

# Faith in Business: How to Develop a Christian Entrepreneur Ethics in Chinese Multi-Scriptural Context?

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# The Approach to Faith in Business in China

- The specific context for the Christian entrepreneur ethics in China:
  1. There is a systematic, rich, long-lived, non-Christian culture in China;
  2. The Christian heritage is relatively weak, and diffused, thin-dimensional;
- The importance of studying the cultural characters and heritage in China, and developing a Christian entrepreneur ethics in dialogue with Chinese cultural resources.
- The existence of other religions and religion-loaded cultures is both a challenge and a blessing.

# The so-called biggest unaffiliated group in China

- A new study by the Pew Forum also finds that roughly one-in-six people around the globe (1.1 billion, or 16%) have no religious affiliation.
- This makes the unaffiliated the third-largest religious group worldwide, behind Christians and Muslims, and about equal in size to the world's Catholic population.
- The religiously unaffiliated include atheists, agnostics and people who do not identify with any particular religion in surveys.

# Religious Unaffiliated



## Regional Distribution of the Unaffiliated

Population by region as of 2010



Percentage of world unaffiliated population in each region as of 2010



Population estimates are rounded to the ten thousands. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • Global Religious Landscape, December 2012



# Unaffiliated but Religious

- More than six-in-ten (62%) of all religiously unaffiliated people live in one country, China.
- But many of the unaffiliated hold some religious or spiritual beliefs (such as belief in God or a universal spirit) even though they do not identify with a particular faith.
- China, the world's most populous country, also is home to a majority of followers of folk or traditional religions (73%, mostly a popular form of Daoism) and Buddhists (62%).

# The Religiousity of Chinese Culture



- Multi-religious context, and religions, for instance, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism had played very important roles in shaping the Chinese cultures;
- The two indigenous religions: Daoism and Confucianism;
- The so called three “foreign religions”:  
Buddhism, Islam and Christianity (including Catholic and Protestantism);
- A strong tendency of indigenization in China.

# The Convergence of Religion and Culture

- A culture heavily loaded with the indigenous religions;
- Cultural classics is at the same time regarded as religious scriptures, for instance, *Tao De Jing*, *Yi Ching*, etc.
- An ethical system heavily influenced by the popular forms of religious ethics;
- For example, to teach the social responsibility appeals to the Daoist teaching that “The family that accumulates goodness is sure to have abundant happiness, and the family that accumulates evil is sure to have abundant misery, upon the descendent.”
- The indigenous religions had penetrated into all aspects of Chinese cultures and daily thinking.

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# Deep Learning in Border Crossing

- The central question: How to develop a Christian business ethics in engagement with Chinese cultures?
- On the one hand, it would root in a Christian Biblical tradition;
- On the other hand, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions in China.
- The purpose is to get fresh intellectual insights that are indebted to the encountered Chinese traditions as well as the Christian tradition.
- It is a theology and practice of interreligious learning.
- Learning across religious borders in a way that discloses the truth of my faith, in the light of their faiths and cultures.

# The approach of developing Christian Business Ethics in China

- Scripture-Based Religions;
- Deep Learning in Border Crossing;
- Contextualization of Christian Ethics in Engagement with Chinese Cultures;



# The Priority of Scripture in Chinese Cultures

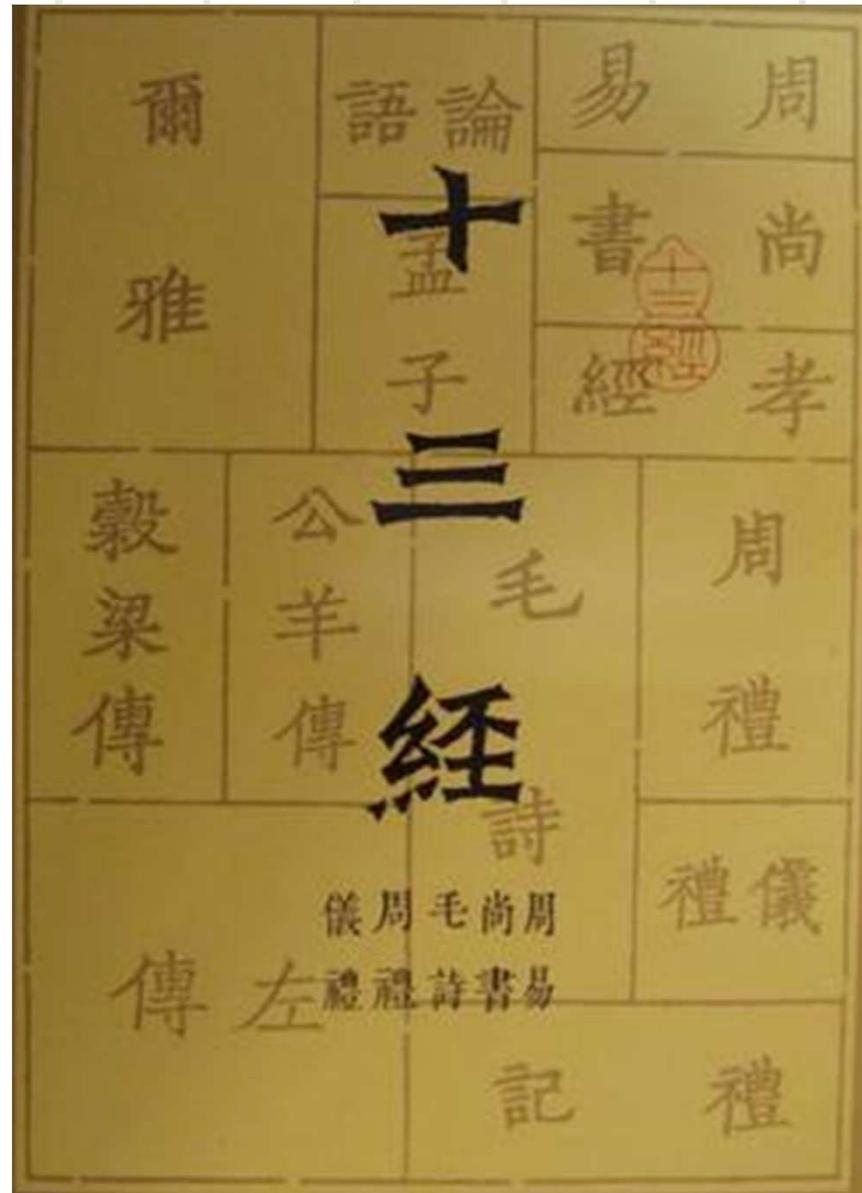


- Scripture enjoyed a foundational role in Chinese religions;
- The thirteen scriptures of Confucianism;
- The source of ancient wisdom;



# Confucian Thirteen Scriptures

十三經



# The Parallels between the Chinese Scriptures and the Bible

From 2070-1600 BC, the first dynasty was established as the Xia Dynasty, the beginning of Chinese civilizations, and the exemplary regime for Confucianism	Roughly, the age of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the founding Fathers of the Old Testament
From 1600-1046 BC, the second ancient dynasty, Shang, the formative period for Chinese civilization	Moses and the story of Exodus, and the settlement of ancient Israelite in the Promised Land.
From 1046-770 BC, the Zhou dynasty, the flourishing Chinese ancient civilization	The founding of Davidic monarchy and the golden period of Ancient Israel
From 770 BC, the beginning of Eastern Zhou, and the emergence of those ancient Sages	The Exilic Period of the Northern Israel and the Southern Judah
Laozi, 571-471 BC; the founder of Daoism; Confucius, 551-479 BC; the founder of Confucianism, and he began to compile and edit the ancient Classics, the cornerstone of Chinese civilizations.	The beginning of the Second Temple period, and the compilation of the Pentateuch by Ezra and the formation of the Old Testament.

# A Business Ethics based on the Biblical Interpretation

- Business ethics is not a universalistic theory of philosophical arguments;
- But: 1. Based on the Christian identity;
- 2. Rooted in the Christian Scripture;
- A full respect to the Bible in the Chinese context;
- The Bible is not only an inspiration of God, but also a source of ancient wisdom.
- These biblical figures were examples and master teachers.

# Starting from the Christian Particularity

- The first Christian Business ethic is courage;
- A sense of Calling with the attitude of Chutzpa;
- Risk-Taking;
- Chutzpah is the quality of audacity, for good or for bad. The word derives from the Hebrew word ḥutspâ (חֲצִפָּה), meaning "insolence" or "audacity".

# Biblical Story of Abraham's Calling

- Abraham is the ideal type of Biblical figures;
- The first word of his calling is “brought yourself out of”;
- The three elements:
  1. Dare to adventure;
  2. The sense of calling;
  3. Hope without any despair;

# An ethic of journeying



- In the biblical story, the most dangerous time is the two settled periods:

1. Settled in Egypt;

2. Settled in Canaan;

- To fulfill the duty of keeping the pioneer in the business, never be satisfied by the achievements;



# Ethic of loyalty based on Christian idea of covenant

- The Biblical concept of covenant;
- The moral imperatives are not utilitarian, not out of human agreements, but of divine instruction, and based on the covenant between the divine and human;
- Commitment to the covenant;
- The ethic of loyalty in business.
- The trustworthiness of Christian business.

# Ethic Rooted in both Christian and Chinese Cultures

- The work ethic between both Christian faith and Chinese cultures;
- The ethic of social charity: social care as a method of self-cultivation;
- The ethic of Sabbath with the Daoist culture of “dialectic of moving and resting”(动静之道);

# The Weber's Thesis of Work Ethic

- As Max Weber, the rising of Capitalism is closely related to the work ethic derived from the Protestantism, especially its idea of calling;
  1. To work is to pray;
  2. Workshop is the place to glorify God;
- This work ethic could be interpreted from the ancient wisdom of Yi Jing that “天行健，君子以自强不息；  
“The gentleman shall follow the way of Heaven that self-strengthen without end”

# Ethics of social charity

- The family and community-oriented value occupies a special role both in Christian faith and Chinese cultures or religions.
- The social care for the poor, the sojourners, and the marginal, even the animals is a long-standing tradition of the Biblical faith.
- The laws in the Pentateuch, for instance, Lev. 19: 9-15; and the teaching of Jesus, Matt. 25: 41-45.
- This is also the teaching in Confucianism, for example, Wang Yangming, care for the weakest is a spiritual practice for self cultivation.

# One Body with the Universe

- Someone might object that this response is because the child belongs to the same species. But when they hear the anguished cries or see the frightened appearance of birds or beasts, they cannot avoid a sense of being unable to bear it. ... Someone might object this this response is because birds and beasts are sentient creatures. But when they see grass or trees uprooted and torn apart, they cannot avoid feeling a sense of sympathy and distress. ... Someone might object that this response is because grass and trees have life and vitality. But when they see tiles and stones broken and destroyed, they cannot avoid feeling a sense of concern and regret. ... This shows that the benevolence that forms one body [with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad creatures] is something that even the minds of petty people possess. (Tiwald and Van Norden 2014, 242)

# Ethic of Sabbath

- Sabbath is a spiritual encounter between our soul and God, a sense of spiritual freedom from the business work.
- It is a way of care for our inner life in intensive competition.
- It is a value of respect the welfare of whole person, to respect the human rights of rest, also an adjustment to the natural and economical rhythm.
- In the ancient Chinese wisdom, the paradigm of ying/yang is a fundamental value, a dialectic understanding of the world.
- To step back is to forward 进退, and to forsake in order to get 舍得, moving and silencing 动静
- To respect the rhythm of creating and sabbathing, moving and silencing, a business ethic rooted in both the Bible and Chinese culture.