current trends bode well for increased official vigilance against religion's perceived threat to the CCP's rule. Religion will continue to hold a strong appeal in a Chinese society undergoing wrenching social and economic transition, while the deepening influence of transnational forces as China integrates into the global economy will further weaken its system of comprehensive social control.

Experiences from other countries and China's own history suggest that China's rulers face two broad options: they can either accommodate burgeoning religious groups and integrate them into a broader civil society, or they can repress them and create a mobilized opposition to the established order. China's own history illustrates this choice well. Popular religious groups have been an enduring feature of China's social landscape for centuries. For the most part, one leading scholar observes, such groups met the needs of "peasants, laborers, and artisans who needed support, assurance, and a renewed sense of their own worth and continuity" in relatively peaceful coexistence with political authorities.[21] China's emperors periodically sought to eradicate autonomous religious groups, however, usually in response to the groups' growing institutionalization and influence in society. Rulers' zealotry in repressing autonomous religious groups derived from the structure of China's social and political order, which was conceived as a single, monolithic hierarchy sustained by heaven's mandate. Thus the very existence of alternative social groups offering salvation was an affront to the emperor's totalistic claims, spurring official crackdowns that, in turn, provoked popular uprisings.

These inherent tensions—which resemble church-state relations today—have endowed China with an unparalleled history of religious-based political rebellion. As C. K. Yang observes in his classic study of religion in Chi-

nese society, "Religious rebellion crowded the records of every decade after the middle of the eighteenth century. Few political rebellions of any appreciable proportions were totally unconnected with some religious element or organization."[22] The most prominent example is the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64), which originated when Hong Xiuquan, a failed government official examinee, came upon some Christian evangelical tracts and, after a lengthy illness, convinced himself that he was the younger brother of Jesus. The sectarian religious movement that Hong founded eventually sought to topple the Qing dynasty, launching a civil war that lasted fourteen years and claimed more than 20 million lives. Although no religious group in China today is capable of catalyzing a similar catastrophe, continued government persecution may antagonize religious adherents to stage concerted protests, which, if done in tandem with other disaffected social segments, could escalate into a mass rebellion against the government.

Communist states in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union similarly tried, and failed, to repress, control, and co-opt religion.[23] Poland's Solidarity movement, the juggernaut of social and political change in Eastern Europe, fused the material interests of labor with Polish nationalism and Catholic faith, creating an irrepressible force for political change.[24] Similarly, East Germany's "revolution of the candles" began with peaceful candlelit demonstrations around Leipzig's Nikolai Church in September 1989 and over the following weeks grew to mass gatherings of 300,000 people. An East German sociologist studying the demonstrations has found that the core of early protesters were members of church groups who had already formed communities of trust and solidarity within an otherwise atomized society.[25] Other authoritarian states adopted less repressive policies toward their religious populations, including South Korea in the 1980s, Taiwan under Chiang Ching-kuo, and a number of authoritarian regimes in Latin America.[26] Although religion also played a catalyzing role in these countries' democratic transition, for the most part, religious leaders advocated nonviolent change, moderating more radical opposition forces.[27]

The fundamentalist attributes of many of China's resurgent religious groups today offer another point of comparison. Consistent with the emergence of religious fundamentalism in other countries, much religious revival in China today may be seen as a backlash against the secularization of society.[28] China's secularization process was even more rapid and extreme than that in most countries where fundamentalist religion has

emerged. Mao-era mass political campaigns repeatedly attacked religious beliefs and practices along with other forms of traditional culture, replacing them with a quasi-religious utopian Marxist ideology and a personality cult of Chairman Mao—both of which were discredited by the Cultural Revolution's destructive culmination. As with fundamentalist religion elsewhere, China's house-church Protestants, underground Catholics, and many indigenous sects and cults—including the Falungong—claim to be the defenders of true religion (by upholding orthodoxy or orthopraxy) against the party-state's secular ideology, its restrictive policies, and the compromised "patriotic" religious organizations. Emerging in a hostile environment, many groups form separate enclaves with sharp boundaries, mobilize adherents with millenarian or messianic doctrines, and define their strategies for action against the perceived threats posed by their adversaries.

Although these attributes endow fundamentalist religious groups with considerable mobilizational capabilities, their social and political impact depends largely on the reaction of the established order to their emergence. Countries with established civic institutions have been able to absorb the energies of fundamentalist religious groups by "draining off anxiety and resentment in response to social and economic crises, and converting them into secular politics and public policy."[29] Fundamentalist religious movements in Western democratic states, India, and Latin America, for example, have largely been integrated into broader society and have even utilized the social capital they generate to promote economic development and democratic governance.[30] By contrast, interventionist states that have repressed the institutions of civil society and sought to restrict religion's expression have engendered religious radicalism and militancy. The rise of militant Islam in twentieth-century Egypt, Algeria, and Iran, for example, is intrinsically linked with the persistent efforts of their authoritarian states to repress autonomous social organization and political dissent, whereas radical Islamic movements in the more moderate states of Turkey and Indonesia have held less popular appeal.

China's leaders face similar choices today. They can either accommodate popular religious forms by adopting broader reforms that protect autonomous civic institutions, or they can attempt to repress them through coercion and brute force. China's history and experiences in other countries suggest that the latter option will only breed social unrest and rebellion. Although the CCP has stepped back from its extreme antireligion policies of the Mao era, China's leaders have not yet demonstrated the political will

to embrace a more accommodative posture. Rather, they occupy a slippery middle ground in which the rhetoric of "freedom of religious belief" coexists with ongoing efforts to repress religion's most popular forms. Faced with the continued rapid growth of fundamentalist religious groups, the choice China's leaders face is an increasingly urgent one. In the absence of decisive measures to reform its policies toward religious groups and other civic institutions, however, their current middle ground may prove to be a decision against adaptation, with pernicious implications for both the state and social development.

Official Dialogue on Issues of Religious Freedom

The rise in importance of church-state relations within China remains largely unexamined either in China or in the United States. China's leaders prefer to avoid the subject entirely, enforcing a ban, until recently, on internal discussion of the subject. American concerns about violations of religious freedom, in turn, have been expressed primarily in the form of criticism over individual cases. Until the mid-1990s, religious repression was rarely mentioned in debates over China policy in Washington (with the exception of Tibet). During the 1990s, however, reports of growing persecution of Christians abroad—including in China—combined with the perceived indifference to these abuses within the U.S. foreign policy establishment gave rise to a groundswell of American popular support for legislation to advance religious freedom abroad. The resulting International Religious Freedom Act, passed in 1998, created an Office of International Religious Freedom, headed by an ambassador-at-large, within the State Department and a U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The act effectively institutionalized U.S. government concern for religious freedom abroad, requiring, among other mandates, that the State Department issue an annual report on religious freedom in other countries and that the president take action against countries found to violate religious freedom.

Every annual State Department report on international religious freedom has listed China as a "country of concern." In response to the initial report in 1998, China denied requests for a dialogue from Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Robert Seiple. By the time the George W. Bush administration came into office in 2000, religious persecution had become a leading issue in bilateral relations. Chinese officials refused to meet with officials from the International Religious Freedom

Office, however, during a U.S. embassy–sponsored trip to China in March 2001. In his first face-to-face encounter with China's president Jiang Zemin, President George Bush raised the issue of religious freedom, making clear his concern about the issue at the October 2001 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Shanghai. Bush also conditioned his planned trip to China in February 2002 on the Chinese government's granting him the opportunity to make a live and uncensored televised speech on religious freedom and human rights (accepting a recommendation from the Commission on International Religious Freedom).[31] China's leaders conceded—Bush's speech aired on China's CCTV on February 21, 2002—and religious freedom became one of the most prominent issues during the second trip.

The Chinese resistance to dialogue on the issue of religious freedom has recently begun to change. In July 2002, at Beijing's invitation, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom John Hanford visited China, and exchanges on issues of international religious freedom during broader dialogues on human rights followed. But the dialogue remains sporadic and unfocused. For the most part, businesses, faith-based organizations, and other nongovernmental organizations with China portfolios have either remained on the sidelines or have harnessed discourse on religious freedom in China to domestic political agendas. As a result, the focus has been on governmental prerogatives, and policy debates have been superficial at best and manipulative at worst.

About This Book

God and Caesar in China seeks to take initial steps toward a grounded dialogue on advancing religious freedom in China. The volume grew out of a conference sponsored by the Pew Civitas Program in Faith and Public Affairs at the Brookings Institution in February 2002. The conference participants are leading specialists on church-state relations in China, yet they also hold a diverse array of perspectives, coming from Hong Kong, mainland China, and the United States, with backgrounds in academia, government, and human rights advocacy.

Rather than attempt the unwieldy task of surveying China's entire religious landscape, we decided to conduct a closer historical examination of China's Catholics and Protestants, and their interaction with the state, in greater depth. Whereas many religious forms coexist relatively harmo-

niously with CCP rule, Christianity's congregational form, cogent belief system, close historical links with Western churches, and the hierarchical order within the Catholic Church leading to the ultimate authority in the pope create a constant source of conflict between state demands and religious norms and values. As the representatives of the dominant religions in the United States, Catholic and Protestant churches and faith-based organizations have extensive transnational networks leading into China, and they hold the capacity to exert considerable influence.

This volume addresses three sets of related questions. The first deals with official control of religion in China. Why and how does China's government seek to regulate religion? How intrusive are the government's institutions of control? How much latitude does the government give religious groups to govern themselves and conduct religious activities? How pervasive is the Chinese government's repression of religious groups and believers who fail to comply with its policies?

Next, we examine the interaction between China's Catholics and Protestants and China's ruling Communist Party and the historical underpinnings of their relations. What were the dominant attributes of Catholic and Protestant churches that conditioned their response to China's communist revolution? To what extent have China's Catholics and Protestants adapted to, resisted, or rebelled against state demands? What are the implications of China's rapidly changing church-state relations for the nation's social and political stability? Is the church a bulwark for the existing order? A force for change? Positive or negative?

Finally, we seek to draw the implications of church-state relations in China for U.S. foreign policy and for bilateral relations more broadly. What common ground do China and the United States share in protecting religious freedoms? What place should promoting religious freedom have in U.S. foreign policymaking? What tools should be used to achieve our objectives? What role should nongovernmental actors play in improving the situation in China?

God and Caesar in China is organized around these themes. Daniel Bays begins the first section with a review of China's long history of official control of religion. Bays observes that state control and monitoring of religion is far from an invention of the Communist Party. The state's prerogative to determine which forms of religion are acceptable within the dominant orthodoxy of the day and which forms are to be spurned as "heterodox," as well as the bureaucratic impulse to control even authorized religious forms and repress deviancy, is deeply rooted in China's governing tradition. The

requirement to register religious groups, an official bureaucracy to monitor religious affairs, and often violent repression of religious groups that fall outside official boundaries have been a feature of every Chinese government for at least a thousand years.

Bays also notes, however, how radically Communist Party rule under Mao Zedong deviated from traditional patterns of religious control and monitoring. Armed with an atheistic ideology that viewed religion as an unscientific "opiate" of the masses and adopting a revolutionary policy agenda that sought to re-create society in its image, China's Communist Party promulgated a policy framework for religion that explicitly sought to isolate it from broader society, with the intention of eradicating it entirely. Extreme measures against religion culminated in a total ban on religious activity during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

Mickey Spiegel follows with an overview of religious policy in post-Mao China. In the early 1980s China's Communist Party initiated a policy framework that may be seen as a return to traditional normalcy in religious governance. Spiegel points out that the main thrust of religious policy since 1980 has been to reintegrate religion into the socialist mainstream and to repress those who resist. The fundamental tenets, she observes, are the assertion of government control over religious organizations and the establishment of strict boundaries for "normal" religious activity. Yet the result is official regulation of all aspects of religious life: religious venues, clergy, activities, believers, and even theological doctrines are all subject to government dictates. In addition, religious regulations are vaguely worded, enabling official cadres to interpret them as they wish. In some localities, this arbitrary rule leads to laissez-faire governance; in others, to prohibition and abuse.

Kim-kwong Chan finishes this first section with a discussion of the implications of China's entry into the World Trade Organization for the government's ability to retain control over the church. Chan explains that there are strong reasons to believe that the government's system of religious control is not sustainable. China's policy of economic reform and opening has succeeded spectacularly in some respects, most notably by creating sustained rapid economic growth. Yet it has also created widespread social dislocation, increasing economic inequality, and, for many rural farmers and urban employees of state-owned enterprises, a decline in living standards—all of which have fueled a widespread religious revival throughout Chinese society. Economic marketization and deepening integration into the global economy have also given rise to dense webs of transnational interaction,

increased social mobility, and a diffusion of economic power and communications technology. Religious groups in China and abroad have utilized these developments to their own advantage, challenging the government's ability to contain religion's social and political influence. China's entry into the World Trade Organization will accelerate these trends, making it increasingly difficult for the state to sustain its comprehensive system of religious control. Despite these broad-based and irreversible developments, Chan notes, China's leaders have yet to demonstrate a willingness to fundamentally revise their approach to religion. He concludes his chapter with an insightful analysis of an important work conference on religion held by China's top leaders in December 2001, during which President Jiang Zemin insisted that the "Party's leadership in religious work and the government's management of religious affairs must be strengthened and must not be weakened."[32]

The volume's second section examines the internal development of China's Catholic and Protestant churches and their interactions with the state. Jean-Paul Wiest offers a sweeping overview of the church's entry into China in the seventh century and, more specifically, Jesuit Catholics' mission endeavors from the fourteenth century to 1949. Wiest notes the difficulties Christianity has faced over the centuries in sinking roots into China's cultural soil. At least three waves of Christian missionaries came and left—or were wiped out—over a thousand-year period, with few Chinese converts to show for their efforts. Their problems included imperial bans against the religion, following periods of official tolerance, and opposition from China's broader ruling elite, who, charged with maintaining Confucian orthodoxy, despised Christianity's claims of holding the key to universal salvation.

Catholic missions faced particularly formidable challenges. The Jesuits' patiently cultivated inroads to China's ruling elite were abruptly cut off when the Vatican sided with church conservatives in the "rites controversy," which condemned as heretical such traditional Chinese rituals as ancestor worship. The church's close ties to Western imperialist powers and its heavy reliance on them to impose free mission activity under the unequal-treaty system of the early 1840s further alienated China's ruling elites from the Catholics. The church's mission strategy of converting entire communities, rather than individual souls, also hindered its growth, particularly after an imperial ban forced Catholic missionaries to retreat to the rural hinterland. This, Wiest observes, is one reason that China's Catholics today are concentrated in rural strongholds.

Richard Madsen next examines the development of China's Catholic Church under CCP rule, noting patterns of conflict and cooperation between the church and state. Conflict intensified after the Communist takeover. The Vatican under Pope Pius XII adopted an intensely anticommunist stand, issuing an edict that promised excommunication for any collaborators with the communist regime. The Vatican's hostility toward China's Communist Party was matched by the party's determination to assume control over the church. Yet though the CCP eventually convinced a handful of collaborators to establish the official Catholic Patriotic Association, most Chinese Catholic clergy and believers shunned the politically sanctioned organization. Some resisted by worshipping at home, others by organizing underground churches.

In recent decades, however, both the Vatican and the CCP have adopted less confrontational stands. China's rulers allowed China's Catholics to recognize the pope's "spiritual authority," and the Vatican has employed a system of secret ordination that allows bishops and priests within official churches to receive Vatican approval. As Madsen puts it, "A black-and-white conflict between open and underground churches is being replaced by shades of gray." At the same time, continued official repression of the underground church has fostered a culture of martyrdom that strengthens resistance. Although the bitter conflict between the Catholic Church and the CCP of the 1950s may be softening, full reconciliation remains elusive.

Protestant missions similarly increased dramatically under the unequal treaty system, reinforcing negative Chinese perceptions of Christianity. After its strained origins, however, the Protestant enterprise gained a more solid footing in Chinese society, laying the foundations for rapid church growth in the late twentieth century. In his chapter on China's Protestants, Yihua Xu recounts how Chinese Protestants and foreign missionaries alike promoted a variety of measures to promote greater autonomy and indigenization, which became broadly known as the "three-self principles" (self-support, self-propagation, and self-governance). Xu identifies three distinct strains of promoting three-self principles within the church: breakaway churches from mainstream Western denominations; indigenous Protestant movements, which often combined Christian doctrines with elements of traditional Chinese beliefs and practices; and reform measures from within the Sino-foreign Protestant establishment itself.

Ironically, it was the latter category—which was most strongly influenced by Western ideas and values—that produced the Protestant activists who established the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) under CCP

rule and came to dominate China's Protestant establishment. The key institutional links, Xu points out, were China's YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), the Anglican Church—particularly its St. John's University in Shanghai—and the Union Theological Seminary in New York. These three institutions groomed a small group of Protestant intellectuals in social activism and liberal theology, aligning them with the international socialist movement and generating support for China's socialist experiment. Nearly all leading Protestant figures after China's communist takeover, continuing down to the present, have emerged from these institutions.

My later chapter discusses Protestantism's development since the communist takeover in 1949. Although there was considerable continuity among Protestant elites in the transition to CCP rule, there was also bitter conflict and turmoil. The party's radical policy agenda resulted in the systematic dismantling of China's network of Protestant institutions, in which the TSPM took a leading role. As the party's denunciation campaigns swept across the country, TSPM officials led attacks against all Protestant churches and movements that did not submit to their control. The result was widespread alienation of China's Protestants.

The church's development during the reform period has been deeply influenced by these earlier events. Political authorities revived the TSPM and rehabilitated the elites that rose within its ranks during the radical Mao Zedong years, yet the state gave grassroots churches more space to conduct religious activities. The spectacular growth rate of Protestantism in China throughout the reform era has placed the forces for change increasingly in the driver's seat and defenders of the established order within the government and the TSPM hierarchy on the defensive. Forces for change have emerged from within the official church, the rapidly growing and increasingly well-organized house-church networks and resurgent indigenous Protestant movements, overseas mission organizations, and, more recently, transnational Chinese Christian networks. Together, they have contributed to the church's bid for greater autonomy from the state.

The book closes with a look at the implications of church-state relations in China for U.S.-China relations. Drawing on their perspectives as former Chinese and U.S. government officials, respectively, the authors of the final two chapters examine the development of the issue of religious freedom in bilateral relations, offering concrete suggestions to the two governments and involved social actors for improving the management of this contentious issue.

Peng Liu, a former official in China's United Front Work Department and current scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, explains in his chapter that the starting point on religion in bilateral relations is to recognize the vast gulf that separates American views of religion's proper social status with those of China's ruling Communist Party. Whereas religious freedom is a founding principle of the United States and continues to be embodied in the beliefs of the majority of Americans, China's ruling Communist Party views religion as a form of philosophical idealism that is fundamentally incompatible with Marxist materialism. Religion's foundations in Chinese society are sufficiently broad to prevent the government from eradicating it, yet the party's own ideology prohibits it from endorsing and supporting religion or even just ignoring it. From the party's perspective, the only alternative is to compel religion to "serve the political purpose of building a modern socialist China," Liu explains. Because of its explicitly political and utilitarian approach to religion, he adds, the Communist Party invariably views religious issues, particularly in foreign affairs, "through the filter of its political interests."

The dearth of common ground between these contrasting views, however, should not prevent the two sides from creating a framework for managing their differences, as they have done on other contentious issues, such as Taiwan, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and trade. For comparative value, he also points to efforts by other Western countries (such as Canada and Norway) to promote greater freedom of religion in China—efforts that rely more on low-key official meetings and technical exchanges and avoid public criticism. Liu proposes several measures both sides can take toward building such a framework, calling on China's government to set up a task force as a counterpart to the U.S. International Religious Freedom Office and on the U.S. government to open channels for input from societal actors. He also encourages Americans to have patience. With the dramatic social changes under way in China and a new generation of leaders seeking a legacy, Liu argues, "the Chinese government's change in religious policies is only a matter of time and opportunity." A constructive approach by the United States can accelerate these changes, whereas a policy based on criticism and contention will redound to the conservatives who oppose change.

Drawing on government experience from the other side of the Atlantic, Carol Lee Hamrin, a former career officer in the U.S. State Department, concludes with her own set of policy prescriptions. Echoing several of Liu's themes, Hamrin suggests that a measure of convergence may be possible

after all. Hamrin identifies domestic sources of tensions in both countries as part of the problem. Conflictual church-state relations in China largely reflect problems in the government's broader system of social control. America's response, however, has also been influenced by the culture wars that have raged within this country. Both countries, Hamrin observes, have experienced identity crises in the post–cold war period, giving rise to neoconservative movements in China and the United States. Conservatism in the United States has taken the form of a global crusade to promote market economies, religious and human rights, and political democracies abroad. China's leaders, in turn, faced a worldwide rejection of communist ideology and were cautioned by the Asian financial crisis in 1997. In response, they attempted to shore up domestic support by advancing a strident nationalism. These developments together exacerbated a clash of interests and identities between the two countries.

In the search for policy solutions, Hamrin argues for finding a middle ground between policy frameworks informed by rigid ideologies, either secular or religious. The tragedy of September 11, 2001, upgraded religion's policy salience in both Washington and Beijing, and the war on terror has given the two capitals a new focal point for cooperation. Of a more lasting nature, China's leaders have practical incentives to liberalize religious control, including the need to develop the third sector, to strengthen public morality in an age of corruption and discredited official ideology, and to induce educated Chinese living abroad (many of whom have faith commitments) to return to China.

The United States should respond, Hamrin argues, by building a domestic consensus on international religious freedom policy toward China, which will require revising assumptions and expectations. Policy initiatives should target subnational authorities in China, as well as Beijing, and should encourage participation of commercial interests and nonprofit organizations. Finally, initiatives should be based on international norms, not merely American ones.

Notes

1. Official figures are notoriously unreliable. Publicly available documents usually cite 100 million religious believers; internal reports cite 200 million; informed outside estimates cite higher numbers than both types of official reports. Needless to say, no definitive statistics are available. See Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "Freedom of Religious Belief in China," White Paper

(October 1997) (www.china.org.cn/e-white/Freedom/index.htm [November 13, 2003]). An overview of outside estimates is reported in U.S. Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2002: China (Includes Hong Kong and Macau),* October 7, 2002 (www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13870.htm [November 13, 2003]).

2. See chapter 6, this volume. Also see Jean Charbonnier, "Guide to the Catholic Church in China," *UCA News,* October 2, 2000, p. 14.

3. For the number of authorized venues, see Bao Jiayuan, "Update on the Church in China," *Chinese Theological Review,* vol. 14 (2000), pp. 116–32. Figures on the total number of Protestants include those who worship in unauthorized "house churches," which are estimated by outside observers and mission organizations that work closely with China's house-church networks to number 40 million to 80 million adherents. See, for example, Open Doors, "Chinese House Church Leader: Huge Need for More Bibles," press release, March 3, 2003 (www.opendoorsusa.org/Display.asp?Page=Chinabibles [November 13, 2003]).

4. Deng Zhaoming, "Recent Millennial Movements on Mainland China: Three Cases," *Inter-Religio,* vol. 34 (Winter 1998), pp. 51–53; Paul Hattaway, "When China's Christians Wish They Were in Prison: An Examination of the Eastern Lightning Cult in China" (April 24, 2001) (www.asiaharvest.org/elreport.htm [November 13, 2003]).

5. For a discussion of varied estimates of Falungong adherents, see James Tong, "An Organizational Analysis of the Falun Gong: Structure, Communications, Financing," *China Quarterly*, no. 171 (September 2002), pp. 636–60.

6. The Religious Affairs Bureau was changed to the State Administration for Religious Affairs in 1998. Because most references to the bureau in the following chapters relate to it before 1998, we use the more familiar "Religious Affairs Bureau" throughout the volume.

7. For a detailed discussion, see Jason Kindopp, "Failed Hegemony: The Theological Construction Campaign," in "The Politics of Protestantism in Contemporary China: State Control, Civil Society, and Social Movement in a Single Party-State" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 2004).

8. Barry Sautman, "Resolving the Tibet Question: Problems and Prospects," *Journal of Contemporary China*, no. 30 (February 2002), pp. 77–107; Dru Gladney, "Xinjiang: China's Future West Bank?" *Current History,* vol. 101 (September 2002), pp. 267–71.

9. See note 3, this chapter.

10. See chapter 6, this volume.

11. For a recent update, see Amnesty International, "China's Anti-Terrorism Legislation and Repression in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region," *ASA* (March 22, 2002) (web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA170102002?open&of=ENG-CHN [November 13, 2003]).

12. Author's compilation, based on data from human rights reports.

13. The U.S. State Department's 2001 report on religious freedom begins its discussion of China with the statement, "The situation for religious freedom and spiritual movements worsened in the past year." U.S. Department of State, "International Religious Freedom Report for 2001: Executive Summary" (www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2001/5531pf.htm [November 13, 2003]), p. 2. The 2002 report notes that "the Government's respect for religious freedom and freedom of conscience remained poor,

especially for members of some unregistered religious groups and spiritual movements such as the Falun Gong." U.S. Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2002,* p. 1.

14. Cited in Murray Scot Tanner, "Cracks in the Wall: China's Eroding Coercive State," *Current History,* vol. 100 (September 2001), pp. 243–49.

15. Figures from Chinese Academy of Sciences economist Hu Angang, cited in Josephine Ma, "Graft-Busters Need Their Own Bureau Economist," *South China Morning Post,* May 16, 2001, p. 1.

16. Chinese economists now estimate China's GINI coefficient for inequality to be approximately 0.45. Kang Xiaoguang, "Weilai 3-5 nian Zhongguo dalu zhengzhi wendingxing fenxi" [An analysis of political stability in mainland China in the next three to five years], *Beijing zhanlue yu guanli* [Beijing strategy and management], June 1, 2002, pp. 1–15.

17. In 2001 the CCP's own Organization Department published a 308-page study detailing the alarming increase in size and frequency of collective protests. *China Investigation Report 2000–2001: Studies of Contradictions among the People under New Conditions* [Zhongguo diaocha baogao: Xin xingshi xia renmin neibu maodun yanjiu, 2000–01], cited in Tanner, "Cracks in the Wall," p. 246.

18. Human Rights Watch, *Dangerous Meditation: China's Campaign against Falungong* (New York, 2002).

19. Li Shixiong and Xiqiu (Bob) Fu, eds. and trans., *Religion and National Security in China: Secret Documents from China's Security Sector* (Bartlesville, Okla.: Voice of the Martyrs, 2002).

20. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, "Reform and Resistance in Contemporary China," introduction to *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict, and Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 1–19, 9.

21. Daniel L. Overmyer, "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society," *Modern China,* vol. 7 (April 1981), pp. 153–90, 155.

22. C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society* (University of California Press, 1961), p. 219.

23. Sabrina Petra Ramet, ed., *Protestantism and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia: The Communist and Post-Communist Eras* (Duke University Press, 1992); Sabrina Petra Ramet, "Adaptation and Transformation of Religious Policy in Communist and Post-Communist Systems," in Sabrina Petra Ramet, ed., *Adaptation and Transformation in Communist and Post-Communist Systems* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 141–84.

24. See, for example, Jozef Tischner, *The Spirit of Solidarity*, trans. Marek B. Zaleski and Benjamin Fiore (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982).

25. Niels Nielsen, *Revolutions in Eastern Europe: The Religious Roots* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991), chap. 2, citing the work of Ehrhart Neubert.

26. David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (London: Blackwell, 1990); David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (University of California Press, 1990); Won Gue Lee, "A Sociological Study on the Factors of Church Growth and Decline in Korea," *Korea Journal,* vol. 39, no. 4 (1999), pp. 235–69.

27. Samuel P. Huntington, "Religion and the Third Wave," *National Interest,* vol. 24 (Summer 1991), pp. 29–42.

28. For a comparative overview of fundamentalist religion, see Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Accounting for Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (University of Chicago Press, 1994).

29. Gabriel A. Almond, Emmanuel Sivan, and R. Scott Appleby, "Fundamentalism: Genus and Species," in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended,* vol. 5 of *The Fundamentalism Project* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 399–444, 434.

30. Amy Sherman, *The Soul of Development: Biblical Christianity and Economic Transformation in Guatemala* (Oxford University Press, 1996); Daniel H. Levine, "Religious Change, Empowerment, and Power: Reflections on Latin American Experience," in Satya R. Pattnayak, ed., *Organized Religion in the Political Transformation of Latin America* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995), pp. 15–40.

31. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Annual Report" (May 2002), p. 3 (www.uscirf.gov/reports/02AnnualRpt/2002report.pdf [November 13, 2003]).

32. Sun Chengbin and Yin Hongzhu, "Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji Address Religious Work Conference, Other Leaders Take Part," reprinted in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS-CHI-2001-1212, December 12, 2001.