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MaThesis

Inculturation or Syncretism of the Gospel in China

Embedding Christianity in Chinese Confucianism

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Summary

During the transmission of Christianity to China that proceeded since the Seventh Century, Christianity has encountered Confucianism – the mainstream religion in China. This encounter led to the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism. The theological question this thesis addresses is whether this embedment amounts to inculturation or syncretism. Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, the Jesuit missionaries, including Matteo Ricci, dedicated themselves to the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism. In his mission-driven theology, Ricci related the personal God of Christianity to the Classical Confucian idea of "the Sovereign on High", but neglected important elements which we consider essential for Christianity, namely the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and the doctrine of original sin. Some of Ricci's Jesuit followers tried to introduce those ideas in the Christian-Confucian fusion that emerged after Ricci in China. But their efforts did not change Chinese Christian theology of the time in a crucial way. The fusion of Christianity and Confucianism that became typical for Chinese Christian theology and remained very influential in the twentieth century is heavily influenced by certain Confucian ideas, such as the goodness of human nature and spiritual potency of moral acts, while neglecting the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and original sin. From the theological perspective adopted in this thesis, which considers central teachings of Confucianism to be incompatible with the essence of Christianity, this fusion is deemed to be an example of syncretism – a fusion of Christianity and Confucianism, while losing the Christian essence.

Inculturation or Syncretism of the Gospel in China: Embedding Christianity in
Chinese Confucianism

Introduction

Confucianism is one of the mainstream traditional philosophies in China. Even
in modern socialist China, Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, was rehabilitated
as a cultural hero with quintessential "Chinese characteristics" due to the significant
influence of his philosophy on Chinese culture (Selover and Jensen 2006, 71). For
this reason, Confucianism has had considerable influence on the encounter of
Christianity in China.

As a Christian who has a Chinese background, I have been involved in different
Chinese Christian communities, including some located in the West. Interestingly, I
have experienced some common features that are shared by many Chinese Christians
that I have encountered. For instance, they stress filial piety and social service by
referring to chosen biblical scriptures, such as Exodus 20:12 and Matthew 19:19.
Also in my experience, Chinese Christians tend to maintain their Chinese ethnic
identity and combine many Chinese traditional festivals with their Christian
celebrations. Some interpret the recent prosperity of China by claiming that God has
started to bless the Chinese people just like he was blessing the Israelites according to
the biblical narrative. Such experience has inspired me to research the historical and
theological factors that have formed and shaped these features of Chinese Christianity.

In this thesis, I will research the following question: Is the embedment of
Christianity in Chinese Confucianism, as is manifested in the work of influential
Chinese Christian theologians, an example of inculturation or of religious syncretism?

Section 1: The Conceptual Definitions

The central concepts in contextual and intercultural theology, and previously in
mission studies, will be instrumental for my argument concerning the encounter
between Christianity and Confucianism. These concepts include "accommodation",
"inculturation", and "syncretism". They need to be clearly defined.

<u>Accommodation</u>

First, I want to define "accommodation". According to the German theologian Volker Küster, the term "accommodation" was proposed in the Catholic sphere with the foundation of mission studies at the beginning of the twentieth century. Then, Thomas Ohm (1892-1962) differentiated the accommodation model into three stages:

- The first stage is "accommodation", which indicates the assimilation of the proclamation of the gospel to a particular culture.
- The second is "assimilation", which means the adaptation of elements from the culture.
- The third is the theological transformation of the (adapted) elements (Küster 1999, 22).

This model has the following features:

- The relationship between the gospel and culture is static and without reciprocity.
- The event of accommodation offers a downward slope between the subject of mission, namely the church, and the object of mission, namely the encountered culture (Küster 1999, 22).

These features furthermore indicate that the encountered cultural change, the specific dynamic of the gospel, and the reciprocal processes which result, are hardly taken into account in the event of accommodation (Küster 1999, 22-23). Concerning the three stages of the accommodation model that was differentiated by Ohm, they are combinedly to represent the features that relate to the relationship between the gospel and culture and the event of accommodation. So, they need to be all included in the definition of "accommodation".

Thus, I define "accommodation" as:

> *The fusion of the gospel with a particular culture through preaching in the church as a part of a mission, without emphasizing the potential reciprocity among the gospel, the church, and the culture.*

It is noteworthy that the term "accommodation" is often used to describe certain kinds of missions that happened chronologically prior to the proposition of the term. Küster sees the Dominicans and Franciscans' condemnation of the missionary work

that was done by the Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in China as a kind of accommodation controversy (Küster 1999, 21). Historian Daniel H. Bays describes an important policy for Jesuit missionaries as "accommodation and adaptation to Chinese culture" (Bays 2012, 21). Another historian Jean-Paul Wiest just calls the policy that was followed by Ricci as "cultural accommodation" (Wiest 2012, 19). So, the work of Jesuit missionaries, especially that of Ricci, is seen as a typical example of accommodation by the modern theologians and historians.

Inculturation

The next definition I focus on is "inculturation". Brian Stanley explains that the term "inculturation" originated in Catholicism. It can be traced to the phrase "Catholicisme inculturé" that was used by the French writer J. Masson in 1962 (Stanley 2007, 22). The concept of this phrase was then extensively discussed at the 32nd General Assembly of the Jesuit order in 1974. This led to the term "inculturation", which was introduced by the Superior-General of the Jesuit order at the Synod of Bishops in 1977. "Inculturation" implies that the whole body of the Christian message needs to become incarnate in the patterns of thought, language, and symbols of a particular culture. Notably, this term was also relevant to the anthropological concept of "enculturation" or "acculturation" (ibid.). This relevance is clarified by Küster. In detail, "enculturation" means that a person grows into his or her own culture, sometimes having a critical controversy with tradition; while "acculturation" refers to the contact between two cultures and the reciprocal effects it has on them. With its proximity to cultural anthropology, "inculturation" oscillates between the concepts of "acculturation" and "enculturation". Since the gospel is always accessible to people through the mediation of the local culture, the mission always functions like acculturation, which is with reciprocity between the gospel and the local culture. But if the subject is the local church, the mission can at the same time function like enculturation. On the other hand, "inculturation" is proximate to the theological concept of "incarnation". However, Küster argues that the synonymous use of inculturation and incarnation should be ruled out as inadequate because they involve different subjects (Küster 1999, 23-24).

Moreover, Küster claims that the theologies of inculturation can be summed up within the framework of a broader concept of the relationship between gospel and culture called "contextual theology", which was developed based on the concept of contextualization. He also categorized inculturation theology as a kind of cultural-religious type of contextual theology in contrast to the socio-economic and political type (Küster 1999, 24-25). Here, the concepts of "contextualization" and "contextual theology" need to be introduced. According to the American Catholic theologian Stephen B. Bevans, the term "contextualization" was introduced in 1972. It not only implies the incarnation of the gospel, but seeks also to include the social realities, such as secularity, technology and human justice. Contextualization sees culture as more dynamic, flexible, open and able to be enriched by an encounter with other cultures (Bevans 1992, 21-22). Bevans argues that theology must be contextual because the contemporary context for theology has two sets of factors: external factors and internal factors. External factors include historical events, intellectual currents, cultural shifts, and political forces. For example, many Asian and African societies have their special socio-cultural and historical elements, which often appear too strange to be perceived from some traditional theological perspectives. Internal factors include the incarnational nature of Christianity, the encounter of God and humans through Jesus Christ, and the understanding of "truths" based on God's revelation. Since the internal factors point to a contextual imperative within Christianity, they are ultimately much more important than the external ones (ibid., 5-9).

Similar to Küster, Bevans also puts inculturation into the categories of contextual theology. Specifically, Bevans sets a series of models within the spectrum with "culture social change" and "gospel message tradition" as the elements in the two extremes respectively. Among these models, the translation model is closest to the extreme of "gospel message tradition". This model concerns the translation of the authentic meaning of the gospel into a particular culture. It takes the gospel as the kernel and the culture as the husk (Bevans 1992, 27-33). So, in this model, the internal factors are much more emphasized than the external ones. Also, Bevans sees Pope John Paul II's introduction of inculturation as an example of the translation

model. John Paul II introduced the term "inculturation" to the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1979 by relating it to incarnation-revealing. On the one hand, the gospel was seen as a pre-set tradition that should greatly impact a culture. On the other hand, the good part of the culture should be preserved (ibid., 42-43).

Stanley and Bevans share a common point in their interpretations of inculturation: the incarnation of the gospel. Here, the "incarnation" refers to a metaphor for the translation of the gospel into a particular culture. Although the synonymous use of inculturation and incarnation is opposed by Küster, I still see the metaphor that is embodied in the use to be helpful to define "inculturation". Concerning the content of the gospel that needs to be translated, Stanley states it as "the whole body of the Christian message" and Bevans regards it as the three internal factors. So, the content covers more than the information about God's incarnation in flesh. I generalize the content to be the essence of the gospel. Also, Küster poses a point of inculturation: the reciprocity between the gospel and the local culture. This point may imply the respect for the culture and the willingness to preserve the good part of it, but also the re-interpretation of the gospel that may be needed to make the message relevant for people of that culture. Because of his emphasis on reciprocity, Küster disapproves of the metaphor of the "kernel" and the "husk" as the gospel and the culture, which may imply the separation of the gospel and the culture. He also describes the translation model as a variant of the accommodation model in evangelical circles. Concerning inculturation, it is distinguished from accommodation with its feature of reciprocity by Küster, though it is reduced to the concept of accommodation in some recent documents (Küster 1999, 21-24). It implies that the translation model might lack the emphasis on reciprocity, just as the accommodation model does.

I find Stanley and Bevans' definition of "inculturation" as "the translation of the gospel into a culture" to be incomplete. This definition needs to be complemented with Küster's emphasis on reciprocity. Thus, I define "inculturation" as:

> *The translation of the essence of the gospel into a particular culture through their reciprocity*. The consequence of inculturation is that *the essence of the*

gospel and the preserved good of the culture are successfully fused, with much more emphasis on the former than the latter.

Syncretism

The last definition is the one of "syncretism". Peter Schineller, the Superior of the Nigeria-Ghana Jesuit Mission, shows that "syncretism" has contrasting meanings and connotations. Many theologians, such as Byang Kato and Harvie M. Conn, interpret "syncretism" as negative. They regard it as an uncritical affirmative approach that leads to the fusion of incompatible cultural elements with the gospel and the loss of critical and basic elements of the gospel during the cultural contextualization. Other scholars argue that "syncretism" has positive connotations. For example, Eugene Hillman sees syncretism as the process which shaped Christianity itself. Leonardo Boff claims that syncretism reflects the best nature of the church and opens it for true catholicity (Schineller 1992, 50).

Notably, Schineller argues that the scholars who viewed "syncretism" as positive approached this term from an anthropological rather than theological perspective (Schineller 1992, 50). Schineller's examples and argument about syncretism can be related to Bevans' interpretation of contextualization. In detail, the negative interpretations of "syncretism" emphasize the potential loss and distortion of the gospel. Such emphasis concerns the question whether the internal factors can be preserved. Whereas, the positive interpretations place emphasis on historical changes, religion forms, and the nature of church. All these elements refer to "external factors". So, syncretism can be seen as a kind of contextualization that emphasizes the external factors much more than the internal ones. It may accordingly be located towards the extreme of "culture social change" within the spectrum of contextual theology. Coincidentally, the model that was set close to this extreme by Bevans is called the "anthropological model", which centers on the value and goodness of the person, society, and culture, with the insights of anthropology (Bevans 1992, 47-48). The meaning of this model is consistent not only with the positive interpretations of syncretism but also with Schineller's argument about the positive interpretations. Moreover, a danger of this model is that it is prone to attach to cultural romanticism,

which is evidenced by uncritical thinking about culture (ibid., 53). This danger is consistent with the negative interpretations of syncretism.

Thus, I define "syncretism" as the opposite to "inculturation", which belongs to the translation model with the emphasis on reciprocity. That is:

> *The fusion of the gospel with the preserved good of a particular culture through mutual contact, with much more emphasis on the latter than the former*.

Section 2: The Theological Position

Theological presuppositions will be important for my evaluation of the encounter between Christianity and Confucianism. So, I need to explicate my theological position. I consider the core of my theology to be faithful to basic commitments of Christianity.

According to theologian David B. Burrell, Chalcedon Christology emphasized God's incarnation in Christ. Like everything else, the meaning of the incarnation is based on the distinction between God and the world. Namely, God's divine nature is independent from the world (Burrell 2010, 40). Volker Küster also shows that the incarnation of Christ is commonly emphasized by the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox confessions. But also, their Christologies share the emphasis on the cross and resurrection of Christ, although their foci are different: Catholic Christology focuses on the incarnation; Protestant Christology focuses on the cross; Orthodox Christology focuses on the resurrection (Küster 1999, 29-31). The shared emphases of the three Christologies can be related to the idea of Jesus' nature as mediation, which was proposed by theologian Martien E. Brinkman. According to Brinkman, Jesus accomplished the transformation process of his nature as mediation between God and humans through opening his two ways. The first way is for "the humanization of God", which indicates Jesus' incarnation. The second is for "the deification of human being", which indicates Jesus' cross and resurrection. Believers need to participate in Jesus' cross and resurrection, namely Jesus' second way, to receive the mediation of Jesus, and then get their identification as "children of God" and even "heirs of God" (Brinkman 2009, 248-250).

Moreover, Augustine proposes the reason why humans need salvation in Christ. In his treatise "On Marriage and Concupiscence", Augustine states that every person suffers from original sin that he or she individually derived from humans' sinned ancestor Adam (as cited in Stump and Meister 2020, 24). He furthermore argues that humans are unable to justify themselves before God because of original sin, in the treatise "Answer to the Pelagians II" (ibid.). Notably, Adam's sin led to the fallen bodies as well as the sinful souls of his descendants (Stump and Meister 2020, 30-31). In "De lib. arb.", Augustine claims that humans' sinful souls suffer from two penalties: the ignorance or lack of the noetic intimacy with God enjoyed by Adam and Eve, and the difficulty of eloquence (as cited in Stump and Kretzmann 2001, 47-48). It implies that inherent sinful souls lead to humanity's estrangement from God. Similarly, the English philosopher Oliver D. Crisp stated a dogmatic claim of the moderate Reformed view of sin: "possession of original sin leads to death and separation from God irrespective of actual sin". Actual sins indicate the misdeeds that are committed by the fallen people with themselves as the moral agents. From the moderate Reformed view, people are culpable for their actual sins, but inculpable for original sin, which is the hereditary depravity of their nature and souls (Stump and Meister 2020, 43-47).

In line with Christology of Chalcedon, and the views developed by Augustine, the moderate Reformation, and more recently by Küster and Brinkman, I propose my theological position: the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ are essential for believers to unite with God. It is because of three reasons:

- Humans' original sin has made them incapable of uniting with God.
- God shows his salvation to humans through his incarnation in Christ since God's nature is distinct from the world.
- Humans can get their new identities from God through participating in Jesus' cross and resurrection.

Therefore, the essence of the gospel must include the concept of original sin and those of the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ.

Section 3: The Chapter Outline

It is on the basis of the theological position laid out above that I am approaching the central research question: Is the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism an example of inculturation or syncretism? I will approach the research question in stages, by addressing the following sub-questions: Since we trace the modern history of Christianity in China back to the early modern period and Matteo Ricci, the first question is how were the elements of Christianity and Confucianism negotiated and combined in the work and thought of Ricci in the early seventeenth century? Second: how were the elements of Christianity and Confucianism combined and how has Chinese Christian theology changed in the work of the Jesuits and Ricci's interpreters in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Have the central Christian doctrines been preserved or changed under the influence of Confucian ideas during those formative centuries for Chinese Christianity? Finally, did the Chinese Christian theology of the early and especially late twentieth century embed Christianity in Chinese Confucianism in a way that the essence of the gospel has been preserved (successful inculturation)? Or did it amount to a kind of syncretistic fusion between Christianity and Confucianism in which the Christian essence, including the concepts of the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and of original sin, have been lost?

I will first introduce the political, social and theological conditions of modern Chinese Christianity and briefly describe how Christianity has been received in China throughout history, in order to lay out the basic features of Chinese Christianity in Chapter One. Concerning the theological condition, it will focus on what we might call the mainstream theology that was represented in Chinese Christianity during the late twentieth century. This choice is partly because it is difficult to find or access a sufficient number of scholarly studies of Chinese Christian theology in the twenty-first century.

It is rarely disputed that the Jesuit mission to China was very important for the encounter of Christianity and Chinese Confucianism. As is shown above, Volker Küster, Daniel H. Bays and Jean-Paul Wiest all regard the Jesuit mission in Asia, especially Ricci's mission in China, as a typical example of cultural accommodation of Christianity. Bays even sees the Jesuit mission as the advent of Christianity in

China, which made Christianity become a permanent part of the Chinese religious landscape and the first chance for Chinese people to learn about the cultural experience of the West (Bays 2012, 18-19). So, the Jesuit mission seemed to be rather important for the encounter of Christianity and Chinese Confucianism. For this reason, I will introduce Ricci's mission experience and detailed contribution in China, and summarize how he embedded Christianity in Chinese Confucianism in Chapter Two.

In Chapter Three, I will trace the complex reception of Ricci's and the Jesuits' contribution in China. The first context of reception I will explore will be the condemnation, the admiration and the ways of complementing Ricci's work. Its authors lived between the sixteenth and eighteenth century, with some of them being Ricci's Jesuit companions and successors. The second context of reception consists of the discussions of Ricci's contribution and that of his companions and successors from the twentieth century onwards. The reception will show the meanings and some potential effects of the Jesuits' contribution in China. The first three chapters, then, examine the theologies that prominently influenced Chinese Christianity between the sixteenth and eighteenth century, and during the late twentieth century – which constitute the necessary studies on the basis of which I will be able to address the final, theological-evaluative question in Chapter Four.

In Chapter Four, a number of different positions regarding the compatibility and incompatibility between Christianity and Confucianism will be first examined. I will analyze these interpretations to discover what are the essential elements that are represented in somewhat different kinds of fusion between Christianity and Confucianism in theory. I will argue that this fusion typically represents some Confucian elements, such as the emphasis on human nature and moral acts. On the other hand, I will show that some notable Christian elements, including the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and original sin, are not likely to be represented in the combination. Finally, the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism will be theologically evaluated by referring to my theological position and the relevant criteria for inculturation. The evaluation will be of the theological condition of modern Chinese Christianity as expressed by prominent thinkers that are

analyzed in this thesis, which is the consequence of embedding Christianity in Chinese Confucianism, that is shown in Chapter One. I will argue that this embedment is a kind of syncretism which sacrifices at least some elements of what I consider to be the essence of Christian belief.

Chapter One: The Introduction of Christianity in China

Section 1: The General Condition of Modern Chinese Christianity

Chinese society has dramatically changed since the end of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s. The Chinese economy has been transformed due to a new policy of openness towards the global market. It has furthermore unprecedentedly changed China in the social, cultural, and religious aspects (Phan 2010, 149). In this social context, Christianity has seemed to become more and more prevalent in modern Chinese society. By the early twenty-first century, more than twenty thousand churches have been officially registered in China (Bays 2012, 190). Also, over thirty thousand meeting places and thirteen thousand chapels for Christianity have been established (Phan 2010, 151). Many Chinese Christian associations and churches have been established abroad as well.

The number of Christians in China has increased with considerable speed from the early twentieth century to the twenty-first century. According to Catholic theologian Peter C. Phan, the number of Protestants in China was around two hundred thousand in 1912. Then, it rose to six hundred and twenty thousand in 1936, to one million in 1949, to seventeen million in the 1980s, eventually to at least forty million in 2010. The number of Catholics in China has also increased from three million in 1949 to five million in 2006, then to around twelve million in 2010 (Phan 2010, 151-152). Similarly, theologian Sebastian C. H. Kim states that the estimated number of Chinese Christians ranged from a conservative fifteen million to seventy million in 2008. So, the number of Christians who regularly worship on Sundays in China can be reasonably assumed to far outnumber those in Britain, Germany and France together. The prevalence of Chinese Christian literature available in Asia has even attracted many young Korean and Japanese people to learn Chinese (Kim 2008, 102-103).

In this chapter, I will answer the question: what are the general features of modern Chinese Christianity? One of these features is the "four majorities (si duo)" that Phan describes: the majority of people who regularly visit the Chinese Christian communities are rural villagers, illiterates, the elderly, and women (Phan 2010, 165).

This feature of distribution remains until the twenty-first century although from sometime between the late 1980s and the late 1990s, the boom of participation in the urban church started because of the sharp economic growth in China, as is depicted by Daniel H. Bays (Bays 2012, 199-200). It reflects that Christianity tends to appeal to low class people in modern China. It is likely that these people possess little knowledge about Christianity.

It is also noteworthy that Christianity is prone to be mixed with many indigenous elements in Chinese rural areas. For instance, the socialist Richard Madsen described that Chinese rural Catholics tend to celebrate the same festivals as their non-Catholic neighbours by interweaving their Catholic feast days with the rhythm of traditional observances. It transforms Catholicism into a rural folk religion in that area (Bays 2012, 197-199). This feature implies that Christianity seems to be a vulnerable religion in modern China though it has a big number of Chinese followers.

Section 2: The Historical Condition of Christianity in China from the Seventh Century to the Early Twentieth Century

Martien E. Brinkman explains that the first Christianity that existed in China was Nestorian Christianity. It was brought by Bishop Alopen of Syria to China in 635, and soon approbated by the contemporary Chinese emperor Taizong of Tang in 638. During the seventh and eighth centuries, this kind of Christianity also kept admixing with the two contemporarily coexisted religions Taoism and Buddhism, especially the latter (Brinkman 2009, 59-60). Then, as is narrated by Daniel H. Bays, Nestorian Christianity was repressed by many ardent Confucianists because of its foreignness during the ninth century, and eventually withdrew from China in the tenth century. In the thirteenth century, the Mongols annexed China and founded the Yuan dynasty. In this new era, Nestorian Christianity was spread and prevalent in China again. In addition, the first papal envoy named Friar Giovanni da Montecorvino and some Italian merchants, who were all Roman Catholics, visited China and brought Catholicism to this land in the late thirteenth century. Thus, Nestorian and Catholic Christianity coexisted, but also competed in China during the Yuan dynasty. Both

kinds of Christianity were expelled from China in the mid fourteenth century perhaps because of the xenophobic policies of the new Ming dynasty (Bays 2012, 10-15).

After that, there had been no Christians in China until Jesuit missionaries transmitted Catholic Christianity to China again in 1582, as is stated by the religious scholar Aristotle C. Dy (Dy 2011, 53). According to Bays, Jesuit missionaries brought Catholic Christianity in some Asian nations, including China and Japan, through the policy of accommodation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their missions had first converted a considerable number of Chinese people to Christianity by the mid seventeenth century during the Ming dynasty of China, and remained until the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century when China turned into the Qing dynasty. The earliest Jesuit missionaries had converted a proportion of high-ranking elites and officials by the end of the Ming dynasty. But after the shift of dynasty in the eighteenth century, virtually all converts came from low-ranking elites and commoners because a great number of later Jesuits and virtually all the mendicant friars turned to create and maintain Christian communities in the rural areas. Also, during the reception of Catholic Christianity in China, Christianity kept mixing with the indigenous religions, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Concerning the number of converts, approximately two hundred thousand Chinese people were Catholic Christians in the early 1700s. In spite of a considerable dip that was apparently because of the crackdown of the Yongzheng emperor in mid-century, the number steadily rose back to around two hundred thousand in the early 1800s. On the other hand, during that period, Christianity tended to be seen as a "foreign religion" that was basically ingrained in Europe by virtually all the Chinese people, including Chinese Christians. And few of them understood how the religion worked (Bays 2012, 19-33). Notably, from the eighteenth century, Christianity had become a religion that was generally welcomed by low class people but excluded by high class people in China. The followers of Christianity tended to have little knowledge about Christianity though their number grew quickly. These features are rather similar to those of modern Chinese Christianity that are mentioned in the previous section.

Shortly after, Protestant Christianity also started to be transmitted to China by some British and American missionaries. These missionaries had brought further Christian knowledge to the Chinese people from the early nineteenth century. Robert Morrison (1782-1834), for example, published the first Chinese language version of the Bible, the first Chinese-English dictionary and grammar (Daily 2012, 10). Moreover, the Protestant Christian missionaries established a large number of churches, Christian schools and colleges in China. Their contribution helped the number of Protestant Christians to steadily grow alongside Catholic Christians in China for the next one hundred years. In 1900, the number of Catholic Christians was up to around seven hundred and fifty thousand and that of Protestant Christians was about a hundred thousand. Both groups of Christians maintained their growth in China until the 1920s, before the momentous events of the Second World War. According to Bays, this apparent prosperity of Christianity in China even inspired some western missionaries and politicians' overly optimistic perception on the future of China. They expected that China would easily become Christian and build good relationships with the western Christian nations. However, they were eventually disappointed by many cases in China. For example, Hong Xiuquan, who accepted Christianity through the study with an American Baptism missionary named Issachar Roberts, led the Taiping Rebellion movement to overthrow the rule of the Qing authority in 1850. He seemed to present some doctrinal essentials of Christianity in his movement, such as his emphasis on the Ten Commandments and monotheism. For that, a number of western governments and Protestant missionaries delightedly expected Hong would become a Christian ruler of China after his victory and then build harmonious relationships with foreigners. However, Hong despised foreigners and held the belief that all foreigners should be subordinate to Chinese people. Also, some missionaries strongly disapproved of Taiping's beliefs and practices, which were much more Confucian than Christian. Then in 1913, Yuan Shikai, the president of the Republic of China, asked the Protestants of China to pray for him and his government. This movement inspired the American Protestants to be optimistic about the potential of China becoming a "Christian nation" soon, and even published a report titled "The Christian Occupation of China" in 1922. But by then, the Christian

movement had become almost extinct in China (Bays 2012, 67-106). These phenomena in the early twentieth century reflect that Christianity in China was essentially vulnerable though it appeared to be strong during some periods. This vulnerability of Christianity in China has been retained in the modern time.

D. E. Mungello, an American historian, shows the development of some indigenous Chinese Christian associations in the early twentieth century. Some leaders in the indigenous Christian movements during the 1930s and 1940s, such as Wang Mingdao (1900-1991), Song Shangjie (1901-1944), and Ni Tuosheng (1903-1972), all founded their own preaching associations, but came to bad ends in their late life (Song died in the war between China and Japan; Wang and Ni were jailed by the Chinese authority). T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen, 1888-1979), a foreign-mission Christian, became one of the most prominent leaders of the Sino-foreign Protestant establishment in the 1920s. But in the early 1950s, he was attacked and removed from power by the government (Mungello 2012, 546-548).

Section 3: The Modern Chinese Christianity
Section 3.1: The "Three-Self" Principle and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement

According to Daniel H. Bays, two Protestant missionaries, Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, the heads of the (Anglican) British Church Missionary Society and the (ecumenical) American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions respectively, stressed "self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation" for Chinese churches in the mid nineteenth century. This was later named the "three-self" principle by Chinese people in the twentieth century. The principle was rarely promoted in China during the nineteenth century (Bays 2012, 51-52). It was picked up and advocated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the early 1950s. Ironically, this communist authority used the "three-self" concept to eliminate the foreign influence on the domestic Catholic and Protestant churches through cutting the ties with their foreign former associates and foreign institutions, and putting them under the jurisdiction of state and party bodies assigned to monitor them (ibid., 159). Chin Ken-Pa from National Taiwan University shows the detail that the "three-self" principle was developed by Wu Yaozong, who reduced Christianity to a mere gospel

of love for the sake of revolution (e.g., to serve the nationalist movement), through a "denomination ecumenical movement", which was aimed to save China. Wu's act furthermore led to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) (Lai and Lam 2010, 153).

Concerning TSPM, it was formed by the CCP to get absolute control on the Catholic and Protestant churches in China through promoting the ideas of anti-imperialism and patriotism in them. This movement was first strongly resisted by the Catholic churches because they insisted on maintaining the political and religious dominance and connection with the Vatican. Through establishing the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association in 1957 and then the Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church and the Chinese Catholic Church Administrative Commission in 1980, the CCP eventually managed to have considerable control on the Catholic churches and maintained an apparently harmonious relationship with the Vatican. On the other hand, TSPM seemed to be more easily implemented in the Protestant churches from the 1950s (Phan 2010, 153-157). Melissa Manhong Lin from the Chinese Christian Council, suggests that the Chinese Protestant Church has found its own identity through a journey of inculturation. That is, Christianity has shifted from a religion that was seen as an invasive tool of the western imperialism to a Chinese indigenous religion since 1980. It has accordingly become an ecumenical church with a new identity (Lin 1998, 9-10).

It is also noteworthy that the CCP prohibited the re-establishment of the denominational organizations when all the churches resumed their meetings and Sunday services after the Cultural Revolution. The absence of the denominational organizations seemed to produce some problems. For that, the CCP established the China Christian Council (CCC) not only to set the church system in order but also to provide Bibles and theological education. Peter C. Phan, an American Catholic theologian, suggests that CCC was seen as an ecclesiastical organization by the Chinese authority. It was called collectively with TSPM as the "two associations (liang hui)" of the official Chinese Christianity (Phan 2010, 158).

Section 3.2: The Theology of Modern Chinese Christianity

As is mentioned before, the "two associations", namely TSPM and CCC, have taken charge of the ideological and theological education in the official Chinese Christian churches during the sovereignty of the CCP. Notably, Bishop K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun) was an important Chinese bishop who joined in the work of TSPM in the 1950s and then became the head of both TSPM and CCC in the 1980s (Wickeri 2013, 78). So, his theology is likely to somewhat reflect the theological ideas of the "two associations". According to Martien E. Brinkman, Bishop Ting emphasized the idea of the "cosmic Christ". That is, Jesus Christ shares his universal love to the whole creation rather than only to believers (Brinkman 2009, 76-77). In addition, Philip L. Wickeri, the overseas coordinator for the Amity Foundation of China, depicts that Bishop Ting also headed the Amity Foundation – an independent Chinese people's organization that consists of many Protestant members. This organization was established in 1985 for the purpose of promoting health, education and social welfare in China. But under the influence of its Protestant members such as Bishop Ting, Amity has generated its further functions: improving the understanding of Christianity in China, promoting China's socialist modernization, and connecting the overseas church-related organizations. They had been gradually developed on the basis of Amity's original function – the humane social service. Notably, the relationship among these functions reflects the theological view of the Protestant members of Amity: demonstrating the fact of Christian existence in social practice. In detail, the members thought that their ethical concerns and behaviors on other Chinese people can manifest God's mercy on the latter, which may make the latter get a better feeling and understanding of Christianity. Also, if Chinese people generally have a better quality of life, as well as better understanding of Christianity, China's modernization and openness would be promoted. It would furthermore help the Chinese church-related organizations to build relationships with the ones abroad. This view was advocated by relating to Jesus' teachings about being salt and light that represented in Matthew 5. Moreover, Hao Wenzao, a member of Amity, expressed that he and his comrades' willingness to participate in social service was based on their special sense of patriotism, in order to promote the harmony in China and that among all the nations (Wickeri 1989, 78-84).

In addition, Mellisa Manhong Lin's study on the Chinese indigenous churches from 1970s to 1990s also shows how the theology of these churches had changed during the period. According to Lin, Chinese Christians tended to see God's essential nature as a "ruling Caesar" who focuses on the judgement upon sinners in the 1970s. They believed that a person's misfortune is caused by God's punishment for his hidden sin. Such belief urged them to pleasure God in special ways, such as going to church on Sundays. Then in the 1990s, the mainstream perception of God's essential nature was shifted from punishment to love. God's goodness, love and glory were seen as his wholeness. Notably, Bishop Ting played an important role in this shift of theology. He emphasized the idea of "God is love" through arguing God to be a Cosmic Lover who possesses "love" to be his supreme attribute that is subordinated by other attributes. Also, he focused on Christ's grace, which has saved original sin. It gradually led to the negation of the idea of original sin. The Chinese Christians furthermore got their understanding of redemption and eschatology based on the loving nature of God. They were also encouraged to serve people. It was because the service of people was related to the redemption of Christ, which indicated the great event of Christ having laid down his life for humanity (Lin 1998, 15-18).

Section 4: Summary and Discussion about the General Features of Chinese Christianity

From the eighteenth century, Christianity has been an essentially vulnerable religion despite its outward appearance of having a large number of followers in China. Most of the followers belong to the lower classes and perhaps have little knowledge about Christianity. Also, Christianity has been seen as a foreign religion by the mainstream people in China. Being different from Christianity, Buddhism has been perfectly inculturated in China and never seen as a foreign religion by most modern Chinese people though it also originated, geographically speaking, from the West (Lin 1998, 23). Moreover, the Chinese people's reception of Christianity has inevitably been along with their "Sinicization of Christianity". That is, they have mixed Christianity with the indigenous philosophies, including Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and even patriotism, in intentional or unintentional ways.

Concerning the theological aspect, Bishop Ting's views seemed to be rather influential and representative in the Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century. Bishop Ting viewed Jesus as the "cosmic Christ" who universally loves the whole creation, and God as a "Cosmic Lover" with the essence of love. He also claimed: Christ's grace is so great that it has saved original sin. It led to the general negation of original sin in the Chinese indigenous churches. Moreover, Bishop Ting advocated to demonstrate the fact of Christian existence in social practice. That is, Christians need to improve people's understanding of Christianity through serving for them. This view mainly influenced the Christian members of the Amity Foundation. Notably, it is consistent with the idea of relating the service of people to the manifestation of God's mercy and the redemption of Christ that was represented in the Chinese churches. This theology is accompanied with patriotism. Bishop Ting's views may be seen as the consequence of the theological teaching of "two associations" of the CCP. While concerning the unofficially indigenous Christian associations, their theologies seemed to have rather limited influence in China during the twentieth century. It might be because the powers of their leaders have usually been repressed by the CCP from the 1950s.

Some researchers who discovered the theological features above posed not so positive comments to the theological condition of Chinese churches in the late twentieth century. Melissa Manhong Lin comments that the ecclesiology was absent because the doctrinal matters of the Chinese churches were rather weak (Lin 1998, 21). Martien E. Brinkman argues that Bishop Ting's theology reflected the limitation of the development of Chinese theology throughout history (Brinkman 2009, 78). Here, Lin's comment seems to reflect the general ignorance of Christian doctrines in Chinese churches. Brinkman's argument may imply that Chinese theology can hardly be developed even though many western missionaries from different denominations have made their efforts to form theology in Chinese churches. So, the theological condition of modern Chinese Christianity seems to be complex. It deserves to be systematically researched in the historical, cultural and theological aspects. In the next chapter, I will start the historical part of the research through listing Matteo Ricci's contribution in China. I will seek to answer the question: how were the

elements of Christianity and Confucianism negotiated and combined in the work and thought of Ricci?

Chapter Two: Matteo Ricci's Work and Contribution in China in the Sixteenth Century

Section 1: The Historical Background of the Jesuit Missions in Asia in the Sixteenth Century

The European Jesuit missions in Asia mostly took place in the sixteenth century at the end of the Renaissance – a period of European history characterized by a drive for innovation and exploration. According to Michela Fontana, the Renaissance had brought significant change and diversification to European society and culture. However, it had gradually slowed down its pace of change because of the savage wars among different religious countries in the mid sixteenth century (Fontana 2011, 3).

At its end, the Renaissance had produced an important outcome: a stronger cooperation between science and philosophy as empirical science began to play a central role in the investigation and understanding of nature. The most significant example is mathematics (Fontana 2011, 3). In the second half of the sixteenth century, mathematics functioned as an advanced tool for the study of nature. This function furthermore related mathematics to its theological purposes. In detail, the Church claimed that God created and designed the earth according to mathematical laws. Also, God endowed humans to have the capability of discovering and understanding these laws by means of reason. Therefore, humans should consider the search of these laws as a religious quest, and the discovery of the mathematical relations underlying nature as a way to celebrate the greatness and glory of God's work. This philosophical vision was echoed by some contemporary important scientists, including an illustrious German astronomer and mathematician Christopher Clavius (ibid., 9-11).

In the political aspect, Western countries such as Catholic Italy, Spain and Portugal were dominant powers in the world. In order to vie for supremacy over the world's oceans, the maritime powers of Spain and Portugal became the first western powers to land in India and circumnavigate the globe. Their actions also opened up the new routes for Jesuit missions in the Far East (Fontana 2011, 3). For example,

Francis Xavier had founded his missions in India, Moluccas, and Japan before his death in 1552. He was also the first Jesuit missionary who attempted to enter China, though he eventually died on the small island of Shangchuan with some regret having never landed on mainland China (ibid., 6).

Some authorities of these western countries acted with religious intolerance in their Far Eastern colonies. For instance, in 1540, a Portuguese authority forced the Indian Hindu and Muslim natives to accept Christianity. Also, these Christian converts were required to abandon their castes and customs, and to adopt Portuguese names and manners in Goa. In the same city, some soldiers of the authority also destroyed the city's Hindu temples. Then in 1577, many "heretics", the Indian natives who were suspected to follow other religions than Christianity, were burned after a humiliating walk in Goa. In response, some Jesuit missionaries, such as Rodolfo Aquaviva (the head missionary at Salcette), were killed by the natives who vented their anger on the Portuguese priests (Mong 2015, 386-387).

The European Catholic authorities had committed many such bloody episodes and atrocities. As a response to their negative consequences, some Jesuits considered converting the Far Eastern natives to Christianity by a gentler approach. Alessandro Valignano, for example, argued that the worldview of western people should be shifted from Europe-centered to multipolar (Wiest 2012, 17). Based on this argument, Valignano suggested that missionaries needed to evangelize the natives through adapting their local traditions and social customs that were compatible with Christianity instead of Europeanizing them (Mong 2015, 388). Moreover, he recruited a number of young Italian missionaries who had mainly been influenced by the humanistic ideas of the Renaissance. He also trained these missionaries to learn the local culture of their assigned countries before beginning their assignments (Wiest 2012, 17).

One of these missionaries was Matteo Ricci. Ricci was admitted to the Roman College in 1572. During his university period, he was taught by Clavius in mathematics, and accepted Clavius' views about using mathematics to discover Nature that had been created by God (Fontana 2011, 7-10). As a Jesuit missionary, Ricci was chosen by his novice master Valignano to pioneer the latter's new

missionary project: bringing the gospel to China through the policy of cultural accommodation (Mong 2015, 388).

Section 2: The Details of Matteo Ricci's Work in China

Section 2.1: The Religious, Philosophical and Socio-cultural Conditions of China during Matteo Ricci's Mission Period

According to Paul S. Chung, Matteo Ricci arrived in China in 1583. Soon after his arrival, Ricci found that there were three major and significant religions in China: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Among them, Confucianism was the most privileged one. Through the study of "Analects", which is one of the "Four Books" (the other three are "Great Learning", "Doctrine of the Mean", and "Mencius"), he learned that Confucius and his followers revered Heaven and emphasized the inherent goodness of human nature (Chung 2010, 81-82). However, as is described by Michela Fontana, Ricci also found that Confucian philosophy only stresses ethical and political precepts concerning social hierarchy, ritual, and human improvement, but mentions virtually nothing about metaphysics (Fontana 2011, 52). So, Confucianism was like an ethical and social philosophy with little interest in the supernatural and a life after death. While Buddhism and Taoism both expressed the pursuit for spirituality and the longing for a transcendental world after life. Buddhism, the religion that had been imported from India to China in the first century, possesses some fundamental conceptions such as the suffering in life, the final salvation through righteous conduct, and the transmigration of one's spirit into another living being (animal or human) after death. Taoism was originally laid in the teaching of the "Old Master" Laozi in far ancient China. Its philosophy focuses on the practice of "non-action", which refers to the meditation on the natural order by withdrawing into solitude. In the sixteenth century, Buddhist and Taoist monasteries were primarily dominated by the imperial power that followed Confucian doctrines in China (ibid., 61-63).

It is noteworthy that the Confucianism that was privileged in China during Ricci's mission period is normally characterized as Neo-Confucianism, which was a later development of Confucianism as metaphysical thought. The earliest Neo-

Confucianists first developed Confucian metaphysics in the "Four Books" and "The Book of Changes", and then integrated an evolutionary cosmology, humanistic ethics, and a rationalistic epistemology of the other philosophies or religions (especially Buddhism and Taoism) into the former. By the sixteenth century, the time of the Ming dynasty of China, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism had had considerable mutual fusion (Chung 2010, 82). This condition enabled Neo-Confucianism to be further developed, especially its metaphysics, through incorporating more elements of Buddhism and Taoism (Mong 2015, 390).

On the other hand, according to Fontana, it was difficult for Chinese people to think about the separation of metaphysical and worldly power, which was prevalently known by Ricci and perhaps all his European colleagues. Chinese philosophers only regarded Tao or The Way, an indefinable principle as permanent reality. Also, this principle is always accompanied with qi, which refers to a combination of energy and matter that permeated and worked through all the things over the universe. Qi closely connects the heavens and the earth, which make them exert mutual influence. The wellbeing of the earth always depends on man's capability of building harmonious relationships with the heavens. For that, the emperor, the supreme ruler who was seen as the Son of Heaven by Chinese people, was always responsible for maintaining the harmony between the celestial and terrestrial worlds. Based on such belief, Chinese people can hardly conceive the distinction between the transcendent (e.g., a creator of the universe) and the immanent (e.g., the worldly things) (Fontana 2011, 60). It was also inconceivable for them to understand the concept of sin and the expectation of joy in heaven after death, which are fundamental in Christian doctrine (ibid., 125).

Since the ultimate aim of Ricci's work in China was to convert the Chinese people into Christianity, he had to deal with the religious and philosophical issues that are mentioned above. Fontana describes that Ricci considered Buddhism as a "sect of idols" (Fontana 2011, 62). For him, the popularity of Buddhism, which had too strong a following in the population to be challenged in the Ming dynasty of China, was one of the biggest obstacles in his work of proselytism in China. Even the Confucian literati, namely the intellectuals who follow Confucianism, generally appreciated the Buddhist philosophy though they tended to despise the Buddhist

monks (ibid., 220). In addition, the literati tended to regard Buddhism and Taoism as high-level religions, while the Chinese peasants appreciated the Buddhist and Taoist cults and the charity of the monks. These two groups of Chinese people chose to accept Christianity only if they perceived Christianity to be no worse than Buddhism and Taoism in the aspects of magical effect, and charity (ibid., 218).

Section 2.2: The Emphasis on the Personal God

The tricky religious and philosophical conditions in China made Ricci need to find a covert path where the elements of Christian philosophy can get in touch with those of Chinese philosophy. While translating "Four Books", Ricci became convinced that the morality of Classical Confucianism is very similar to Western Christian ethics. They both taught their followers one fundamental point: worshiping the Lord of Heaven (Mong 2015, 390). As is depicted by Chung, Ricci was aware that the Classical Confucian idea of "the Lord of Heaven" originally related to "the Sovereign on High" that was represented with the concept of the interplay of "yin" and "yang" in the "Book of Changes". Here, "the Sovereign on High" refers to the transcendent and unmoved One who is the cause of all movement and the source of all phenomena and goodness in creation. Ricci regarded "the Sovereign on High" in Confucianism the same as "the Lord of Heaven" or "God the Creator" in Christianity (Chung 2010, 84-85). According to Ambrose Ih-Ren Mong, since Confucius taught people to worship the Lord of Heaven through moral self-improvement, Ricci regarded Confucianism as natural law and Confucius as "another Seneca". But for Ricci, there was a defect in Classical Confucianism: Confucius' emphasis on the relationship between heaven and humans seemed to blur the Chinese people's awareness of God (Mong 2015, 390-391).

On the other hand, Neo-Confucianism, which was believed by the vast majority of contemporary Chinese literati, possessed a concept of "the Great Ultimate" that differed from "the Sovereign on High" in Classical Confucianism. Specifically, "the Great Ultimate" in Neo-Confucianism was called "Taiji" in Chinese. This concept was produced by Zhou Dunyi in the eleventh century. Zhou made this production through combining the Taoist concept of "Non Being" and the Buddhist idea of

"voidness" with his theory of the universal five elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth) into his Supreme Reality (Chung 2010, 85). Then in the twelfth century, another important Neo-Confucianist named Zhu Xi explained "the Great Ultimate (Taiji)" as the "Li (Principle)" of heaven and earth, which shaped the meaning of "the Great Ultimate" into something that refers to "Ultimateless" or "empty" (ibid., 88).

According to Chung, Ricci had strong objections against Neo-Confucianism. He criticized Zhu Xi's explanation of "the Great Ultimate" as a relatively materialistic "Sovereign on High" instead of a personal one (Chung 2010, 88). Moreover, Ricci argued that the concept of "the Great Ultimate" should be irrevocably rejected because it was a result of Classical Confucianism's contamination by Buddhist and Taoist ideas. He accordingly stressed that the Chinese word "Shangdi" actually refers to "the Sovereign on High" in Classical Confucianism. This ancient concept should be interpreted as a personal god. Thus, Ricci projected the Neo-Confucian idea of "the Great Ultimate" back to the Classical Confucian idea of "the Sovereign on High" (Fontana 2011, 226). In addition, since Chinese people tended to relate the word "Tian", which means "Heaven", to the idea of "the Sovereign on High", Ricci specially invented a Chinese word "Tianzhu" to refer to the idea of "the Sovereign on High". The invention of the word "Tianzhu" not only helped Chinese people to access the idea of the difference between human and divine nature, but also offered them with the potential of understanding the concept of "the Lord of Heaven" or "God the Creator" in Christianity, which can be seen as the same personal deity as "the Sovereign on High" in Classical Confucianism (ibid., 226-227). Ricci composed all these things in his treatise "The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (Tianzhu shiyi)" (ibid., 225).

Section 2.3: The Emphasis on the Goodness of Human Nature

Chung also states that Ricci engaged in building the harmonious connection between more elements of Classical Confucianism and Christian ideas. One element was the idea of humanity, which is created with the five basic virtues (humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness) according to Confucianism. Ricci claimed that this element was initially caused and taught by the Lord of

Heaven – God that is shared in Confucianism and Christianity (Chung 2010, 84). The other element was the innate goodness of human nature. Ricci's connection between the Confucian elements and Christian ones was in line with Mencius, who was the successor of Confucius. Mencius claimed that "Tian-ming (mandate of Heaven)", which teaches true humanity, can become the source and principle of ethical laws and values in the personal and social life of humans because of the presence of the human heart/mind in which "Heaven" is within "xing (human nature)". It also indicated that humans are good by nature. Ricci thus regarded the combination of "Tian-ming" and "xing" as the reason for humans to be essentially good. Moreover, Mencius argued that evil is only formed by bad habits. This argument of Mencius was related to Augustine's understanding of evil as "a lack of goodness" by Ricci. Ricci explained that humans have the capability of doing both good and evil because this capability was endowed by the Lord of Heaven. For that, he proposed the concept of "acquired goodness", which refers to the goodness of virtue, besides the "innate goodness" of human nature. The "acquired goodness" is related to merit, which guides humans to take efforts to do good and thus accumulate humanity. In this case, the Confucian idea of self-cultivation can be seen as a complement of the Christian ideas of human nature and meritorious virtue (ibid., 86-87).

Ricci represented the Christian understanding of heaven and hell as the places of afterlife for those who did good in life and their counterparts who did evil in life, respectively. Also, in order to highlight the innate goodness of human nature and humanity's capability of doing good and evil, Ricci emphasized the distinction between the nature of humans and that of animals, opposing the Buddhist idea of transmigration between humans and animals (Mong 2015, 391). He stated that humans and animals are different in "The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven": the soul or anima (lingcai) of humans is exclusively different from that of animals. Specifically, the soul or anima of humans is capable of discerning right and wrong and differentiating true and false, whereas that of animals has only the capability of sense and movement. Moreover, the soul or anima of humans can have connection to God the Creator through its capability. Ricci explained this point by relating it through Aristotle's doctrine of four causes. In detail, the four causes are the maker,

form, matter and end. The maker creates the object and turns it into the thing it should be. The form shapes a thing through fitting it in a category and differentiating it from other kinds of things. Matter is the substance that the object is made from and takes on form. The end determines the function of the object. Notably, the maker and end are external, and combinedly refer to God the Creator; while the form and matter are equal to the basis of things "yin" and "yang", which combinedly refer to the internal God in the soul of humans. So there is a dependent connection between God the Creator and the soul, which is like the autonomous relationship between the sun and its reflected light (as cited in Paramore 2008, 252-254).

Section 2.4: Ricci's Approbation of Some Confucian Practices

According to Chung, Ricci approbated some Confucian practices of the converted Chinese Christians. One example was the practice of filial piety, which refers to children's obliged payment to parents and elders. This traditional practice was grounded in the Confucian principles of the "Five Human Relationships" and the "Three Bonds". The former refers to the hierarchical relationships between king and minister, father and son, husband and wife, among brothers, and among friends; while the latter to those between king and minister, father and son, husband and wife. Filial piety directly relates to the submission of the son to his father, which can be interpreted to have the extended meaning of the submission of the minister to his king, and that of the human to the Lord of Heaven (the first Father and creator of all). This series of Confucian ideas was seen as the early theism of ancient Chinese writings that relate to the concept of the "Lord of Heaven" by Ricci (Chung 2010, 83-84). His hermeneutics thus highlighted the importance of the Confucian virtues of filial piety and loyalty (Pak 2017, 188).

The other prevalent Confucian practice in Chinese society was the ancestral rite. This rite refers to the ceremony held by living people to serve and worship their dead ancestors in some regulated times every year. Mark D. Luttio explains that the aims of the rite were not only to fulfill the living people's duty to their dead relatives, but also to teach the late generation and the ignorant people to honor and serve their living relatives of the old generation. During Ricci's mission period, the rite had been

seen by the Ming emperors as the linchpin of the Chinese social structure and thus strongly promoted (Luttio 1994, 292). It is noteworthy that Ricci did not regard the ancestral rite to be a kind of superstition that was contrary to Christianity. Specifically, he first stated that the rite was not relevant to idolatry worship because Chinese people neither recognized any divinity in the dead ones nor asked or hoped for anything from the latter. Also, this rite was necessary for the Chinese literati to maintain the peace of the empire and the good government of common people and families. It can be helpful to preserve the good order in Chinese society by manifesting the virtues of filial piety. Thus, Ricci perceived the rite as a civil act without a religious nature (ibid., 295-296).

Section 2.5: The Shift from the Western Worldview to the Sinocentric Worldview

Ricci also aimed to introduce the geographical relationship between China and his homeland Italy to Chinese people. According to Fontana, Ricci was surprised to find that Europe on his planispheric map was strange for his Chinese guests. For that, he observed Chinese maps, and found that these maps included the geography of East Asia, India, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Africa at most because these regions reached the upper limit of the geographical knowledge of Chinese people in the sixteenth century. Namely, none of the contemporary Chinese people knew about Europe and America. Moreover, all the local maps showed China in the central location with an exaggeratedly large size, which presented a Sinocentric view of the world. It was because most Chinese people regarded their own nation as the greatest one in the world, and therefore saw all the other nations as comparatively insignificant, savage, and barbarous. Under this circumstance, Ricci had to abandon the Eurocentric worldview that was presented in the western maps, and placed Asia in the center of the map. Also, Europe and Africa were placed on the left of Asia, and Americas was placed on the right. By doing this, Ricci skillfully created a map not only granting China a privileged position but also presenting realistic proportions (for the time) between the continents. He named the map as "Complete map of the mountains and seas (Yudi shanhai quantu)" (Fontana 2011, 55-57).

Section 2.6: The Teaching of Science and Making Friends in China

According to Fontana, Ricci found that the science of China was lagging far behind that of Europe (Fontana 2011, 59). So Ricci proceeded to teach some of his Chinese friends about science. His first student was Qu Taisu – a friend whom Ricci made in 1590 (ibid., 86). Through the experience of teaching Qu, Ricci got his first chance of knowing the people who belonged to a high social class in China (ibid., 93-94). Ricci also taught science to Xu Guangqi, who was the other friend of Ricci and one of the later "three pillars" of Chinese Catholicism (the other two were Yang Tingyun and Li Zhizao). After his learning from Ricci, Xu used his newly gained scientific knowledge to deal with some big practical issues in China, such as a better understanding of the flooding of the two greatest Chinese rivers – the Huang He and the Yangtze (ibid., 250-251). According to Jean-Paul Wiest, Ricci summarized his experience of making friends in the book "Jiaoyoulun". This summary helped Ricci to build close relationships with higher-ranking Chinese officials and literati (Wiest 2012, 19). For example, Ricci got to know Prince Kang Yi and dedicated the book "Jiaoyoulun" to him in 1595 (Fontana 2011, 126-127). Also, Ricci gave a presentation about the moral truth of Christianity to several Chinese literati, including Xu Guangqi, Li Zhizao, Li Dai, Feng Qi, Wang Yazi, and so forth. Then, he guided these literati to learn the Christian idea of the status after death through some Christian practices, such as fasting, penance, and examining the consciences of selves. After the practices, some among the literati found some agreement with Christian ideas, and built closer relationships with Ricci (ibid., 261-263).

Section 3: Summary and Discussion about Matteo Ricci's Contribution in China

In order to reject the Neo-Confucian metaphysical concept of "the Great Ultimate (Taiji)" that means "Ultimateless" or "empty", Matteo Ricci stressed "the Sovereign on High (Shangdi)", the transcendent One who is the source of all creation and the cause of all movement, in Classical Confucianism, and related it to "God the Creator" or "the Lord of Heaven (Tianzhu)" in Christianity. It was because Ricci regarded "the Sovereign on High" the same as "God the Creator" or "the Lord of Heaven". He accordingly introduced the concept of the personal God to Chinese

people. Notably, the representation of the Confucian idea of "the Sovereign on High" was with the concept of the interplay of "yin" and "yang" in the "Book of Changes". It implies that the existence of the Sovereign on High may depend on something else. On the other hand, Thomas Aquinas claimed that God the Creator exists by itself, as is described by David B. Burrell (Burrell 2010, 45). For that, the sameness of "the Sovereign on High" and "God the Creator" is not necessarily sufficient.

In the practical aspect, Ricci approbated some Chinese traditional practices, such as those of filial piety and ancestral rites. Ricci chose to approbate these practices because he saw them as civil acts that mainly functioned as preserving the good order in Chinese society, though filial piety might contain the extended religious meaning of submitting to the Lord of Heaven. Also, he guided some Chinese officials to participate in Christian practices in order to teach them about Christian moral truth. It implies that Ricci aimed to guide a number of high class Chinese people to accept Christianity and even convert them into Christians. He seemed to manage to do it. However, just about two centuries later, Christianity became a religion that was mainly welcomed by low class people but excluded by high class ones in China, which is mentioned in Chapter One.

Ricci also approbated some Chinese ideas. One of the Chinese ideas that he approbated was the Sinocentric worldview. Ricci might have even fed this worldview through creating the Chinese versioned global map. The other important idea that he might approbate was the Confucian idea of the inseparability of metaphysical and worldly power. Here, qi played an important role in connecting the celestial and terrestrial worlds and maintaining the harmony between them. According to the Chinese philosopher Chung-Ying Cheng, Mencius proposed the concept of qi and defined it as the vital force that unifies all kinds of substances, including man's heart, mind, body, and heaven, earth, and the universe. Moreover, qi is generated by gathering moral acts of man. On the ground of qi, the moral acts that were impelled by the humans' heart-mind would provide an influence in the cosmos of heaven and earth, and therefore make the unison of humans and the universe at large (Cheng 2000, 45-46). For that, Chinese filial piety, ancestral rites, and emperors' practices for

maintaining the harmony between the celestial and terrestrial worlds, can be interpreted as the moral acts for the generation of qi.

Also, Ricci proposed the concepts of the innate goodness and acquired goodness of human nature, and the idea of "bad habits forming evil" by referring to Mencius' similar ideas. They offered the basis for Ricci to introduce the concepts of heaven and hell, where those who followed their acquired goodness and those who followed their bad habits would respectively live after death. Mencius' ideas are also interpreted in detail by Cheng. Human nature (Xing) consists of moral sentiments, such as benevolence and righteousness, by birth. It is also ingrained in a human's mind and heart. Moreover, human nature is highly malleable and subscribes to human habits that are influenced by the environment and culture. Bad habits would blur the ingrained moral sentiments in humanity's mind and heart. For that, humans need to know and feel the moral sentiments in their mind and heart, namely human nature, through self-transformation, which indicates the process of the unity of mind and heart through human nature on the ground of qi. Here, human nature is present in an ontological sense and active in working at the harmonious unity of mind and heart. The unity produces humanity's self-realization of human nature. It furthermore impels humans to practise self-cultivation and moral development (Cheng 2000, 46-50). If Cheng's interpretation here is combined with his interpretation about how qi works in the unison of heaven and earth and that of humans and the universe, we get a good picture of the Confucian idea that human nature, especially the acquired goodness of it, is the essential ontological agency for unifying humanity's mind and heart, and furthermore for compelling humans to practice moral acts to unify heaven and earth, or humans and the universe. Moreover, Mencius' idea of the evil that is formed by bad habit is similar to the moderate Reformed idea of actual sins, namely the immoral deeds that people commit in the world.

Notably, Ricci highlighted his concepts of the innate and acquired goodness of human nature through his claim of a dependent connection between the external God and human souls that have the internal God, with the latter being the reflection of the former. It is not hard to see that this claim contradicts Augustine's idea of humans' sinful souls. As is shown in "Introduction", Augustine argues that humans' sinful

souls have led to humans' incapacity of intimately connecting to God. So, there is no way for human souls to be the reflection of God.

In addition, Ricci's legacy can be objected to from the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox perspectives. According to Ambrose Ih-Ren Mong, Ricci failed to embed some fundamental Christian concepts in Chinese Confucianism, such as God's Trinity, and Jesus' incarnation and redemption (Mong 2015, 394). It shows that the concepts that relate to Jesus were not emphasized in Ricci's work. Ricci did not apparently mention the concept of sin in his work either. So, it makes sense to ask: how has Ricci's work been received and interpreted after him, and whether the Jesus-centered Christian concepts and beliefs have been embedded in Chinese Confucianism later? These questions will be addressed and discussed in the next chapter.

**Chapter Three: The Reception of Matteo Ricci and His Jesuit Companions'
Work in China**

Section 1: General Introduction into the Reception and Their Authors

Matteo Ricci's contribution in China were admired by many people in the
seventeenth century. However, his work also received condemnation by some
Catholic orders principally the Dominicans and the Fransiscans in Rome (Chung
2010, 92). The condemnation led to the "rites controversy" – a papal opposition to the
Chinese Christian rites and the Jesuits' cultural accommodation policy from the mid
seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century (Bays 2012, 28-29). On the other
hand, some of the later generation of Jesuits and Chinese Christian literati posed their
defence of the Chinese rites and the Jesuits' work during the eighteenth century.
Afterwards, the debated reception of Ricci and the Jesuits' work emerged again
during the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Therefore, I will list some
representatives of the reception and then make a summary of them.

*Section 2: The Reception during the "Rites Controversy" Period (the Seventeenth
and Eighteenth Centuries)*

Section 2.1: The Condemnations of Matteo Ricci's Work

The first person who opposed Matteo Ricci's work and the Jesuits' practices
seemed to be Juan Baptista Morales, a Dominican and a missionary to China from
1633 to 1637. Mark D. Luttio writes that Morales described his objection to the
Christian rites in China in "seventeen questions", and then submitted his description
to the Roman Pope Innocent X. Based on Morales' description, Innocent X issued a
pronouncement to repudiate the Jesuits' posture in 1645. After that, Charles Maigrot,
a member of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, also shared the strong disagreement
with the Jesuits' practices in China (Luttio 1994, 298-299). In 1704, Pope Clement X
issued a decree to condemn the Jesuit's policy and rites in China. The decree seemed
to be mainly regarding three issues: first, the Chinese terms "Tian" and "Shangdi"
cannot be used to designate the name of God because they contain other religious
connotations; second, the Chinese ancestral rites were not only civil but also religious,

which related to idolatry worship; third, for the Christian participants, their souls were prone to get connection with the non-Christian ancestral gods or spirits in the ancestral rites. Notably, this decree was apparently caused by the guerilla warfare between Maigrot and the proponents for the Chinese rites in China in 1693, as is stated by Daniel H. Bays (Bays 2012, 28-29).

The Chinese rites to ancestors were seen as religiously superstitious by the orders of Rome (Luttio 1994, 300). Also, these orders seemed to accuse Ricci and his companions of consciously putting Jesus Christ aside by not displaying the crucifix and explaining the Passion to their Chinese converts, as is stated by Aristotle C. Dy (Dy 2011, 54). Even some Jesuits, including Ricci's successor Nicola Eongobardi, also objected to the Jesuits' cultural accommodation policy (Chung 2010, 92).

Section 2.2: The Admiration, Complement, and Defence for Ricci's Work

As is shown in Chapter Two, Ricci's contribution was admired by a number of people in China from the higher social classes. These people included Ricci's students as well as friends Qu Taisu and Xu Guangqi, and some high-ranking elites, such as Li Zhizao, Yang Tingyun, Prince Kang Yi, Wang Yazi, and so on. Some Jesuit missionaries after Ricci admired the latter's work as well. They also offered the complement for the theological concepts that were apparently negated by Ricci. For example, Diego de Pantoja, one of Ricci's closest collaborators, stated a long and detailed explanation about the passion of Jesus and the doctrine of the resurrection in the teaching of the "Doctrina Christiana". He also related the salvific value of Jesus' passion to the virtue of Chinese filial piety in his treatise "The Recitation of the Passion of the Savior". In addition, Giulio Aleni, a Jesuit missionary who labored in China from 1582 to 1610, published "The Life of Jesus in Words and Images" and "The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ" to tell the life of Jesus in Chinese. In his treatise "Learned Conversations of Fuzhou", Aleni introduced the concept of incarnation, which was seen to be motivated by God's love to humans. In 1635, Aleni related the incarnation to the mystery of redemption through regarding the incarnation as the working out of God's salvific plan for humanity in his book "Introduction to the incarnation of the Lord of Heaven". Notably, in this book, he clarified the redemption

and self-sacrifice of Jesus by alluding to an ancient Chinese legend of Cheng Tang – the first emperor of the Shang dynasty (1766-1753 B.C.E.). The country suffered from a serious famine during the reign period of Cheng Tang. The people believed that it was caused by the anger of Heaven or God, which had to be appeased by a human sacrifice. For that, as a semi-divine emperor, Cheng Tang offered himself as the victim to God. Based on the allusion, Aleni stated that Cheng Tang prefigured Jesus Christ, who also offered himself to God in order to save humans. Also, he related Jesus Christ to the Chinese sage philosophers, including Confucius, Mencius, and Laozi, but also regarded the former to be superior to the latter because of the former's incarnation and redemption (Dy 2011, 55-57).

The most important admirer and defender of Ricci's contribution might be Zhang Xingyao (1633-1715) – a literatus who possessed the equivalent status to the "three pillars" in Chinese Christianity (Bays 2012, 24). According to D. E. Mungello, Zhang claimed that the Lord of Heaven Teaching was first simultaneously learned and transmitted by the wise literati of China (e.g., Confucius and Mencius) and those of Europe, which generated the original Confucianism in China and Christianity in Europe. Throughout history, the Heavenly Teaching had been perfectly inherited by the European scholars in Christianity. However, some early Chinese literati had negated parts of the Heavenly Teaching, which made the latter be degenerated into a kind of Literati Teaching. Then, the teaching in China was further obscured and distorted by Buddhism and Taoism, which eventually produced Neo-Confucianism. Thus, Christianity in Europe eventually transcended Confucianism in China. But they were compatible. For that, Zhang argued that the Chinese Literati Teaching should be supplemented by the Heavenly Teaching. He saw the Jesuits' work to be in line with this kind of supplement. Also, Zhang appreciated Mencius's idea of the inherent goodness of human nature. But human nature had been tainted at conception by original sin. Through God's grace, human nature can recover to the perfect status – an eternal status of sage hood that is led by the advanced soul (linghun). It is also the way to let a person escape from hell and go into heaven. Zhang also saw the Jesuits, including Ricci, as the people who had been up to this eternal status of sagehood. So they were the superior kind of "sages and worthies" compared to the Chinese sage

literati, such as Confucius and Mencius. In addition, Zhang regarded Jesus as the Son of Heaven as well as a human sage who represents the divinity of the human incarnation of God. It reflected his distinguishing God the Son or "Son of the Lord of Heaven (Tianzhuzi)" from God the Father or "Holy Father (Shengfu)". Zhang only posed a rather limited mention about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. But he quite stressed the commandment to eat the Sage's body (Shengti) and to drink the Sage's blood (Shengxue) in order to attain immortality by referring to the eucharistic eating of the body and blood of Christ (Mungello 1994, 70-154).

Mungello also describes Zhang's sustained defence of the Chinese ancestral rites from the Europeans' criticism. Zhang claimed that the rites must be retained. This was because they were not only more civil and social rather than religious in nature, but also necessary and moral in Chinese society. The rites not only strengthened people's remembrance of their dead ancestors, but also helped them to be closer to their living parents and reinforce a social consciousness of the extended family or clan. The Chinese Christians who did not revere their ancestors through ancestral rites would be considered as abominable and unnatural, and thus suffered hard criticism from other Chinese people. Moreover, Zhang argued that people who attended to the souls of their ancestors would be awarded by heaven, otherwise would be punished in hell, through blending ancestral reverence with the biblical commandment "honor your father and mother" that is represented in Exodus 20:12. He furthermore stated that the Lord of Heaven should be honored and revered by all the people because he is the "Great Father and Mother (Da Fumu)" of humanity (Mungello 1994, 155-163).

Some Jesuit missionaries also posed the defence of their own work. For instance, Father Martino Martini, an Italian-German Jesuit, had his mission in Hangzhou of China during the 1640s, and then was selected as procurator and sent back to Rome in 1650, as is narrated by D. E. Mungello (Mungello 1994, 19-25). Then in 1655, according to Mark D. Luttio, Martini defended the Jesuits' practices and policy through arguing that Juan Baptista Morales' description about the Chinese rites was a great misrepresentation. His defence won a temporary allowance for Christians to participate in the Chinese rites in 1656. However, the allowance was banned again

just after the military conflict between Morales and the pro-rites proponents in 1693, which is mentioned above (Luttio 1994, 298-299).

Section 3: The Reception during the Late Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries
Section 3.1: The Criticisms towards the Designation of the Chinese Terms and Ideas to the Christian Concepts

As is shown in Chapter Two, Matteo Ricci conducted his accommodation through relating the Christian concepts to the relevant Confucian concepts (e.g., heaven, hell, the Lord of Heaven) and displacing the Buddhist ones because he thought that the latter was misleading for Christian learning. However, some modern scholars found that those Jesuit missionaries ironically borrowed many religious concepts of Buddhism in their Christian teaching to Chinese people. It made these scholars question the precision of the Chinese words that the Jesuits used to designate the Christian concepts. For instance, Ambrose Ih-Ren Mong argues that the term "Tian", which Chinese people related to heaven, is equivalent to the Sanskrit Devaloka or "mansions of the gods" in Buddhism. It furthermore indicates that "Lord of Heaven" is also essentially a Buddhist term. Also, the Chinese term "Diyu (Hell)" comes from the Sanskrit naraka in Buddhist cosmology. The Buddhist term "linghun" was also accepted by Ricci to designate "advanced soul" or "spirit" (Mong 2015, 391-392). Similarly, D. E. Mungello clarifies that the idea of a hell in which souls were punished in the afterlife for their evil deeds in life had not been presented in ancient Chinese culture. In the ancient time, Chinese people only had a vague idea of heaven. Concerning the idea related to afterlife, they believed that the souls would be ruled by the three underworld gods named Youbei, Youhao, and Tubo, and a demon named Siming. After the introduction of Buddhism in China, the idea of hell that is separated from heaven proceeded to be developed in Chinese culture (Mungello 1994, 134-135).

In addition, some questions and criticisms can be raised regarding the potential incommensurability between the European and Chinese terms. For example, Mong also questions the precision of Ricci's using the Chinese word "Sheng" to designate "holy", "sacred", and "saint". He claims that the word "Sheng" should be seen as the

opposite of "ignorance" because the Sheng in China referred to the sages who got cultural achievement from the past who attained wisdom, understanding, and cultivated virtues. While in the Christian context, "saint" and "holy" are the opposites of "sinner" and "profane" respectively. Moreover, "Shangdi", the Chinese Confucian term Ricci used to designate the Judeo-Christian God, is opposed by many Christians. Jacques Gernet even argued that Western and Eastern concepts are not commensurable because the difference between European and Chinese languages associated with different worldviews is radical (Mong 2015, 392). Gernet also criticized the Chinese legend of Cheng Tang that Giulio Aleni used to explain the passion of Jesus Christ. He argued that the emperor Cheng Tang cannot be regarded as the Master of Heaven or God-human, which is equivalent to Jesus Christ (Dy 2011, 59).

Section 3.2: The Defence of the Jesuit Missionaries' Strategy for Inculturation in China

Some modern scholars argued that some of Ricci and his companions' deeds, such as fitting some Christian terms into the Chinese terms and selectively omitting some Christian concepts, were parts of their strategy for inculturation in China. For instance, Paul S. Chung claims that Ricci's using the Confucian term "Shangdi" to designate the Christian God was a hermeneutical strategy of transforming the Christian concepts in Confucian teaching (Chung 2010, 83-84). Aristotle C. Dy defends Ricci's strategy of obscuring Jesus Christ and his crucifixion. Specifically, Ricci did briefly present Jesus Christ in the eighth and last chapter of his treatise "The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven", but not showed the passion and death of Christ. The crucifixion of Christ was intentionally not displayed by Ricci and his companions for two reasons: first, these Jesuit missionaries were afraid that the crucifix would be interpreted as a Taoist charm – the transcendence of a common person into a god – by Chinese people; second, the nudity of Jesus in art was forbidden by the Chinese law. The Jesuit missionaries intended to delay explanation of the crucifixion of Christ until such time that the catechumens were ready for the teaching. So their deeds cannot be seen as the renunciation of Christ, according to Dy

(Dy 2011, 54). Concerning Ricci's approbation of the Chinese ancestral rite, George Dunne, a Jesuit scholar, argued that the approbation was necessary to conduct the Jesuits' policy of cultural accommodation. It was because the nascent Church would be forced to assume a posture that seemed hostile to the Chinese environment if the ancestral rite was banned. In this case, Christianity would be regarded as a foreign substance in the body of Chinese social culture and could not be embedded in the latter anymore (Luttio 1994, 303-304). The argument of Dunne seems to be quite in line with Zhang Xingyao's defence of the rites.

Section 4: Summary and Discussion about the Reception of Matteo Ricci and His Jesuit Companions' Work in China

The condemnations of the Jesuits' work are from the Dominicans and the Fransiscans in Rome during the "Rites Controversy" period and some modern scholars. These condemnations can be summarized into four points:

- First, the religious superstition of the ancestral rites from a Christian perspective.
- Second, the Chinese Christian terms that mixed with Buddhist ideas.
- Third, the relating of Jesus Christ to human sages.
- Fourth, Matteo Ricci's negation of the concepts that relate to Jesus Christ.

Concerning the first three points, they basically reflected the Chinese socio-cultural elements that had formed under the influence of Confucian and even Buddhist ideas: the rites with Confucian social meaning, the Chinese words consisted of both Confucian and Buddhist meanings, and the Confucian worship of human sages. These elements might lead to the distortion of the meanings of the Christian concepts that were based on the western understanding. However, they played an indispensably bridgeable role in the process of the embedment of Christianity in China from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century. As Martien E. Brinkman argues, the scriptures of Confucianism and even Buddhism are seen as holy for Chinese people. These scriptures tend to form an indispensably natural reference framework for Chinese Christians to conceive and comprehend their articulation of their own faith (Brinkman 2009, 245). Thus, if the Jesuits really took their acts of

approbating of the ancestral rites, introducing Jesus by relating him to human sages, and even obscuring some Christian concepts that relate to Jesus, as strategies, as were defended by some modern scholars, the acts of the Jesuits were understandable.

Ricci's lack of reference to Jesus Christ was somewhat complemented by some admirers of Ricci's work during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The concept of the resurrection was taught by Diego de Pantoja. Then, Giulio Aleni and Zhang Xingyao introduced the incarnation of Jesus Christ by relating Jesus to chosen Chinese human sages. The cross of Christ was also briefly mentioned by Zhang. It is noteworthy that de Pantoja introduced the redemption of Jesus by relating it to filial piety. Such emphasis on filial piety seemed to be further clarified by Zhang's relating it to the reverence for ancestors in the ancestral rite. Zhang thought that the reverence for ancestors can be extended to filial piety towards the living parents, and further to the reverence for God who is the "Great Father and Mother" of all humans. Based on this thought, Zhang considered the practices in the ancestral rites as the necessary moral acts for Christians to revere God. Zhang's thought needs to be comprehended based on the Confucian idea that qi is generated by moral acts and unifies all kinds of substances, which was mentioned in Chapter Two. As moral acts, the practices in the ancestral rites can generate qi, which would form the closer unity between a person and his living parents, and the unity between humans and God. Humans' reverence for God would accordingly be accomplished. Notably, Zhang did not call God as "Father" as God is called in the Four Gospels. Calling God as "Great Father and Mother" seemed to be unique to Zhang. Through this calling, Zhang was likely to emphasize the extended relation between humans' reverence for God and filial piety towards the living parents. Zhang seemed to be better at presenting the relation between the redemption of Jesus and filial piety than de Pantoja. It might be because of Zhang's identity – a Chinese Confucian. As a Confucian, Zhang was likely to have sufficient knowledge about Confucianism, which may help him to relate some Christian elements to certain Confucian ones in detail. As a Chinese, Zhang was naturally good at expressing his thoughts to the contemporary Chinese people who spoke the same native language. So, Zhang's thought was likely to have more significant influence than those of Aleni and de Pantoja on the Chinese recipients.

Zhang's thought can be compared with the Thomistic idea of the relation between God and humans. According to David B. Burrell, Thomas Aquinas identified God as the cause of universal creation and the ultimate source of all being. As created substances, humans need to be infused with goodness through their participation in the good of the order of the universe that has been designed by God. Otherwise, they might be evil. The participation is accidental rather than substantial. Moreover, God's subsistence is not dependent on creation; while for created substances, their subsistence is dependent on God the Creator. So, the relation between created substances and God is non-reciprocal. It is different from the relation between a child and a parent, which is mutually dependent and reciprocal (Burrell 2010, 45-51). Aquinas' conception of God is consistent with Chalcedon's conception, which is shown in "Introduction". Concerning Zhang's thought, it appears to differ from Aquinas' idea in two significant respects. First, Zhang seemed to relate the relation between humans and God very closely to that of humans and their parents, which are mutually dependent. So, Zhang seemed to have regarded the relation between humans and God as reciprocal, at least to a significant extent. Second, the idea that qi is generated by moral acts and unifies all kinds of substances, which was the basis of Zhang's thought, relates to the very substance of "human nature". As is shown in Chapter One, according to Confucianism, the goodness of humans was endowed by God and plays a role as the ontological agency in the unison of all substances. The moral acts of revering ancestors and filial piety are also considered as substances. It contradicts Aquinas' idea that humans need to be infused with goodness through participation, which is strictly speaking accidental.

Zhang also mentioned that original sin had tainted the goodness of human nature. He furthermore argued that human nature can recover to the sagely perfect status that is led by the soul through God's saving. The "perfect status that is led by the soul" in Zhang's argument can be related to Ricci's proposal that God the Creator reflects the soul of humans that has the internal God. But it contradicts Augustine's idea of humans' sinful souls, which is mentioned in Chapter Two. It implies that Zhang understood original sin as something like the evil that is formed by bad habit, which is similar to the moderate Reformed idea of actual sins.

Since Zhang was a Chinese Confucian as well as Christian, we can regard his thought and argument as reflecting the condition of the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism in his time. If Zhang's thought and argument are valid, humans can fully build harmonious unity with God through their own moral acts. In this case, the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ would be meaningless.

Zhang's questionable attempts to improve on Ricci's embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism raise difficult questions about the compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism more generally. In the final chapter, I will examine different interpretations of compatibility or incompatibility of Christianity and Confucianism, before reaching my own theological conclusions on the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Section 1: The Interpretations of the Compatibility or Incompatibility between Christianity and Confucianism

Whether Christianity and Confucianism are compatible or not has remained a controversial topic in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries also beyond the reference to Matteo Ricci's legacy. Among the scholars who have researched Christianity and Confucianism, some of them claim that these two religions are compatible because of their common key elements, such as the perceived similarities between the Christian God and god as understood by Confucianism, and the shared emphasis on filial piety. Other scholars have argued that they are incompatible and that there are essential differences between them, such as their different philosophical ideas about human nature and filial piety. These scholars are mostly experts in Christianity or Confucianism. Some of them are theologians or church leaders. Their lifetimes range from the early twentieth century to the twenty-first century. I will introduce these scholars' interpretations and then critically discuss their views. By doing this, I will explore the cultural or religious elements which are represented in the fusion of Christianity and Confucianism in theory. Also, I will discover whether the Christian essential ideas, including the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and original sin, are likely to be included or excluded in the fusion.

Section 1.1: The Interpretations of the Compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism

The earliest scholar who supported the compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism in the twentieth century was an important Chinese fundamentalist theologian Jia Yuming (1880-1964). Jia argued that Christianity and Confucianism share the same supernatural person-God. Also, he generated his theology with the goal of encouraging every Chinese Christian to become a "Christ-human", which indicates "Jesus is me and I am Jesus". In detail, by resonating with Mencius' view "sprout of goodness", Jia stressed that human nature has the feature of "delighting in good and hating evil". However, humans started to "not follow after their own

nature" after they disobeyed God's commandment. This phenomenon was regarded by Jia as "indulgence" (fall), which was in line with Mencius' view "due to what ensnares their hearts". Moreover, Jia believed that "indulgence" inspired "selfishness" of the human heart or soul under the negative influence of materialism. He also related "indulgence" to sin. For that, "indulgence" or sin has made humans unable to know the true God. Jia accordingly argued that humans have to unite their inner spirits with that of Jesus Christ – the Son of God and the transcendental good. By doing that, humans can realize their true nature in the spiritual life of Christ, and then unify with God. Notably, although humans have suffered from indulgence, human nature's feature of "delighting in good and hating evil" has never been lost. So, human nature still plays an important role as the subjective moral agency of humans to become Christ-mans (Kwok 2014, 146-156).

Jia's interpretation shows that human nature, mainly its feature of "delighting in good and hating evil", plays a role as the subjective moral agency of humans to connect their spirits with that of Christ. By doing that, humans can realize their true nature and then connect to God. We can relate this approach to Ricci's idea that the acquired goodness of human nature impels humans to realize their real nature, namely the internal God in their souls, and eventually unite with God, which is shown in Chapter Two. Here, the acquired goodness of human nature is understood as the ontological agency in unity with God from the Confucian perspective. I interpret the idea of human nature as the ontological agency as basically the same as Jia's idea of human nature as the subjective moral agency. Jia essentially emphasized the role of human nature as the ontological agency in the unity of God and humans. Moreover, Jia's idea of "indulgence" referred to sin that inspired "selfishness" of the human heart under the bad influence of materialism, echoing Mencius' idea of the evil that is formed by bad habit. As is mentioned in Chapter Two, this Mencius' idea is similar to the moderate Reformed idea of actual sins, which implies that Jia also regarded sin as a kind of misdeed that humans commit rather than a condition of original sin.

Some other scholars also support the compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism. For example, Sou-hwan Kim (1922-2009), a Korean Cardinal, emphasized the equivalence between the Confucian "Shangdi" and the Christian God

"Lord of Heaven (Tianzhu)", and the virtues of filial piety and loyalty, by relating to Ricci's hermeneutics. He explained that both Christianity and Confucianism were "religions of filial piety" that stressed "great filial piety" toward God as the Great Father and Great King. The "great filial piety" can be furthermore related to humans' filial piety toward their own parents. Kim converged humaneness in Confucianism and love in Christianity because he regarded humaneness and love to be the essences of the two religions that reflect the transcendent goal of approaching God – nurturing one's nature toward God's nature (Pak 2017, 188-190). Moreover, Kim stressed the social service, including proclaiming justice, righteousness, and peace, that were practised by the Confucian sages as well as the Hebrew prophets. He argued that practising social service can synchronize the spiritualities of Confucianism and Christianity (ibid., 202-206). Similarly, Song Nai Rhee, a scholar of the Bible and Hebrew, claims that the Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament and Confucian Classics taught similar ethical contents to the ancient Hebrew and Chinese sages, respectively. These two books both required the fear of God (the Confucian "Tian") through believing God's justice and righteousness. Also, they both commanded filial piety through emphasizing "honor your father and mother" and "the highest filial piety is the honoring of one's parents" respectively (Rhee 1965, 207-212). Pan-chiu Lai, on the other hand, a scholar of Cultural and Religious Studies, interprets the connection between Christianity and Confucianism from an ecological perspective. According to Lai's Christian interpretation, God created humans to be superior to the rest of creation in certain aspects and responsible to cultivate and take care of nature and other kinds of creatures. So the Christian identification about human nature is in line with the Confucian one – humans are the superior product of nature who were endowed with the moral character of Heaven, and are accordingly capable of building and maintaining cosmic harmony within Heaven and Earth through love of life and nature. Thus, a potential Christian-Confucian dialogue on human nature may help to deal with the environmental issues and improve ecological ethics (Lai 2004, 207-213).

Kim, Rhee, and Lai all interpret moral acts – and especially the social practice of filial piety – to be essential to unify with God or Heaven. Lai claims that humans are responsible to build and maintain harmony within Heaven and Earth according to

ecological ethics. Also, Kim and Lai both argue that Christianity and Confucianism share emphasis on the love and the cultivation of human nature. The interpretations of these three scholars are consistent with the Confucian idea I have explained in Chapters Two and Three: moral acts generate qi, which builds the unions of all substances (e.g., God and humans, and Heaven and Earth), with the goodness of human nature as the ontological agency. Thus, Kim, Rhee, and Lai implicitly emphasize the essential role of human nature as the ontological agency in the act of uniting God and humans, and Heaven and Earth.

To summarize: Jia, Kim, Rhee, and Lai all explicitly or implicitly emphasize the essential role of human nature in unity with God or Heaven. In connection with this doctrine, Kim, Rhee, and Lai also emphasize moral acts. These two points are typically Confucian. On the other hand, these scholars' interpretations do not seem to give any role in their theology to what I referred to as Christian essence, especially humans' original sin, and the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ.

Section 1.2: The Interpretations of the Incompatibility between Christianity and Confucianism

T. C. Chao, the Christian missionary that was introduced in Chapter One, seemed to be the earliest scholar who claimed the incompatibility between Christianity and Confucianism in the twentieth century. He argued that Confucianism guides its believers to accomplish self-discipline through entirely relying on the power for righteousness in human nature, which has intrinsic goodness according to Confucian philosophy. There is no need of salvation for humans to fulfill self-transcendence. Confucianism thus purely functions as a system of ethics for Chinese people in their daily life. On the other hand, Christianity stresses sinful human nature. Sin and weakness make humans incapable of having complete self-awareness and rising to the nobility of saintliness. So they need to be delivered by the transcendental and supernatural power of God (Chao 1928, 593-598). Another Christian scholar who argues there is a deep difference between the Confucian and Christian ideas of humanity is Zhibin Xie. In detail, from a Confucian perspective, humans have a physical nature and a nature of principle, with the latter being perfect; while

Christianity sees humans as a combination of God's image and original sin. Based on the different ideas of humanity, Confucian followers are likely to use the idea of humaneness/benevolence to build moral and reciprocal relationships between people, and practice the moral standards with the aims of achieving original essence (intuitive knowledge) and achieving sagehood, whereas Christianity tends to see humans' relationship as a metaphysical foundation that represents God's existence, and asserts moral practice to be a response to God's grace and actions (Xie 2013, 7-9).

Chao and Xie's interpretations express humans' original sin, which has made human nature become imperfect and therefore cannot function as the ontological agency for self-transcendence and uniting with God. This expression is consistent with the understanding of original sin from the Augustinian and the moderate Reformed perspectives. Also, Xie argues that Confucian self-transcendence through moral practices can only lead people to build reciprocal relationships with others. This argument may reflect the issues of Zhang Xingyao's extension of human filial piety to humans' unity with God, which is mentioned in Chapter Three. So, Confucian self-transcendence only relies on self-power. Since human nature is imperfect, from a Christian perspective such transcendence cannot be accomplished.

We should note that this view of incompatibility is not limited to Christian theologians. Cai Renhou, a Confucian scholar, also argues that Confucianism asserts the goodness of humanity and its cultivation through self-effort, whereas Christianity maintains the evil of human nature and salvation through other-power (Lai 2004, 202). He explains that Chinese Confucianism teaches self-perfection through a kind of ontological self-conscious actualization, which is a subjective human moral agency. Such agency has been blocked according to the Christian doctrine. So, Confucianism can easily proclaim that every person is capable of becoming a Yao or a Shun – the legendary Chinese emperors who were the models of perfect humanity – while Christians can hardly pose a similar proclamation as "all humans are capable of becoming Christ" (Kwok 2014, 147). Concerning filial piety, theologian Joshua R. Brown argues persuasively that Confucian filial piety, the obedience that is based on the parent-child relationship, serves as an archetypal experience in Confucian thought. However, since the creatures who have finite capabilities of loving are ontologically

different from God the Creator who is capable of infinite divine love, creaturely obedience, which indicates human obedience to God, is non-archetypal. Accordingly, Confucian filial piety cannot be extended to human obedience to God. Instead, humans need to accomplish God's commandments within the covenant, which was only made for the relationship between God and the Israelites in the Old Testament. On the other hand, as the Son of God, Jesus Christ serves his filial obedience to God as an archetypal experience. Moreover, Jesus translated his heavenly form of existence into the form of existence on earth for humans through his incarnation. Then, after his sacrifice on the Cross, Jesus returned to his heavenly form of existence through his resurrection. By doing those things, Jesus became the new covenant within the relationship between God and the whole of humanity. Thus, humans can complete ratification of the obedience to God only if they follow the Cross of Jesus Christ (Brown 2016, 443-456).

Cai's interpretation shows that human nature is understood as the ontological agency of humans to realize their true nature and transcend themselves only from the Confucian perspective. While this agency has been blocked in Christianity. So there is no way for humans to become Christ from the Christian perspective. Cai's interpretation therefore refutes Jia's interpretation that humans can realize their true nature through becoming Christ-mans. Moreover, Cai's interpretation can be understood by being put in the context of Brown's interpretation. Specifically, human obedience to God is non-archetypal because of the ontological distinction between God and humans. Also because of the unbridgeable chasm of the ontological agency for self-transcendence, the human obedience to their own parents, which is archetypal, cannot be extended to human obedience to God. On the other hand, Jesus Christ's obedience to God is archetypal. For that, God shows himself in the incarnation of Christ, and then made the new covenant within the relationship between God and humans through the cross and resurrection of Christ. Thus, the ontological chasm has been conditionally abolished. Humans can thus accomplish their obedience to God through following the cross of Christ. Such interpretation is consistent with Martien E. Brinkman's idea of Jesus' nature as mediation between God and humans, which is shown in "Introduction".

From the comparison of the interpretations which investigate the (in)compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism, we can see that those interpretations which argue in favour of the incompatibility between the two retain an emphasis on the Christian doctrines which I consider theologically essential: the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and humans' original sin. We can also note that the same Christian essence is prone not only to be less emphasised but to be at least implicitly negated when Christianity is fused with Confucianism. I suggest we are now ready to address the central research question: Is the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism an example of inculturation or syncretism?

Section 2: The Evaluation of the Embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism

We have now arrived at the final and evaluative question of this research. The question is whether the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism is an example of inculturation or syncretism, especially regarding Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century as it was expressed by its influential voices. Many features of Chinese Christian theology were likely to be shaped and formed by Matteo Ricci and his successors' legacies, which have been discussed in Chapters Two and Three, respectively. Here, our theological evaluation of the said embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism will be based on Peter Schineller's criteria for inculturation.

The first Shineller's criterion relates to "insertion into the cultural situation", and states that the gospel should preserve the particular cultures (Schineller 1992, 52-53). This criterion is easy to be used for the evaluation. As we have shown in Chapters Two and Three, Ricci and his successors had preserved many key elements of Chinese culture during their work in China from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century. These included the Classical Confucian ideas of the personal God and the goodness of human nature, the practice of filial piety and ancestral rite, the Sinocentric worldview, and in part, the idea that qi is generated by moral acts and unifies all kinds of substances with human nature as the ontological agency. In the previous section, we tried to show that most of these elements had been maintained

by many Chinese scholars until the twentieth century. So, the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism meets this criterion. But it is noteworthy that this criterion also fits syncretism, which can mean a fusion of the gospel with the preserved good of a culture with much more emphasis on the latter than the former.

The second criterion involves the "engagement by pastoral agencies". Namely, the local church leaders and theological scholars should be inspired to guide the local people to live the Gospel in their particular situations (Schineller 1992, 53). It is very difficult if not impossible to use this criterion in the evaluation in the context of the present thesis. According to the condition of the Christian associations in the late twentieth century that is described in Chapter One, the Christian theologians who also served as leaders in the official Christian associations, such as Bishop Ting, seemed to have considerable influence on Chinese Christians. On the other hand, the leaders of the unofficially indigenous associations, including Wang Mingdao, Ni Tuosheng, and T. C. Chao, tended to be repressed by the Chinese authority. So, on both sides, the pastoral agencies in China were much interfered with by the power and the institutions of the government. In addition, it would be very hard, as well as beyond the scope and the methodology of this study, to conduct a sociological research into these pastoral practices of Chinese Christian leaders. We thus leave out this criterion for the evaluation.

The third criterion is regarding the "faithfulness to the Christian message". This criterion involves both Scripture and the tradition of the church. On the one hand, any inculturation of the gospel must be in accordance with the Scriptures. On the other hand, the tradition of the church must also be taken into account. The tradition of the church consists of diverse elements, such as the church's theological writings, the living examples of the saints, the church's history, and so on. However, it is noteworthy that the distinction between what is essential and what is accidental in regard to both Scripture and tradition of the church is difficult and sometimes controversial. For example, covering women's heads is seen as accidental in many American churches but essential in many African ones (Schineller 1992, 52). Generally speaking, the criterion emphasizes the importance of maintaining the essence of the gospel as it is combined with the traditions of the local church, which

is always the case to some extent. But it is often hard to distinguish this essence from the traditional elements of the church that are accidental for the gospel. In order to have as clear an idea as possible of the essence of the gospel, I will use this evaluative criterion based on my theological position, stated in the Introduction: the essence of the gospel includes the doctrines of the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and the doctrine of original sin.

As is shown in Chapter One, the Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century mainly possessed two features:

- First, moral social practice, such as the service of people, was much emphasized in the Chinese Christian associations. Social practice was not only used to promote the social condition in China, but also related to the manifestation of God's mercy and the redemption of Christ, by Chinese Christians.
- Second, God and Christ are the cosmic lovers who love the whole creation. So, Christ's grace has saved humans' original sin.

The first feature indicates that moral social practice is essential for the Chinese Christian theology as it has been expressed by its influential representatives. It is similar to Sou-hwan Kim, Song Nai Rhee, and Pan-chiu Lai's emphasis on moral acts in their interpretations of the compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism, which are explained in the previous section. Notably, the emphasis on moral acts within the relationship between humans and God (or God's son Christ) tends to be understood on the basis of the Confucian idea that moral acts generate qi, which unifies humans and God with human nature as the ontological agency. It implies that the Confucian idea had influenced Chinese Christian thought in the twentieth century, just as it had largely done in the earlier centuries. These Chinese Christians might also emphasize moral acts based on the implicit emphasis of human nature as the ontological agency, as Kim, Rhee, and Lai do.

With its first and second features being examined together, the Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century shares considerable similarity to Zhang Xingyao's idea of Christianity's fusion with Confucianism in the seventeenth century. As is mentioned in Chapter Three, Zhang claimed that moral acts, such as filial piety,

were essential for the unity between God and humanity. This reminds us of the use of social service to manifest God's mercy and the redemption of Christ to others by Chinese Christian theologians in the late twentieth century. In relation to this topic, I proceed on the basis of Thomas Aquinas and the Christian orthodox mainstream, according to which the relation between God and humans is non-reciprocal: humans are dependent on God but not vice versa. Because of this, humans can only be infused with God's goodness through participation that is strictly speaking (metaphysically) accidental. For that, moral acts, including filial piety in the seventeenth century and social service in the late twentieth century, are likely to be accidental for the gospel. Moreover, Zhang argued that God's saving can simply recover human nature to the perfect status although human nature had been tainted by original sin. It is also similar to the argument in the late twentieth century Chinese Christian theology that Christ's grace has saved humans' original sin. Such arguments led original sin to be paid less and less attention in Chinese Christianity. As we have seen in Chapter One, the doctrine of the original sin was eventually negated. In addition, the Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century overall indicates that Christians can manifest God's mercy and the redemption of Christ to other people through serving the latter, since the former's original sin has been dissolved by Christ. In this case, the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ would be meaningless. This consequence again has clear parallels with Zhang's understanding of Christianity's fusion with Confucianism. It implies that Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century tended to follow a doctrinal path which is at least partly similar to that of Chinese Confucian Christians of the seventeenth century.

In summary, according to the Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century, social practice is an essential element for Christianity. But this element is likely to be accidental for the gospel. More important, the Chinese Christian theology of the late twentieth century lacks the emphasis on the ideas of the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ, and original sin. So, it effectively loses the essence of the gospel. In addition, since this theology shares the considerable similarities with some scholars' interpretations of the compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism, and with the Chinese Confucian Christian Zhang's idea of Christianity's fusion with

Confucianism in the seventeenth century, it should be seen as a reflection of the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism. Therefore, I conclude that the embedment of Christianity in Chinese Confucianism which I have examined in this thesis is an example of syncretism – a fusion of Christianity and Confucianism of the kind which causes a loss of the Christian essence.

The evaluative conclusion indicates that it is not an exaggeration to say that the essence of the gospel has failed to be embedded in Chinese Confucianism, although the process of the embedment has lasted for more than four centuries. The main reason for this failure seems to be the incompatibility between certain essential elements of Christianity and Confucianism, respectively. From the Christian perspective, original sin has made human souls become permanently sinful. So, humans are not capable of building the noetic intimacy with God anymore. For this reason, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became the mediation between God and humans through his incarnation, cross, and resurrection. Humans can unite with God only if they participate in Jesus' cross and resurrection. From the Confucian perspective, human nature is "good enough" for humans to practise moral acts, even though human nature might have been tainted by evil due to bad socialization. Moral acts accordingly generate qi to arouse humans to realize their true nature and build unity with God or Heaven. Notably, the Confucian idea of evil is far from the Christian idea of original sin but closer to the misdeeds that humans commit in the world. Perhaps because of the incompatibility between these two groups of elements, Ricci decided to approbate some Confucian elements, such as the goodness of human nature, the emphasis of moral acts, and the concept of qi. The only central doctrinal element of Christianity that was successfully embedded in Chinese Confucianism by Ricci was the idea of a personal God, even though the God in Christianity and that in Confucianism may not be exactly the same. Furthermore, while some of Ricci's successors and admirers had later at least partially introduced the Christian ideas of original sin and the incarnation, cross, and resurrection of Christ into Chinese Christianity, they had not succeeded to embed these doctrines in Chinese Confucianism. Confucianism, however, has continued to influence the Chinese Christian theology at least up to the late twentieth century in important ways, as is

evident from my analysis of the Chinese Christian theology of that period. In my view, the way forward for Chinese Christianity today would be to put the most important Christian doctrines – namely, the doctrines of original sin, Christ's incarnation, cross, and resurrection – unambiguously and clearly to the centre of its system of beliefs, and in this way preserve the essence of the gospel.

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