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Between Transnational Mission and Migration Life:
Formation and Diversity of an Evangelical Chinese Community
in Germany

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	12
1.1	TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AS RESEARCH SUBJECT.....	13
1.2	RESEARCH DESIGN	17
2	THE THEORY FRAME OF THE STUDY	19
2.1	TRANSNATIONALISM AS A WIDER PERSPECTIVE.....	19
2.1.1	<i>Transnationalism as Key Idea</i>	19
2.1.2	<i>Transnational Identity of the Community</i>	21
2.2	RELIGIONS IN CONTEMPORARY TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION STUDIES.....	21
2.2.1	<i>The First Approach</i>	22
2.2.2	<i>The Second Approach</i>	23
2.2.3	<i>The Third Approach</i>	24
2.2.4	<i>The Fourth Approach</i>	27
2.2.5	<i>My Approach</i>	29
2.3	RELEVANT RESEARCH.....	30
2.4	SOME USEFUL THEORETICAL TOOLS.....	32
2.4.1	<i>Social Networks</i>	33
2.4.2	<i>Social Capital</i>	34
2.4.3	<i>Embeddedness</i>	34
3	AN ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY	37
3.1	HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY	37
3.2	RELATIONSHIPS TO RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS	38
3.3	THEOLOGY AND RITUAL	40
3.3.1	<i>Sunday Worship</i>	41
3.3.2	<i>Sunday School</i>	43
3.3.3	<i>Bible Reading Groups</i>	44
3.4	ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE	47
3.5	ETHNIC DIVERSITY	47

3.6	SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL SERVICES	48
3.6.1	<i>Communication Room</i>	48
3.6.2	<i>Missionary Work</i>	49
3.6.3	<i>Barbeque</i>	49
3.6.4	<i>Camping</i>	51
3.6.5	<i>Excursion</i>	52
3.6.6	<i>Website</i>	53
3.6.7	<i>Wedding</i>	54
3.7	LANGUAGE	55
3.8	COMMUNICATION WITH GERMAN CHURCHES	56
3.9	COMMUNICATION WITH TRANSNATIONAL MISSIONARY INSTITUTIONS	56
3.9.1	<i>Transnational Missionary Groups</i>	56
3.9.2	<i>Chinese Biblical Seminary in Europe</i>	57
4	FIELD WORK AND REFLECTION ON METHODS	60
4.1	PROCESS OF FIELD WORK	60
4.2	INTERVIEWS	61
4.3	OBJECTIVE HERMENEUTICS	64
4.3.1	<i>A Short Guide to Objective Hermeneutics</i>	64
4.3.2	<i>The Advantage of Applying Objective Hermeneutics</i>	66
4.3.3	<i>Reflection on the Method</i>	69
4.4	DOCUMENTARY METHOD	69
5	ANALYSIS OF PASTOR H	72
5.1	BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF PASTOR H	72
5.2	ANALYSIS OF BEGINNING SEQUENCES	72
5.2.1	<i>The Beginning Stimulus</i>	72
5.2.2	<i>The Narrative Opens</i>	73
5.3	THE HYPOTHESIS OF LATENT MEANING GENERATING RULES AND STRUCTURE	78
5.4	INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW	79
5.4.1	<i>China Mission as a Goal of Transnational Mission</i>	79

5.4.2	<i>Transnational Missionary Detour in Germany</i>	82
5.4.3	<i>Strategies in Transnational Mission</i>	85
5.4.3.1	Active Approach of Young Students	85
5.4.3.2	Local and Transnational Religious Education.....	87
5.4.3.3	Structure Construction of the Community	89
5.4.3.4	Community Activities	92
5.4.3.5	Concurrence with Other Communities.....	95
5.5	SUMMARY	100
5.5.1	<i>Motive of Joining the Community</i>	100
5.5.1.1	Community as a Chain of Transnational Mission	100
5.5.1.2	Strategies of Developing a Transnational Religious Community.....	101
5.5.2	<i>The Type of Pastor H and its Function in the Community</i>	104
6	ANALYSIS OF MR. R	107
6.1	BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF MR. R.....	107
6.2	ANALYSIS OF BEGINNING SEQUENCES	107
6.2.1	<i>The Beginning Stimulus</i>	107
6.2.2	<i>The Narrative Opens</i>	107
6.3	THE HYPOTHESIS OF LATENT MEANING GENERATING RULES AND STRUCTURE	113
6.4	INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW	115
6.4.1	<i>Conversion as an Adaptation to the New Environment</i>	115
6.4.2	<i>God as Guidance in Reorientation of Life</i>	116
6.4.2.1	Adjustment in Relationships	116
6.4.2.2	Reorientation in Career Choice	118
6.4.3	<i>Embeddedness of Mr. R in the Community</i>	121
6.4.3.1	Growth with Development of the Community	121
6.4.3.2	Involvement as Executive Authority in the Community	122
6.4.3.3	His Identity as a Community Member	124
6.4.3.4	Role Awareness as a Community Leader	125
6.4.3.5	Mr. R's Religious Practice.....	130

6.4.4	<i>Transnational Missionary Work and the Role of the Pastor</i>	130
6.4.4.1	Transnational Missionary Group	130
6.4.4.2	The Role of the Pastor	137
6.4.5	<i>Influence on the Family</i>	141
6.5	SUMMARY	144
6.5.1	<i>Motive of Joining the Community</i>	144
6.5.1.1	Adaptation and Reorientation with New Conversion	144
6.5.1.2	Embeddedness in the Community as Spiritual Growth	146
6.5.2	<i>The Type of Mr. R</i>	147
6.5.2.1	Mr. R as a Reproduced Leader Type	147
6.5.2.2	The Function of Mr. R's Type	149
7	ANALYSIS OF MISS Q	151
7.1	BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE	151
7.2	ANALYSIS OF THE BEGINNING SEQUENCES	151
7.2.1	<i>The Beginning Stimulus</i>	151
7.2.2	<i>The Narrative Opens</i>	151
7.3	THE HYPOTHESIS OF LATENT MEANING GENERATING RULES AND STRUCTURE	154
7.4	INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW	154
7.4.1	<i>Community as a Family Substitute</i>	154
7.4.2	<i>Emotional Support from the Community</i>	156
7.4.3	<i>Practical Support from the Community</i>	157
7.4.4	<i>Further Education and Religious Teaching</i>	159
7.4.4.1	Community Activities in Germany	159
7.4.4.2	Sermons and Religious Education	160
7.4.4.3	Theological Understanding and Identity	165
7.4.5	<i>Language as a Barrier and the Contact outside the Community</i>	168
7.4.6	<i>The Role of the Pastor</i>	169
7.4.7	<i>The Family Reaction and Future Influence</i>	172
7.5	SUMMARY	173

7.5.1	<i>Motive of Joining the Community</i>	173
7.5.1.1	First level: Reconnection with Childhood Experience	174
7.5.1.2	Second level: Benefits of Being a Member of the Community	174
7.5.1.3	The Third Level: Community Involvement.....	176
7.5.2	<i>Miss Q's Type in the Community</i>	176
7.5.2.1	Miss Q as a Follower Type.....	176
7.5.2.2	The Function of Miss Q's Type	178
8	ANALYSIS OF MISS F	180
8.1	BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF MISS F.....	180
8.2	ANALYSIS OF THE BEGINNING SEQUENCES	180
8.2.1	<i>The Beginning Stimulus</i>	180
8.2.2	<i>The Narrative Opens</i>	181
8.3	THE HYPOTHESIS OF LATENT MEANING GENERATING RULES AND STRUCTURE	192
8.4	INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW	193
8.4.1	<i>A New World View and a Shelter for Emotions</i>	193
8.4.2	<i>From Resistance to Belief</i>	196
8.4.3	<i>Bible as Foundation of Family Values</i>	198
8.4.4	<i>The Role of the Christians and the Role of Females in the Family</i>	202
8.4.5	<i>The Further Education in the Community Life</i>	203
8.4.5.1	Sermons and Religious Education.....	203
8.4.5.2	The Function of Sunday School.....	203
8.4.5.3	Theological Understanding and Religious Identity	205
8.4.6	<i>Circle Outside the Community</i>	206
8.4.7	<i>The Role of the Pastor</i>	207
8.5	SUMMARY	209
8.5.1	<i>Motive of Joining the Community</i>	209
8.5.1.1	Joining the Community as Distinguishing Mark of Spiritual Conversion.....	209
8.5.1.2	Reconstruction of Family Values with the Bible	210
8.5.1.3	Constancy and Activeness of the Community	212

8.5.2	<i>The Type of Miss F in Comparison to Miss Q</i>	214
8.5.2.1	Miss F as Follower Type	214
8.5.2.2	The Function of Type of Miss F	216
8.5.2.3	In Comparison to Miss Q	216
9	ANALYSIS OF MR. W	219
9.1	BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF MR. W.....	219
9.2	ANALYSIS OF BEGINNING SEQUENCES	219
9.2.1	<i>The Beginning Stimulus</i>	219
9.2.2	<i>The Narrative Opens</i>	220
9.3	THE HYPOTHESIS OF LATENT MEANING GENERATING RULES AND STRUCTURE	225
9.4	INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW	227
9.4.1	<i>Imitating and Forming a Community</i>	227
9.4.2	<i>Role Awareness as a Community Leader</i>	229
9.4.3	<i>The Role of the Pastor</i>	232
9.4.3.1	Transformation.....	233
9.4.3.2	The Pastor as a Provider.....	235
9.4.3.3	The Trajectory of Mr. W	238
9.4.4	<i>Religious Understanding and Teaching</i>	241
9.4.5	<i>The Consequences of Mr. W's Trajectory</i>	244
9.5	SUMMARY	247
9.5.1	<i>Motive of Joining the Community</i>	247
9.5.1.1	Initiating a Community to Resume Religious Practice.....	247
9.5.1.2	Deep Embeddedness as a Community Leader	248
9.5.2	<i>The Type of Mr. W</i>	249
9.5.2.1	Mr. W as a Competitive Leader Type	249
9.5.2.2	The Function of Mr. W's type	251
9.5.2.3	Development of Mr. W's Trajectory.....	254
10	ANALYSIS OF MISS E	256
10.1	BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF MISS E.....	256

10.2	ANALYSIS OF THE BEGINNING SEQUENCES	256
10.2.1	<i>The Beginning Stimulus</i>	256
10.2.2	<i>The Narrative Opens</i>	257
10.3	THE HYPOTHESIS OF LATENT MEANING GENERATING RULES AND STRUCTURE.....	264
10.4	INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW	266
10.4.1	<i>From Rejection to Tolerance</i>	266
10.4.2	<i>Identity Conflicts and Adaptation Strategy</i>	269
10.4.3	<i>Community Life and Friendship as Attraction</i>	271
10.4.4	<i>Embeddedness of Miss E</i>	274
10.4.5	<i>Missionary Work and the Role of the Pastor</i>	277
10.4.6	<i>Circle outside the Community</i>	280
10.5	SUMMARY	282
10.5.1	<i>Motive of Joining the Community</i>	282
10.5.1.1	A Selective Integration as Solution of Identity Conflicts	282
10.5.1.2	Community Life as Religious Practice	284
10.5.2	<i>The Type of Miss E</i>	285
10.5.2.1	Miss E as a Selective Integrated Type.....	285
10.5.2.2	The Function of Miss E's Type	287
11	ANALYSIS OF MISS M.....	290
11.1	BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF MISS M	290
11.2	ANALYSIS OF BEGINNING SEQUENCES	290
11.2.1	<i>The Beginning Stimulus</i>	290
11.2.2	<i>The Narrative Opens</i>	291
11.3	THE HYPOTHESIS OF LATENT MEANING GENERATING RULES AND STRUCTURE.....	298
11.4	INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW	299
11.4.1	<i>Practical Support of the Community</i>	299
11.4.2	<i>Being Baptized as Qualification of Staying in the Community</i>	300
11.4.3	<i>Estrangement from the Community</i>	303
11.4.4	<i>Religious Understanding and Teaching</i>	305

11.4.5	<i>The Role of the Pastor</i>	306
11.4.6	<i>Dropout from the Community</i>	309
11.4.7	<i>Contact outside the Community</i>	312
11.5	SUMMARY	315
11.5.1	<i>Motive of Joining the Community</i>	315
11.5.2	<i>Reasons of Leaving the Community</i>	316
11.5.3	<i>The Type of Miss M</i>	318
11.5.3.1	Miss M as a Dropout Type.....	318
11.5.3.2	The Function of Miss M's type.....	319
12	CONCLUSION	321
12.1	TYPOLGY OF THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS	321
12.1.1	<i>Question One</i>	321
12.1.2	<i>Question Two</i>	323
12.2	DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS OF THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS.....	324
12.3	THE TRAJECTORIES OF THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS	326
12.4	THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE REGARDING TRANSNATIONALISM.....	330
12.5	INFLUENCES OF TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	332
12.6	CONSEQUENCES OF TRANSNATIONAL MISSION	334
	APPENDIX	336
	INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR H.....	336
	INTERVIEW WITH MISS Q.....	362
	INTERVIEW WITH MISS F	376
	INTERVIEW WITH MR. W AND MS. W	388
	INTERVIEW WITH MISS E	404
	INTERVIEW WITH MISS M	420
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	435

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1 Introduction

February 21st 2008 is the last day of the Chinese Spring Festival, on which Chinese family members usually gather together, eat dumplings and celebrate. On this evening, 31 Chinese gathered in a house in Leipzig, a big city in eastern Germany. They prepared foods together, ate together and prayed together. Community life is often filled with activities such as these.

After supper, they began to play a game called “Get to Know Your Partner”. Each time the game will be a new game, with the aim of having people get to know each other better. Each participant picked a game partner at random and tried to answer the following questions: When does your game partner go to sleep? When does your game partner read the Bible? What kind of animal is your game partner afraid of? What is the aim of life according to your game partner’s view? It was a long lasting answering process. Everyone tried to guess the right answer. This long process did not seem boring at all; most of them had fun throughout the game. At the end of the game the anchorman, a pastor, came to a conclusion: “Do care about your neighbours and we shall do better next time”, “And may God hear us, may more people join us, may all the missionary works this year go smoothly.”

After the game, they moved into the phase of experience sharing. It also lasted an hour. People shared their fresh stories from last week or last month, which in their opinion proved the power of and guidance from God. A music student told a story about her performance experience, in which she has been nervous and only through prayer did she become relaxed. A young man told a story of his stomach illness, which was cured by praying. Another young man said he realized that Sunday should be devoted to God, because the one time he had chosen to work and skipped the Sunday worship, he lost more money than he earned.

At about ten o’clock at night, everyone seemed to get tired. They said a final prayer together and left the house. None of them mentioned Chinese Spring Festival. They said goodbye with the words “see you on Sunday in the church”.

“It was totally different two years before. At that time, we were only a few people, fewer than ten. We lived in the same dormitory and were very close. We knew each other very well. We often drank wine and talked throughout the night; we shared almost everything with each other. That was a wonderful time. But now we have so many people, four groups, it is not that easy to have the same phase we had in the beginning. Now the members even don’t know each other. Everything has changed since the Pastor came.”¹

Mr. W says. He is one of the oldest members of this community, and has experienced all the stages of its development. Every member in the community knows him. He is also one of the leaders of the community. He misses the period in which people did not need such games as “Get to Know Your Partner” in order to know each other better. He says that sometimes he feels a smaller community would be better.

The community life has changed and is still changing. The number of members rises. After the arrival of the pastor, the Chinese Christian community came to existence in this city.

Actually, the Pastor comes from Taiwan, and has served more than ten years in Canada. He came to Germany with a clear mission: to convert the Chinese in Germany. The increase of community members proves his effort.

Most of the community members are young students. Some are without religious backgrounds, some were Buddhists, some are undecided about their religion and some have just converted in Germany. Different kinds of people join this community because of different reasons.

1.1 Transnational Religious Communities as Research Subject

Transnational religious communities are widespread on the world. There are

¹ Interview, Mr. W, Lehmanns Bookshop, Leipzig, July 30th, 2007.

transnational religious communities, whose members were already religious when they were in their home countries. When they become migrants in other countries, they form or join their religious communities as they usually did in their home countries. The Miraflonos migrants resume their religious practices in America.² The Buddhists from Vietnam resume their Buddhist teachings and practices in Germany.³ The Tamils resume their Hinduism tradition in a new European cultural context.⁴ The Sudanese continue their religious practice in migrant life in Europe.⁵ These religious groups indicate a new contemporary transnational practice regarding the migrant lives.

These Chinese Christians indicate a different case. There are two sides of the formation of the community: a transnational mission and migration life.

On one side, the pastor plays a significant role in organizing the community. He recruits local Chinese people to take part in the religious events. Four to five times every year, he flies back to Canada and America and raises funds for the missionary work in Germany. He is the member of an organization whose mission targets Chinese people in Germany. He works transnationally: He uses resources from North America and tries to create a missionary space in Germany, trying to convert Chinese people. This form of missionary work and its impact on the lives of Chinese migrants need systematic research, which until now is absent: Do the pastor and his affiliated organization provide what the migrants want? How deep could this transnational missionary strategy impact a community member's life?

On the other side, community life becomes the main content of migration life of the community members. Most of the young Chinese community members did not have any religious experience before they came to Germany. From 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution took place in China, which was a radical political movement. During this period, all kinds of religions were suppressed or even persecuted. Since the political

² Levitt, Peggy. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

³ Baumann, Martin. 2000. *Migration-Religion-Integration: Buddhistische Vietnamesen und Hinduistische Tamilen in Deutschland*, Marburg: Diagonal-Verlag.

⁴ Baumann, Martin, Luchesi, Brigitte, Wilke, Annette. 2003. *Tempel und Tamilen in zweiter Heimat, Hindus aus Sri Lanka im deutschsprachigen und Skandinavischen Raum*, Würzburg: Ergon Verlag.

⁵ Weißköppel, Cordula. 2008. "'You don't get lost'. Transnationales Handeln von Sudanesen in einer Protestantischer Kirchengemeinde." In: Andrea Lauser (ed.), *Migration und religiöse Dynamik. Ethnologische Religionsforschung im transnationalen Kontext*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

reform in 1979, religion is no longer forbidden, but still has its political sensibility. Religious activities are tolerated when they take place in officially recognized churches or temples, but generally are not permitted in the public sphere. Atheism is the dominant ideology of the state, and therefore the access to Christianity is limited for Chinese people. Members of the young generation--those born after the 1970s--have rare chances to get to know a Christian group. Because of that, their conversion in Germany has become an interesting research question. New community members' religious knowledge was gained in Germany. They create their community and at the same time re-create their livelihoods. In this context, these following questions will be challenging: How do they build up this community? Why did they convert and join the community during the migration situation? Is there any relation between religious conversion and migration life? Should joining the Chinese Christian community be considered an act of integration or assimilation into the host society?

After a long-term observation of the community, I discovered that the situation is more complicated than it seems. With a transnational perspective, the formation of the community could be explained more clearly. However, the community is constantly changing. Between transnational mission and migration life, there are different motivations for joining the community; different kinds of religious practices take place within the community. There is a surprising level of diversity inside the community, which is interwoven with cultural, ethnical as well as religious variety, is worth researching. Due to its diversity, the formation of the community is not only influenced by economic conditions, but also religious motivations.

Most of the transnational migrant studies pay much attention to the relationship between economic and migrant lives, or the political pursuance of migrants in another country. Although a "transnational paradigm shift" in migration studies took place since 1990s⁶, for a long time the role of religion in migrants' lives was ignored or underestimated in academic works. Only recently are the works on religion and migration obtaining more and more attention in this field.

⁶ Vertovec, Steven. 2007. "Introduction: New directions in the anthropology of migration and multiculturalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*: 961-978.

When a religious community is transnationally built, there are several interesting research questions for scholars to ask: How does this community work transnationally? What kind of religious lives do community members have? What is the relationship between transnational mission and religious practice? And how do these experiences influence the lives of migrants?

Recent research shows that scholars begin to explore a new perspective on solving the “integration or assimilation” dilemma in migration research. “Simultaneous incorporation” is the new keyword in analyzing the dynamics between religious practice and migration life in academic research.⁷ The formation of a transnational religious community is less holistic or linear, but more situational and with diversity.

This dissertation is an endeavor that is dedicated to trying to describe and explain the formation and diversity of a transnational religious community in the 21st century. It is not a historical research of the development of a Chinese Christian community in Germany, although the history is a part of my research. The question is: What are the reasons that drive the Chinese people to join an evangelical religious community when they are in another country?

When I discuss these questions with some scholars with pastoral backgrounds, some have a simple answer: “Everybody wants to belong to a group, don’t they?” Some suggested that I begin the research with two assumptions: Is the conversion of the Chinese people an adaptation of the Western culture, or do they have the inherent need to be connected with a transcendental God?

These suggestions indicate a one-sided paradigm in understanding religious practices of migrants. It simplifies the complicated situations of migrants’ lives, suggests accordance between Christian religion and Western culture, and puts a dichotomy between integration and assimilation. Therefore, I do not think it is a good idea to make these assumptions before research; to do so could narrow the horizons of research and may lead the researcher to ignore the potential theoretical value of the new phenomenon.

⁷ Lauser, Andrea. 2008. "Einleitung: Die neue Aufmerksamkeit für Religion in der Migrations- und Transnationalismusforschung. Ein Plädoyer für die ethnografische Mikro- und Kontextanalyse." In: Andrea Lauser (ed.), *Migration und religiöse Dynamik. Ethnologische Religionsforschung im transnationalen Kontext*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 7-32.

Actually, during my research a number of people did not think their conversion had anything to do with Western culture, while some people joined the community with clear awareness that they were not going to convert. The suggestions from these scholars indicate a Western-centric and Christian-centric academic perspective; it also indicates the necessity of new approaches and new perspectives into the field of religion and migration. Like Vertovec, the leading researcher in this field, says: “Each transnational field of study shares a kind of common goal: to look empirically at, and to analyze, transnational activities and social forms along with the political and economic factors that condition their creation and reproduction.”⁸

1.2 Research Design

In order to avoid the one-sided paradigm, I decided to perform field works with open questions, which allowed the interviewees to tell their stories and motives without being influenced by me from the beginning. The main question is: How did the members join the community? This question allows members to tell their stories about their motivations, history, and everything related to their decision to join the community. A subjective dimension is explored during the research. In addition to objective dimensions like economy, subjective dimensions such as imaginations, religious understandings and emotions are important elements in transnational practices, which are gaining growing recognition in current academic research.⁹

Through primary source materials interviews and with the method controlled interview analysis, a category of community members could be established. This micro level analysis attempts to answer the following question: Why did they choose to join this community? The individual agents of this community will be in the focus of the analysis. A typology of community members could be subsequently established.

With the typology of the community members, a detailed structural explanation of

⁸ Vertovec, Steven. 2003. "Migration and other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization." *International Migration Review* 3: 641-665.

⁹ Levitt, Peggy, Dewind, Josh, Vertovec, Steven. 2003. "International Perspectives on Transnational Migration: An Introduction." *International Migration Review* 3: 565-575.

formation and diversity of the community is possible. It will explain how individual agents respond to an institution like a religious community in a transnational context. The dynamic relationships between different types will be analyzed: Along with the changes at the community level, did these types of individuals simultaneously change, and if so, how? What kind of types could be influenced by the transnational characteristic of the community? What kind of types tend to resist the community changes? Where are the limits and difficulties of community expansion in a transnational context?

At last but not least, the significance and the social consequences of this new form of transnational religious community will be discussed. As a new spiritual and also a new organizing approach to the Chinese young generations abroad, the transnational missionary action has formed remarkable phenomena throughout Germany and even Europe by influencing migrants' spiritual lives as well as their integration into the host society. Predictably, when these newly converted individuals go back to China after their stay in Germany, they might have an impact on shaping a new religious landscape of Christianity in China. In the typology analysis, I will explore what kind of community members could be able to generate this sort of impact.

Between transnational Mission and migration life, there are more relationships than a single religious one. This dissertation takes a deep look inside these micro-relationships. It tries to establish a possible model to grasp the simultaneous changing and incorporation of a transnational religious community.

Chapter 2 deals with theoretical frame of the study.

Chapter 3 contributes an ethnographic description of the community, which is helpful to understand the whole transnational background.

Chapter 4 describes the field work and contains some reflection on the method of objective hermeneutic and documentary method.

Chapters 5 through 11 include the analysis of different interviews, which serves to illustrate different types, and explains the diversity of the community.

Chapter 12 is the conclusion of the study.

2 The Theory Frame of the Study

2.1 Transnationalism as a Wider Perspective

2.1.1 Transnationalism as Key Idea

Transnationalism has been discussed in different academic perspectives in the last decades. Different approaches have been taken to explore the potential of transnationalism. Scholars have tried different criterions to define transnationalism to avoid terminological ambiguity. “Transnationalism” does not simply mean the characteristic of reaching across or beyond national borders.

Alejandro Portes distinguishes three categories in a global network, namely “international, multinational and transnational”. With reference to differentiated sources and scales of activity he defines: “ ‘International’ pertains to activities and programs of nation-states, ‘multinational’ to large-scale institutions such as corporations or religions whose activities take place in multiple countries, and ‘transnational’ to activities initiated and sustained by non-institutional actors, be they organized groups or networks of individuals across borders.”¹⁰

The key agent of the three categories is different. “International” involves nation-states as agents in programs and activities. In “multinational” activities big institutions are involved as agents, and the activities are mostly initiated and realized by institutions. In “transnational” activities, the individual plays a visible and important role as an agent. Although the transnational activities may be organized by a group or even an institution, the activity still has a transnational and individual character.

According to the criteria, the Chinese Christian community in Germany can be counted as a transnational community. It looks very much like a multinational activity, because the transnational mission is initiated by several institutions and takes place in more than

10 Portes, Alejandro. 2003. "Conclusion: Theoretical Convergencies and Empirical Evidence in the Study of Immigrant Transnationalism." *International Migration Review* 3: 874-892.

one country. However, what I want to argue is that the formation of the community is not only supported by the initiating missionary institution. The formation of the community depends much more on the community members within the community who live in Germany, and they are individual agents. Their behaviors are initiated and sustained by non-institutional actors other than the pastor. The individual agents have a decisive impact on the formation of the community, which makes the community a transnational one.

Actually, there is not a clear line between multinational and transnational activity. The difference between multinational and transnational disappears in some other scholar's categorizations. Vertovec, for example, regards "transnationalism is a manifestation of globalization"¹¹. A contrast between "transnationalism from above" and "from below" is suggested: "transnationalism from above" refers to the sphere of large corporations and international agreements, which can be understood as multinational activities. "Transnationalism from below" refers to small-scale and non-state agents. In this sense, a broader definition of transnationalism is applied to describe the different ongoing transnational activities, because "the scales, spaces and mechanisms of globalization and transnationalism are just too entangled to allow such clear abstractions"¹². In this sense, by assimilating the multinational level into a broader transnational category, the Chinese Christian community in Germany is indeed a transnational religious community.

Transnationalism is a wider perspective of understanding worldwide transnationally happening activities rather than a substance character of these activities. Vertovec summarizes the six main approaches to discussing transnationalism: Transnationalism as social morphology, as type of consciousness, as mode of cultural reproduction, as avenue of capital, as site of political engagement, and as reconstruction of place or locality.¹³ In this globalized 21st century, transnationalism is one of the key ideas to understanding our world.

11 Vertovec, Steven. 2009. *Transnationalism*, New York: Routledge.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

2.1.2 Transnational Identity of the Community

Some community members of my research come from Malaysia, Canada and Taiwan, and they speak Chinese. But the dominant majority in the community comes from mainland China. There are two different Chinese translations for the English word “Chinese”. One is “Hua-Ren” (华人), which emphasizes more on cultural identity, and generally refers to people who are from an ethnic Chinese background, or people who speak the Chinese language. The word “Hua-Ren” is often used to describe Chinese and Chinese migrants abroad. The other is “Zhong-Guo” (中国), which puts more of an emphasis on political identity, and means people who identify themselves as citizens of China. The Chinese name of the Chinese Christian Community in Leipzig explicitly uses the first word: “Hua-Ren”. This signifies the community has already taken ethnic Chinese into account. The self-identification of the community is not a political one; it is based more on an ethnic and cultural background. Transnationalism has already existed in the community as a type of consciousness. It also means that the community is aware of its location in a transnational migration situation.

The conceptual potential of transnationalism makes it possible to discuss and do the research in a new paradigm: How does the community develop itself under the transnational conditions, how does the formation of the community represent its transnationality, and what kind of role do different types of community members play in the transnational mission?

Bringing the discipline of the study of religions into dialogue with theories of transnational migration could be fruitful.

2.2 Religions in Contemporary Transnational Migration Studies

It has been a long time since transnational migration studies have paid attention to demographic and structural changes of migrant groups. Most contemporary theories of international migration focus upon the origins of international migration and the

persistence of transnational flows, which holds the view that the economic consideration plays a central role in the decision to migrate. Studies on religion and religions in transnational migration explore different approaches, which can be mainly divided into four categories.

2.2.1 The First Approach

The first approach can be ascribed as “rational-choice” theory. This approach overcomes the ignorance of the role of religion in migration processes, and takes religion into consideration as an important element. However, religion is regarded as some kind of resource in these studies.

Some scholars emphasize the migrants’ use of religion in the migration process.¹⁴ They argue that religion can be the spiritual resource that provides some immigrant populations some encouragement in their decision to immigrate, the hardships of migration can psychologically effect the migrants’ commitment, and religion also is a supporting factor then. These scholars examine the creative ways in which migrants use the institutions of religions and the beliefs and practices to organize the entire migration process, from decision-making to the development of transnational activities.

This research sheds light on the special function of religion in the migration process. Religion is regarded as a spiritual instrument used to smooth the way in the process of migration. The problem with this research approach is that religion is treated as a homogenous institution. The plurality of religious institutions is ignored in this approach. The tension between different needs of members is not taken into consideration. The deeds, attitudes and behaviors of community members are not always the same or homogenous. Transnational religious activity is not just about domination and homogenization, because “it also involves resistance, heterogeneity, and the active negotiation of space, time and identity at the grassroots”.¹⁵

¹⁴ Hagen, Jacqueline, Ebaugh, Helen Rose. 2003. "Calling upon the sacred: Migrants' use of Religion in the Migration Process", *International Migration Review*: 1145-1161

¹⁵ Vásquez, Manuel A., Marquardt, Marie Friedmann. 2003. *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion across the Americas*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.

The “rational-choice” approach in studies of religions in transnational migration has its advantage of explaining the functions of religion. The disadvantage of this approach is that a reduction and simplification of religion is not avoidable. To economize religion as a resource or a functional element can cause an inevitable homogenization in treating religions, which are very much differentiated from one another. Transnational religious activity is a complex process involving multiple actors. Reductionism and homogenization cannot be adequate to research in this field.

2.2.2 The Second Approach

The second approach can be ascribed to the “second sphere” explanation. This approach tries to regard religion as an independent field of practice, which is parallel to other activities in life. The description and analysis of religions in this approach are more ethnographic and sometimes seek to be “thick description”.

Peggy Levitt has dedicated two chapters of her book *The Transnational Villagers* to describe the religious life of transnational migrants.¹⁶ Levitt completed research on the transformation of life of migrants from Miraflores, a town in the Dominican Republic. She explored the migrants’ religious life as well as their familial and political life in America. She points out the importance of religion in studying transnational migrants and appeals for a transnational perspective in the future migrant study. In Levitt’s research, she pays more attention to the changes of the migrants’ religious practices which are caused by the mobility of the migrants’ lives. The religious life is observed in the frame of a migrant life. The main focus of her writing on the part of religious life is how the Miraflores migrants resume their religious practices in America, their new environment. She focuses mainly on their adaptation and transformation. Levitt also mentions the function of religion: for example, the women are willing to take part in and to be active in churches, because this activity produces social capital in personal and collective groups. The Miraflores migrants developed their own private and personalized style of worship.

¹⁶ Levitt, Peggy. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Levitt calls religion “a second sphere of activity” while the first sphere refers to daily life. Migrant life comes first as the cause, and the change of religious practice comes after as a result. Religious practice changes as a consequence of migration.

The advantage of this approach is a wider perspective on religion, and a holistic view of religious practice in migration life can be achieved. Religion is not merely regarded as a resource of migration life, but religious practice is also thought to be the single activity of life that has autonomy as one separate system.

The problem with this approach is its premise of the separation between a second sphere (religious life) and a first sphere (daily life). The changes of the second sphere are caused by the first sphere. It is an approach with single direction, because the impacts from the second sphere on the first sphere are underestimated. When the daily life of the migrants is deeply interwoven and influenced by religious practice, the “second sphere” theory cannot give a satisfactory explanation. The “second sphere” explanation can achieve great phenomenological observations, but it is not dynamic enough, which is its disadvantage.

2.2.3 The Third Approach

The third approach shows strong interest in institution research. The transnational religious community as research object gains more and more attention in transnational migration studies, because these communities have a “new quality”¹⁷, which requires new observations and even new definitions to grasp.

Karsten Lehmann has tried to identify a new type of religious institution in his work. His definition of migration group demands “a durable residency”, which makes itself a constructive part of the process of institutionalization. He uses Berger’s definition of institution to define religious community¹⁸, which implies a wider horizon of definition. He argues that the *Sekten-Kirchen-Typologie*, or Sect-Church typology, from Max Weber and Troeltsch’s *Mystische Gruppen*, or mystic groups, will not be appropriate

¹⁷ Lehmann, Karsten. 2006. "Institutionen religiöser Pluralität, Vergleichende Analyse der christlichen und muslimischen Migrantengemeinden in Frankfurt am Main." *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 14: 25-52.

¹⁸ Ibid.

regarding the new phenomena of migrant religious communities. These definitions, borrowed from Christianity, have their limits in explaining and analyzing migrant religious communities. So Lehmann defines the new emerging religious institutions of migrants as “Community Church”¹⁹. He describes and discusses the new religious landscape in Frankfurt with the help of statistics. Lehmann provides a historical view of the developments of Christian migrant communities and Muslim migrant communities in Frankfurt, and tries to determine the “new quality” of these institutional forms, a quality that is represented in the new religious aggregation and new process of institutionalization. Lehmann thus argues that the classic institutional models of Weber and Treoltch are not adequate in describing and analyzing the new religious institutions. Lehmann has successfully proven that the classic typologies and theories are not satisfactory in explaining migrant religious communities, in which the new ethnic groups do not fit.

The empirical material of Lehmann’s article is based mainly on the book *The World Religions (Religionen der Welt)*, which was written by Abena Bernasko and Stefan Rech, who work for the Multicultural Affairs of Frankfurt local government, as mentioned by Lehmann. Lehmann criticizes the ambiguous definition of religious community in this book; he also disapproves of the intertwining of inside and outside aspects. Because of the lack of field work, however, Lehmann is unable to further explore the new quality in his article in more detail, because his work is an analysis which is not based on first-hand material. Just as he writes in the article: “The individual motive of grounding the communities can neither be described nor be interpreted”.²⁰ Regarding the lack of first-hand material, Lehmann’s article contributes theoretical significance, which suggests that scholars should not apply the old definitions. More will be achieved through research for the “new quality” by doing field work. Empirical work is very important for the support and proof of new theoretical thoughts: therefore, an analysis of the organizational processes of communities is only possible, when the individual

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Lehmann, Karsten. 2006. "Institutionen religiöser Pluralität, Vergleichende Analyse der christlichen und muslimischen Migrantengemeinden in Frankfurt am Main." *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 14: 25-52.

dimension is regarded as an important part in the research.

Thomas Faist contributed his original opinions on the research of religious intuition, too. Having a different perspective on the relation between agents and institutions,²¹ he is interested in the formation of transnational social space: How do these transnational social migrant spaces “emerge, function, and how are they maintained”? He defines “space” as “a sort of container to a socially, politically and economically relevant construct”, and his analysis of transnational social space can be used to investigate the “new quality” of migrant religious institutions. Faist develops a typology of four kinds of transnational social space: Diffusion (contact fields for the exchange of goods, capital, persons, information and cultural practices); small groups (kinship systems); issue networks, in which information and services are exchanged for the purpose of achieving a common goal; and transnational communities and organizations.²² Transnational organizations differ from small groups by virtue of a higher degree of formal control and coordination of social and symbolic ties. His typology of transnational social space is based on the differentiation of their degree of formalization, institutionalization and longevity.

Besides Lehmann and Faist’s theoretical contributions on institution, another useful approach for research on institutions is Helen Rose Ebaugh’s approach. She did research on religious congregations within a singular city.²³ This can be regarded as another perspective on institution, which discovers the important role of migrant religious institution. With first-hand material, Ebaugh’s in-depth research is convincing. Religious congregations contribute to the reproduction of ethnic identity, in relation to the second generation of migrants and the status of migrant women. The function of religious congregations in sustaining transnational religious ties should not be underestimated. Instead of using the “church-sect” models, Ebaugh summarizes six types of new migrant congregations from empirical research: 1) Mono-ethnic

²¹ Faist, Thomas. 2000. *The Volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces*, New York: Oxford University Press.

²² Faist, Thomas, Özveren, Eyüp. 2004. *Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks and Institutions*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

²³ Ebaugh, Helen Rose. 2003. "Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations." In: Michele Dillon (ed.), *Handbook of the sociology of religion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 225-239.

congregations of descendants of earlier immigrants who established the congregation and those of new immigrants of the same ethnic or nationality group; 2) mono-ethnic congregations composed solely of descendants of those who originally established the congregation; 3) mono-ethnic congregations composed of new immigrants and descendants of earlier waves who share an ethnic identity, but one different from the nationality of those who originally established the congregation, which means the immigrants come from different countries but share a same ethnic background; 4) mono-ethnic congregations composed only of descendants of earlier waves of immigrants who share an ethnic background different from those of the original founders; 5) multi-ethnic congregations composed of new immigrants and descendants of earlier waves of immigrants; 6) multi-ethnic congregations composed of descendants of earlier waves of immigrants.²⁴ The diversity of different new religious congregations illustrates the “new quality” of the migrants’ religious communities. For future research on institution this can be fertile.

2.2.4 The Fourth Approach

Besides the above-mentioned three approaches, there is a considerable amount of research, which combines the perspective of transnationalism and pluralism, and explores a changing religious landscape in the host country society. This is the fourth approach.

The researchers often represent a normative position in these studies, which distinguishes the approach from other studies that have a neutral standpoint. Diana L. Eck expresses her worries about Americans’ fear of “the other” and “the different” in her book *A New Religious America*.²⁵ She calls for a new “We” identity for Americans. Peggy Levitt also expresses her worry in her book *God needs no passport: Immigrants and the changing American religious landscape*²⁶. Levitt raises a question to American

²⁴ Ebaugh, Helen Rose, Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. 2000. *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

²⁵ Eck, Diana L. 2002. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" has become the world's most religiously diverse nation*, New York: HarperSanFrancisco.

²⁶ Levitt, Peggy. 2007. *God needs no Passport: Immigrants and the changing American religious*

people: How to protect national security and continue to be a country of immigrants at the same time. She tries to enlighten the Americans who ignore the changing religious landscape that is generated by religious immigrants in America. Levitt advocates that transnational actors are natural religious diplomats, so the more they come into contact and interact with one another, the greater the chance there is for a robust pluralism to emerge.

Another example of the fourth approach is Martin Baumann's study on the new religious landscape in Switzerland. Baumann's work includes a neutral description of different religious communities in Switzerland, but at the end of his book, he discusses the risks and chances of the new religious landscape in Switzerland.²⁷ He then makes some suggestions on how politicians should deal with the increasing religious diversity in Switzerland.

The standpoints in these studies share a common thread: Christian culture is confronted with the challenge of adapting to other religious cultures on their former "own" territory. Their positions and attitudes are also the same: To attain a pluralistic understanding of culture and the coexistence of people from different religious backgrounds. They treat transnational religious communities with a macro perspective. The interest on demographic changes is dominant. "Diversity" in this context means plurality and multicultural society. Demographic changes are usually indicated by quantitative methods, which are often applied in the research. The practice of comparing numbers of different religious communities is often used for explaining diversity.²⁸

The function of this kind of research is obvious: It offers a comprehensive view of the changing religious landscape. However, within this research, the subjective and individual dimension of the migrants is often at risk to be ignored when the researcher reduces a complex community into a homogenous unit. This is the disadvantage of quantitative method: It is able to successfully prove the diversity rate among different

landscape, New York: The New Press.

²⁷ Baumann, Martin, Stolz, Jörg. 2007. *Eine Schweiz--viele Religionen. Risiken und Chancen des Zusammenlebens*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

²⁸ Ebaugh, Helen Rose, Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. 2000. *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

religions inside a large scale frame, for example, country-size, but it inevitably ignores diversity within a small scale community.²⁹ These researchers are trying to answer the question of how people can enhance cultural understanding and cohesion among different domestic religions. This is not the task of my work, nor is it the approach I take.

2.2.5 My Approach

My concern is to explore the diversity rate in a transnational religious community, so the research is a micro perspective research and also a qualitative research. I try to reconstruct the subjective dimension of individual agents who are often treated as a homogenous unit in other research. My study will focus on the inhomogeneous types of members. The tension among different demands of community members will also be taken into consideration.

Only by taking a deep and differentiated look into the community is it possible to identify the “new quality” of religious society. Between transnational mission and migration life, a dynamic relationship can be multi-dimensional. My task is to grasp the complexity of this multi-dimensional dynamic relationship, which influences the formation and diversity of the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig as a transnational religious community. The research “should emphasize both structure and agency”, and it “needs to articulate both people and process.”³⁰

Of course the “rational choice” theory could be applied in the analysis, but I do not want to oversimplify religion without asking the agents how they feel about and understand religion. The reduction of religion according to its utility cannot be the single and universal answer to why migrants join the community.

My approach is closer to Levitt’s aforementioned “second sphere” theory, because the ethnographical method is applied in the study. But my approach is conducted without

²⁹ This problem has also been discussed by Wilke, Annette. 2006. “Tamil Hindu Temple Life in Germany: Competing and Complementary Modes in Reproducing Culture Identity, Globalized Ethnicity and Expansion of Religious Markets,” in: Pratap Kumar Penumala (ed.): *Religion in the Diaspora*, Leiden: Brill.

³⁰ Vertovec, Steven. 2007. "Introduction: New directions in the anthropology of migration and multiculturalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*: 961-978.

the premise of religious practice as “second sphere”. In my research, the function of religious life will be in the foreground. The significant differences between my research and Levitt’s research are the following: The religious practices of the Chinese in Germany indicate that their newly adapted religion may also form and shape their migrant lives. Levitt emphasizes that the migrant situation brings a huge transformation to the migrant’s religious practices. But it is too early to draw the conclusion that the changing religious sphere is a consequence of the migration process. The effects of different spheres of migration life are not that predictable, and therefore the single causality explanation cannot be satisfactory. My research tries to outline a new relationship between the migrants’ lives and their religious practices. One of my elaborated questions could be: Why do they join the religious community? What types of people will likely play a role in the transnational mission, and who do not? What types of newly recruited members can be discovered and will likely play a role in the transnational mission, when others do not?

The answer to this question will shed light on the production, reproduction and dynamics, i.e. the possible transformation of the transnational mission concerning this community and likely also for others. It can shed light on the limit of a transnational religious community and the possible trajectories of different types of community members as well.

2.3 Relevant Research

An academic interest in Chinese Christians abroad has increased in recent years.³¹

Different scholars take different approaches to do research in this area.

Some research focuses on identity construction. Yang Fenggang’s research on Chinese Christians in America³² deals with the question how Chinese migrants become Christian and become American. “Adhesive identities”, Yang’s model of explanation, is

³¹ Huang, C.Julia. 2003. "Wings of Belief: Modern Chinese Religious Transnationalism." *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 2:2, 205-216.

³² Yang, Fenggang. 1999. *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities*, the United States of America: Pennsylvania State University Press.

a term referring to the compatibility of three identities: Christian, Chinese, and American. His valuable research sheds light on the question of compatibility between Chinese traditional cultural values and Western Christian cultural values and the potential conflict between Christian conversion and Chinese identity. His conclusion is that through adhesive identities, Chinese Christians have constructively integrated Confucianism with Christianity.³³

Yang's research originates from the assumption of potential conflict between Christian Conversion and Chinese identity. His research is undertaken in the theoretical frame of "migrants integrating into host society", which confines the study to remain within the "integration or assimilation" dichotomy. The result of his research is inspiring, but not enough to explain the new phenomenon of the Chinese transnational religious community in Germany, which has a different social context in comparison to the Chinese Christians in the United States of America. Yang's theory is insufficient in explaining the phenomena of a Chinese transnational community in Germany because his research is based on the aforementioned theoretical premise. It will be meaningful to employ a larger frame of transnationalism to analyze the new phenomenon. The larger frame represents a perspective without "integration or assimilation" dichotomy, and does not place integration as the only central question of one's religious conversion.

Yang explores the Chinese transnational missionary networks in another research.³⁴ According to his research there are four types of transnational ties: Individual to individual, individual to organizations the church to individuals, the church to organizations. The transnational ties may shift from one type to another. Three factors are important to maintain transnational networks: Cosmopolitan membership, organizational independence, theological evangelism. This research has its significance on an institutional level.

There is an increasing level of academic interest in Chinese religious migrants. Some scholars try to use the "church-sect" model to explain new Chinese immigrants in

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Yang, Fenggang. 2002. "Chinese Christian Transnationalism: Diverse Networks of a Houston Church." In Ebaugh, Helen Rose (ed.). *Religion across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

southern California.³⁵ Another scholar compiles research on a Buddhist revival with a Taiwan-centered transnationalism.³⁶ And a study on differences between various Christian missionary strategies for Chinese groups in Hungary indicates a multi-sited ethnography of Chinese Christian groups in Europe.³⁷

There are some studies on Chinese Christians in Germany that are conducted by missionary institutions.³⁸ The researchers describe the missionary situation among the Chinese in Germany and analyze the possibility of their missionary work. The aim of this research is to answer one question: How can missionary institutions improve the Chinese missionary work?³⁹ The studies reveal the perspective and attitude of a German missionary institution on the topic, which is that the German protestant church should participate in the missionary work of Chinese Christians in Germany.⁴⁰ The standpoint of the research is not neutral; since the research is actually part of missionary reports, it cannot be regarded as social science. However, the information and statistics collected in the research remain valuable.

The research on Chinese religious transnationalism is in its infancy, and it demands interdisciplinary approaches. I hope my study on the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig can make a step forward in this field.

2.4 Some Useful Theoretical Tools

If the definitions of Troeltsch and Weber are not sufficient to grasp and explain these new forms of communities, the differences of social development and religious motives, we need some other academic theoretical tools to deal with this theme. To handle the

³⁵ Ren, Ping. 2007. "Church or Sect? Exploring a Church of New Chinese Immigrants in Southern California." In: *Marburg Journal of Religion*, Volume 12, No.1.

³⁶ Huang, C. Julia. "Sacred or Profane? The Compassion Relief Movement's Transnationalism in Taiwan, the United States, Japan, and Malaysia." *European Journal of East Asian Studies*: 217-241.

³⁷ Nyíri, Pál. "Moving Targets: Chinese Christian Proselytising among Transnational Migrants from the People's Republic of China." *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 2: 242-300.

³⁸ Oblau, Gotthard, *Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland, EMW und die China Infostelle* (ed.). 2006. *Chinesische Studierende in Deutschland, Chancen christlicher Begegnung*, Breklum: Breklumer Druckerei Manfred Siegel KG.

³⁹ Gänßbauer, Monika. 2002. *Christentum chinesisch, in Theorie und Praxis*, Breklum: Breklumer Druckerei Manfred Siegel KG.

⁴⁰ Oblau, Gotthard, *Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland, EMW und die China Infostelle* (ed.). 2006. *Chinesische Studierende in Deutschland, Chancen christlicher Begegnung*, Breklum: Breklumer Druckerei Manfred Siegel KG.

object requires several academic disciplines, and some definitions from different fields may be valuable in the analysis.

Steven Vertovec has summarized some useful academic tools in dealing with transnational research.⁴¹ Some of these tools will be applied, and explained to what extent it will be useful in my research.

2.4.1 Social Networks

The social network approach observes each person as a “node” linked with others to form a network. “The advantage of the social network perspective lies in its ability to allow us to abstract aspects of interpersonal relations which cut across institutions and the boundaries of aggregated concepts such as neighborhood, workplace, kinship or class.”⁴² Networking is a “de facto” existence.

In the social networks approach the structure of networks is often studied. Other different categories can also be investigated: Network size, density, multiplicity, clusters and cliques, durability and frequency. The networks are constantly being socially constructed and altered by their members.

Vertovec is critical of the fact that social network approaches mainly focus on the tendency of structural determinism, whereas on the questions of cultural content and individual agency the social network aspect pays little attention.

My study of the Chinese Christian Community in Leipzig focuses on the individual agents. Social network will be used as a tool in my analysis of the community, but the social network will be discussed on two levels. On the first level, the transnationalism of the community will be discussed, since transnational social network cannot be ignored in the formation of the community. On the second level, the collaboration of the community members is also related to their internal social network, which is especially interesting in the case of these migrant groups.

⁴¹ Vertovec, Steven. 2003. "Migration and other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization." *International Migration Review* 3: 641-665.

⁴² Ibid.

2.4.2 Social Capital

Vertovec defines social capital in his work: “The resources themselves are not social capital, the concept refers instead to the individual’s ability to mobilize them on demand. Social capital is not a property inherent to an individual, but rather it exists in, and is drawn from, that person’s web of relationships.”⁴³ Social capital is maintained by visits between people, communication, participation in events, and memberships in associations.

Social capital cannot be separated from the analysis of social networks. Social capital exists in these relationships. It is important for my analysis to determine the motivation of why people join the community, and remain a part in it.

When using social capital as an analyzing instrument, the researcher must use caution. It should not become an economic reduction approach by trying to turn every element into capital. The social capital will be a fruitful aspect to explain the agents’ motivations. But social capital will not be the only aspect of my explanation. The individual agents do not always make decisions according to the consideration of gaining social capital, although “social capital can provide privileged access to resources or restrict individual freedoms by controlling behavior.”⁴⁴

2.4.3 Embeddedness

Vertovec argues that all socially situated actions cannot be explained solely by individual motives. Such actions are not simply carried out by atomized actors but are embedded in ongoing networks of personal relationships. “Embeddedness” means the involvement of community members. “The kind and degree of power individuals have relied on how they are variously embedded in networks of relations found at these various scales.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Vertovec, Steven. 2003. "Migration and other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization." *International Migration Review* 3: 641-665.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Vertovec, Steven. 2003. "Migration and other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization." *International Migration Review* 3: 641-665.

Vertovec summarizes two important definitions of embeddedness. Portes develops two kinds of embeddedness: “Relational embeddedness” that involves actors’ personal relations with one another, including norms, sanctions, expectations and reciprocity. Another embeddedness is “structural embeddedness”, which refers to different scales of social relationship in which many others take part beyond those actually involved in an economic transaction. Another scholar Schweitzer describes this involvement also with two categories: a vertical facet represented by hierarchical linkages, and a horizontal facet of embeddedness.

Embeddedness will be an important instrument in analyzing the agent’s community life. Different types of community members have different forms of embeddedness in the community. The decision of joining the community is relevant to the agent’s embeddedness in the community. Embeddedness can be a significant factor to shed light on the difference between different types of the community members.

In my research, I will discuss the relationship between embeddedness in the community and migration life. On one hand, embeddedness means the members’ involvement in the community, which enriches migrant’s life; on the other hand, embeddedness can also mean less contact with the guest society. Community members gain their collective values and a shared life through deep involvement, which can prevent them from integrating into the guest country where they are migrants. That means extreme embeddedness might have a negative effect on the integration process. In my research, the impact of embeddedness in the community will be discussed regarding its impact on migrant life. The impact of transnational mission on the migrant’s life can be represented by it.

All these tools will be used in my analysis of interviews with the community members. The ambition of my work on the institution has the objective to try to establish an explanation model between formation of a transnational religious community and individual agents’ diversity. It is an “exploration of how people in local places respond to global processes.”⁴⁶ A model, which can grasp multivariable causality, must be based

⁴⁶ Vertovec, Steven. 2007. "Introduction: New directions in the anthropology of migration and multiculturalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*: 961-978.

on empirical research. Reconstructive methods are applied to evaluate the interviews, so it can be explained how the individual agents respond to transnational community formation. A bridge can be built between phenomenological thick descriptions and structural analysis.

3 An Ethnographic Description of the Community

3.1 History of the Community

There is no written chronological history of the community. The history of the development of the community is based on interviews with the community members, who have neither the exact date of the early stages of regular gatherings, nor the exact numbers of group members. Their memories are focused on their friendships and sharing life together. Most of the information about early stages of the community is based on interviews with elder members who have been in the community for a long time, ever longer than the pastor. The early stage of community formation and development is an oral history. It is not possible for me to find the detailed history record of members in the beginning group, either. Here is a reconstruction of history based on interviews and participating observation.

The Chinese Christian Community in Leipzig began with the gathering of a small group of Chinese students. Before 2004 there were a few Chinese students who lived in a student dormitory. They got to know each other and became close friends. There was a Christian couple (Mr. W and Ms. W) who were already Christians in China. They tried to introduce Christianity to the small group. The rest of the people in the group learned the Bible text and shared daily life. There was no formal activity for reading the Bible. Topics of discussion jumped from foods to relationships. Religion was commonly discussed. In this phase, it was not religion that brought them together. They were together because they lived near each other and had the same cultural background. The reasons for their gatherings will be discussed later in the analysis of the interviews. Different members have different motives.

This situation continued until 2004 when Pastor Hong arrived. Pastor Hong and his wife volunteered to come to Leipzig from Canada and they began missionary work. Before H came to Germany, he worked in a Canada community, which has partially financially

supported H's activity in Germany. He found the small group and became one of the most influential persons of the group.

At the beginning ten people came to the gathering, and five of them believed in God. The pastor did missionary work actively. He distributed information flyers on the street and invited Chinese students to come to his gathering. Therefore the group grew fast. In 2006, the number of attendees was about 45 people. A regular Sunday worship was held in a German Evangelical Free Church (Freikirche) building, which the pastor borrowed from the church.

In January 2007, the Chinese Christian Community in Leipzig (CCCL) was officially founded by the pastor. From 2004 to 2008 the community amounted to 200 people, who decided to join the community and converted to Christianity. Among the 200 people, 110 were baptized in the community. The missionary work was carried out not only in Leipzig, but also in the cities near Leipzig such as Halle, Magdeburg, Weimar, Jena and Erfurt, which can be reached within one hour by train from Leipzig. Since 2009 Merseburg has also been on the missionary working list. The distance from Leipzig to Merseburg is about 45 minutes by train. When people decide to convert, the baptism ritual is conducted in Leipzig by the pastor. The Chinese Christian Community in Leipzig became a centre of Chinese Christians in East Germany.

3.2 Relationships to Relevant Organizations

The pastor has a Baptist background. He was born in Taiwan and became a Christian when he was 14. After his theological education in a Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary, he worked in Taiwan for 14 years. During this period, he attended several foreign conferences, which made him think about the missionary work in foreign countries. He did research on this subject and drew a conclusion: Missionary work in Germany is most "rewarding". His argument was that the majority of Chinese scholars who study and live in Germany will return to China. H has rich experience with mission in Germany: He was sent by Taiwan Baptist Association in 1991 to Germany and spent 8 years carrying out missionary work. He helped to establish a Chinese Christian

community in Berlin. In 1999, he left Germany and went to Canada to work. In 2004, he came back to Germany to continue his missionary work. In 2006, he joined China Evangelistic Mission (中华福音使命团, “CEM”) and cooperated with CEM in many aspects regarding missionary work in Germany.

CEM, China Evangelistic Mission, was founded in 1975 by two Chinese pastors: Guo Cheng (郭诚) and Zhou Xiumin (周修敏), who were active in missionary work in Thailand. Now CEM is registered in Hong Kong, United States of America and Canada as a non-profit organization. CEM focuses on missionary work of Chinese abroad: Thailand, South Africa, Taiwan, Macao, Cambodia and Germany. Ecumenism has an impact on CEM, so CEM proclaims itself a missionary society without denominational belonging and CEM is willing to cooperate with any other church to carry out their missionary work.

The pastor is a member of the “Freundeskreis für Mission unter Chinesen in Deutschland” (Friends of Mission among Chinese in Germany, “FMCD”), too.

FMCD, “Freundeskreis für Mission unter Chinesen in Deutschland”, was founded in 1985. In 1979 many refugees came to Germany from Vietnam, and among them were many Chinese. In search of material help and spiritual support, a library with 2000 books about Christian religion was founded in Hanover (Hannover), and the library was named Chinese Lending Library. Missionary work among Chinese in Germany began. FMCD was founded later in 1985 based on the library and some regular missionary workers. FMCD belongs to AFA organizationally. AFA, “Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Ausländer”, is a German missionary organization for foreigners in Germany. AFA organizationally belongs to the German Evangelical Alliance, a federation of Evangelical Churches in Germany and German Free Churches. Therefore, FMCD is a part of German Evangelical Alliance. Until 2008 there were about 10,000 Chinese books about Christian religion in Chinese Lending Library. FMCD organizes many missionary activities for Chinese in Germany, like meetings, meals, and watching Christian-themed films. FMCD cooperates with missionary workers from other missionary societies and helps organize summer camp activities.

Due to the long history and rich experience in coordinating Chinese Christian

Communities in Germany, FMCD became an information centre for Chinese Christians in Germany, and it is now an organizational centre of missionary workers for Chinese in Germany nationwide.

The pastor coordinates resources from the church in Canada, from CEM, and from FMCD. The resources include important financial support, lecturers from Hong Kong and Canada, missionary teaching books from Taiwan, etc. With these resources, he carries out his missionary work in Leipzig and in the above-mentioned cities in East Germany.

3.3 Theology and Ritual

As mentioned above, the pastor of the Chinese Christian Community in Leipzig (CCCL) has a Baptist background. The CCCL can be understood as an evangelical Free Church, which the pastor himself claims. However, he refuses to assign the community to any denomination, although he does not appreciate Pentecostal practices like speaking in tongues. He even prevented some members from practicing it.

The diversity of the community can be represented through different opinions of theology. One member of the community expresses his affection of reformed theology, while another practices speaking in tongues at home. When the community members are asked which denomination they belong to, they give surprisingly different answers. Some say they have no idea, some proclaim their identity as “authentic Christians” without any denominational belonging, and some say, “We may be Baptists because the pastor is a Baptist”.

This is also why such research into the community on a micro-level is meaningful, because the small differences among community members can be analyzed. A general statement of “the theology of the community” can only be made at the cost of losing the diversity and complexity of the community. A micro-level research could achieve a multi-dimensional understanding of the community and its members. The diversity exists not only in the theological understanding of the community members, but also in their religious and daily life practices.

The regular rituals of the community are: Sunday worships, Bible reading groups and birthday celebrations. These take place in the city, where the community is situated. Excursions and learning camps are planned every year and these might take place in some other cities.

3.3.1 Sunday Worship

Sunday worship takes place in a German Church (Jacobstr. 7), which the community borrows from a German Free Church. It locates in the centre of Leipzig. Every Sunday afternoon at three o'clock the community members gather in the church from different places of the city. Two community members stand at the door of the church as reception workers and distribute a piece of paper on which the day's worship program is printed. There are two sides of the paper. On one side there is a regular column: A weekly article on religion. It can be a religious essay or a short theological thought. On the other side of the paper is information pertaining to community activities.

The information consists of seven parts:

- 1) "Weekly news" is about the registered numbers of summer camps, the coming missionary workers next week, etc.
- 2) "Community work" is written by community members about their own providence and is sent to the correspondent person.
- 3) "Schedule of Sunday worship" is a schedule of persons who are supposed to serve during Sunday worship over the next five weeks. They are responsible for the organization, music service like singing and piano playing, Bible reading, multi-media use, computer PowerPoint presentations and reception of the worship.
- 4) "Care for each other" (a form of intercession) is about the issues that community members pray for. For example, praying for the people who are having exams, praying for somebody who is suffering from a disease, or praying for the pregnant member for the safe delivery of her baby are all part of this activity.
- 5) "Timetable of the community regular gathering" is a timetable of regular community activities, for example, the weekly gathering of Bible reading. On the timetable, besides

Sunday worship and Sunday schools, the addresses and telephone numbers of four Bible reading groups are written on the paper.

6) “Monthly calendar of the community” is a calendar for a month of activities. On the calendar are special community activities, such as choir training, birthday celebrations and watching sermons with VCD or DVD.

7) “Community bank account” is about the community’s legal bank account. The official address and telephone number of the community are printed on the paper.

After receiving the program at the door of the church, people come into the worship hall, greet each other and take seats. The church has about 120 seats. Members who already know each other sit together. Newcomers are guided into the church by receptionists or some other elder members.

After everyone is seated the worship regularly begins with singing. The lyrics of the songs are projected on to the wall by a projector, so that everyone can see the lyrics. A member who is in charge of leading the singing stands in front of the altar. If the song is familiar to the participants, all members sing under the guide of a singing leader. If the song is new, he or she tries to teach the others how to sing it. During singing some members keep quiet, some members cry, some members raise their hands when the singing leader raises his or her hands. After two or three songs the atmosphere becomes intense. The pastor comes and stands on the stage, and begins his sermon. Sometimes a community member stands on the stage and reads a paragraph of the Bible. Sometimes the pastor comes to the stage and talks for a short while, and then he arranges all participants to watch a long sermon on VCD, which is projected on to the wall of the church. These sermons are held by several famous Chinese missionaries from Canada or America.

After the sermon, the whole community sings again. At the end of the worship, the newcomers will introduce themselves and are welcomed by the other members. With the guidance of the pastor, people pray for the issues that are printed on the program paper, and pray for each other. The whole process lasts for 90 to 120 minutes.

After the worship has finished, most participants leave very quickly. Only a few stay and talk to each other. It seems that their aim of coming to the church is to attend a

ritual worship.

3.3.2 Sunday School

Before Sunday worship, there are Sunday schools held in two small rooms inside the church. In the Sunday school, religious study and teaching are provided for converted community members. There are two kinds of courses in the Sunday school. One course for beginners, called “Creating the New Believers” (初信造就班), and the other is for members who have been baptized and have stayed in the community for a period of time. This course is called “Training the Apostles” (门徒训练班). In the beginning, the pastor and his wife were the only teachers of Sunday school and gave all the lessons. After a period of time, there were some members who had been diligent with theological reading; they were capable of giving guidance and even lessons for the new believers. Since 2007 the community members have been able to give Sunday school by themselves, so the pastor no longer gives lessons.

There are official learning textbooks for Sunday school, which are donated and sent by a Canadian Chinese community. The content of the textbooks is divided into 10 to 12 chapters about the basic understanding of the Bible. The content is designed to be easily understood and closely related to daily life, covering topics such as family values and relationships.

I participated in a course in Sunday school of “Creating the New Believers”. It was held at one o’clock. The teacher was an elder member in the community. There were eight members attending the course. At the beginning, the eight participants prayed for a good communication during the course. Then they read a paragraph of the Bible together. On that day the paragraph was about the relationship between husband and wife. (Ephesians 5:23. “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.”) At the first time it was read by one participant, after that all participants read together a second time. And then they tried to recite this paragraph. It turned out that all the participants were able to recite the paragraph, which gave the impression that they had learned the paragraph and their homework by heart.

Then the discussion of the content began. There were many questions and exercises in textbooks, which the participants were supposed to have finished doing at home. The participants read the questions and their answers one by one. When there were doubts or questions, the teacher took over the topic and tried to answer. During “Creating the New Believers” there were few discussions between participants and teacher. I have been told during the “Training the Apostles” course there are more theological discussions among participants, because many of them have read different religious books and articles.

Sunday school course lasts 90 to 110 minutes. After Sunday school and before Sunday worship there is a 20-minute break. Participants of Sunday school talk and share their lives during this time. Main topics are about daily life.

3.3.3 Bible Reading Groups

Bible reading groups are held weekly in four places. In 2004 there was only one Bible reading group, which was held in the pastor’s home. Later the number of participants increased and there was not enough room for all participants. The gatherings were therefore less efficient. In 2007 all participants were divided into four groups according to where they live. Transportation convenience was the most important deciding element, so members who live near each other in the same district in the city were assigned to the same group. Each group has a team leader, whom the pastor appointed. Team leaders are responsible for organizing the weekly Bible reading. During holidays, the number of Bible reading attendants is less than usual, and so a united gathering for all community members is held instead of separated Bible reading.

I have participated in two Bible reading groups during my research.

The structure of Bible reading activity is divided into three parts. A team leader is the moderator of the whole process.

1) Singing. Books of Chinese hymns are distributed to every participant. One member of the group is in charge of leading the singing of two to three selected songs from the self-made Chinese hymns books. Many songs are written by Christian composers in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and are taught in summer camping courses. Therefore, time

and themes of a past summer camping event are often printed on the cover of these books. Those who have taken the courses in summer camping are responsible for teaching the other community members to learn and sing the new hymns.

2) Bible reading. Every group has its own pace of Bible reading. There is a chief lecturer among the participants; this is usually the team leader, but sometimes other participants can be the chief lecturer, too. The chief lecturer prepares for the reading by checking up on relevant biblical articles, because he or she is responsible for answering the questions from the other participants. The task is assigned several days before the activity takes place. Participants read sentences from the selected Bible text one by one. Most participants have brought a Bible with them. The versions of their Bibles sometimes vary. There are about four officially translated version of the Bible in Chinese. The most widely used version in China is Chinese Union Version of Holy Bible, which was translated during the time from 1906 to 1919. The usage of classical Chinese words is one of the most distinguishing marks of this version, which made the translation elegant and intellectual at that time. Many classical Chinese words are not used in modern Chinese language any more, although the words still exist in modern Chinese. In the 1920s, there was a movement to modernize the Chinese language, which resulted in a new grammar of Chinese written language. The expressions of modern Chinese language are close to daily life language. The classical Chinese expressions in the Bible become special and unique expressions, which community members often quote during Bible reading. They do not translate the classical Chinese expressions into modern Chinese.

3) Prayer. There are two kinds of prayers. The first is called “private prayer”. One by one the participants tell their own worries or wishes during the private praying time. The content of private prayer includes many daily life issues, such as wanting a good mark on the examination or a safe holiday trip. The second kind of prayer is called “public prayer”. One of the participants is responsible for writing down all prayers the other participants have contributed. The content of a public prayer is often related to community members who are not in this particular Bible reading group, and is often related to community activities, like a successful summer camp or a safe group

excursion. After all content of rogation is written down on the paper, the public prayer begins under the guidance of one participant. The other participants look down at the floor, while some close their eyes with a cross in hand, and say “yes” or “Amen” while the prayer is being said. After the prayers are made, the whole Bible reading activity ends. Books of hymns are collected by the team leader, because they are going to be used again the following week. The process is different from Sunday worship, after which Bible reading activity participants are willing to stay for a while to talk to each other, sharing their thoughts and lives together. After half an hour, those who take the same bus go back home together.

The content of the Bible reading group meeting is not always reading the Bible. Sometimes it is a gathering to share feelings and thoughts. One of these activities I participated in was a thoughts-sharing activity. A big lecture was given the week before by a famous Chinese pastor, who came from America and paid a short-term visit to Leipzig. The team leader of this Bible reading group decided to have a feedback exchange among members. The sharing of the transnational religious teaching created an atmosphere of exchanging knowledge and feeling.

Sometimes the gathering is a movie night. It begins with cooking and eating together, while a film is projected on the wall. The films are different each time, but the theme remains focused on a firm belief and religion. For example, once a film was about a persistent missionary worker who went to a tribe and was then eaten by the tribe. But later, people of the tribe were all converted to Christianity. In this sense, movie-night is a multi-media religious learning experience.

What is noticeable is the usage of a roll call. The number of times a member has attended the Bible reading group is checked by the team leader. Those who are full-time participants received praise. Those who were absent more than twice were mentioned by the team leader. A visible change in the discipline of the Bible reading group is that they became rigid. Some routines are formed and are becoming part of the community.

Team leaders talk to newcomers of the Bible reading groups and recommend some books to them. A brochure of the Chinese Lending Library is handed out to newcomers to inform them where they can get the recommended books.

3.4 Organization Structure

The structure of the community has been developing slowly over time. The pastor is the official leader of the community. Four other elder community members are deacons of the diaconal committee. They have meetings every week to discuss future development of the community, like deciding the upcoming activities. Under the diaconal committee there are eight to ten co-workers who can join the diaconal discussion and give some advice; they are candidates to become the next deacons.

The community's daily cost is supported by donations from its own members. A deacon member is in charge of the bank account. Bank account codes, which are necessary for cashing out, are kept by another member. The bank card is kept by a third member. A separated system ensures a transparent money management system for the community. All receipts that are generated during outdoor activities should be kept.

The pastor's income and many other big activities are financially supported by donation from transnational resources. When lecturers from Hong Kong and Canada come to Germany, the flight tickets and other fees are either paid by themselves, or reimbursed by missionary organizations in North America.

3.5 Ethnic Diversity

Most of the community members come from mainland China. Some are from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Some come from Malaysia and Vietnam, but have Chinese migrant background in those countries, and now they come to Germany. All of them can speak Mandarin, the official spoken Chinese language. The political issue between China and Taiwan does not seem to bother the communication between members from mainland China and members from Taiwan.

A large part of community members are students. Only very few of them are longtime residents of Germany and have jobs and a family. That is the reason why the community can barely be financially independent.

Some native Germans appear in big activities like barbeques or weddings of the

community members. They are girlfriends or boyfriends of the community members. They participate in wedding activities and do not attend other religious activities.

3.6 Social Activities and Social Services

Besides the religious activities, the community has some other social activities and services.

3.6.1 Communication Room

There is a formal social activity provision. A communication room was newly rented in 2008. The community planned to have a space where official work could be done. The church is borrowed (free of charge) and is not available from Monday to Saturday. Since the homes of the pastor and other community members are not convenient, a room for the community and the financial resources for it were searched for a long time. In 2008, after solving the financial problem, a room was rented for administration and communication of the community. The reception of transnational lecturers and other relevant work can be done in the space. The room can also be used for Bible reading groups and other community activities. The facility equipment has been a source of conflict between the pastor and other deacon members. The pastor opted to buy the best furniture, because “the room is for God, and for God it should be equipped by the best things”. The other deacon members were in favor of a practical solution of buying some second-hand chairs and desks, in order to save money for other activities. In the end, the pastor had the last word.

The communication room is in the center of Leipzig. It is convenient to get there with public transportation. The room is divided into three areas within a big space: A fully equipped kitchen area, a sleeping area with four loft beds, and a big living room. Before the Bible reading groups begin their reading, a simple supper is always prepared in the kitchen. Community members come and eat together. After that, the reading begins.

The room is also used for transnational missionary groups as a temporary accommodation. Before the communication room was rented, the members from

transnational missionary groups stayed in a hotel. It was expensive and not convenient to communicate with the local community members. Since the room was rented, it became convenient to accommodate transnational missionary groups. They come and live in the communication room, cook for themselves, have telephone and Internet. The communication room is economical and practical for the transnational missionary work.

3.6.2 Missionary Work

Missionary work is organized inside and outside the campus of the universities. At the beginning of a semester, community members send a group to the student registration offices in the university. They distribute brochures and talk to Chinese students, to inform them of Sunday worship activities and Bible reading groups and try to convince them to make a visit.

3.6.3 Barbeque

Barbeques and excursions are organized by the community during the summer. The information is delivered by word of mouth. Anyone interested in a gathering can take part.

There are informal social activities. The informal services are not organized by the community deacons; rather, they are often organized among community members themselves. Especially during the secular holidays, community members gather at somebody's home and have dinner. On Chinese New Year's festival 2009 some community members gathered in a Chinese restaurant, like they would do in China.

As a researcher I have spent a period of time with the community members. I have received two invitations from different community members for dinner. I was invited to a member's home to have dinner and to share my thoughts on religion. Some newcomers of the community got this kind of invitation, too. Some elder members took part in this dinner, while the team leader also participated in thoughts-sharing. They are very interested in other aspects, for example, the perspective of my studies of religions. To them, I was regarded as someone outside the community. They were aware of my

researcher identity. The conversation focused on theological topics. Another invitation was a private invitation, where I was invited to a community member's home to have dinner and to talk with one another. The community member regarded me as a normal and equal friend; the content of conversation was not related to religion.

Different Bible reading groups organize group activities within the group, but the members of other groups are welcome. I have participated in a barbeque activity of one Bible reading group that I spent the most time with. One group member owns a Chinese restaurant in a small town near Leipzig and she offered her garden for the barbeque. So the group members took the train and organized an internal barbeque. It was in July 2009, a hot summer day. Mr. Y, the leader of the Bible reading group was in charge of broiling meat and vegetables. The others helped to prepare meat and vegetables. A big radio was broadcasting Chinese hymns the whole time, some of the hymns were Mandarin, some were Cantonese hymns. Because the restaurant owner grew up in Vietnam, and visited Chinese school there, Cantonese is her mother tongue, which was spoken in her family. She lived in America for a long time and visited the Chinese Christian Community in America. After she came to Leipzig, she was introduced to this community by the Chinese Christian community of America. It indicates that the CCCL has become a recognized part of the whole transnational mission. It is a station where members from other communities can go and join when they move to Leipzig and live there. The community members are influenced by the transnational mission without realizing the effect of the whole network.

At the barbeque there were two theology students from Taiwan, who were doing their internships in Germany. They are trained for developing the missionary work of Chinese people in Europe. They came during summer vacation and helped the pastor organize activities. They got to know some Chinese Christian communities in Germany and helped to answer theological questions from the community members. After their studies, they will be assigned to Europe and develop missionary work. It is another indication of transnational organization of the Chinese Christian communities in Europe, and CCCL is one of them.

3.6.4 Camping

There are two kinds of outdoor big activities in the community. One is in the form of “camping”, the other is in the form of sight-seeing. Both are religious activities.

“Camping” usually takes place in a youth hostel, and lasts for 2 to 3 days. The camping is organized by the pastor and leaders of other Chinese Christian communities in Germany. The offer is quite attractive to the community members, because they do not need to pay an extra cost for transport and accommodation, which are paid by the organizers. The cost is financially supported by missionary institutions and churches in North America. The teachers in the camping activity are pastors from America and professors from Hong Kong. They volunteer to fly to Germany and work for the mission in Germany.

The transnational resources are important in initiating the camping activity; without it, the camping would be impossible. It is a collaboration of resources from different places on a global scale, which is one of the features of transnational mission in the new century.

Camping sometimes takes place outside a city. Sometimes the camping is also offered to community members in other cities in East Germany besides Leipzig. A camping activity on a national scale usually takes place in Nuremberg (Nürnberg), because the biggest youth hostel in Germany is located in Nuremberg.

Not only community members, but also those who are interested in Christianity, can take part in the activities. The elder community members always introduce and persuade new members to participate in camping.

During the camping, intensive courses on basic theological teachings are introduced. At the end of camping, participants are motivated by the lecturer to convert. In such a close intensive environment, a few of the participants decide to convert to Christianity. Camping becomes one of the most powerful strategies and efficient ways to do missionary work in Germany.

3.6.5 Excursion

The second form of outdoor big activities is excursion, like sightseeing. For example, the community members go and visit Wittenberg, where Martin Luther is said to have nailed his 95 Theses in 1517. Learning religious history is one task of the community religious education.

I participated in one excursion to the Spree forest in Berlin. It was an activity for the community members and other Chinese in Leipzig. Two weeks earlier a notice of the excursion was spread to the community members orally and online. It was cheap; participants only paid ten Euros for the transport. It was interesting because Spree forest has the fame of “little Venice in Berlin”, as it was advertised on the notice. This excursion turned out to be very attractive to many Chinese outside the community. They were motivated to join the excursion. It is how the community meets their potential new members.

On the day of the excursion, people gathered in the train station, took the rented bus, and drove to the Spree forest. The two-hour drive was full of religious programs on the bus. Community members sang hymns, read stories, and made the bus into a worship place, a “moving church”. Newly converted community members stood in front of the others and told their providence through the driver’s microphone, just like they usually do in the church. After the arrival at the Spree Forest, two boats were rented. The time on the boat was without any program; people enjoyed the peace and the beautiful scene of the Spree Forest. After the boat trips, there were community programs again.

People were divided into 4 groups and played competitive games, such as running with one leg off the ground. The aim of these games was to cheer people up, to achieve the consciousness of “being one of a community”, and to enhance the solidarity of the group. The end of the whole program was “experience sharing”. People sat in small circles. Each small group encompassed some community members and some members outside the community. The atmosphere was intimate. Those who were strangers in the morning became very trustful now after playing games together. The conversation was guided by the community members, who talked and shared their religious experiences

in Germany, for example, how God led them find their own way. People who were outside the community were interested in the story and asked questions about religion and God. They were told to come to the Sunday worship the following week and the Bible reading group. Some of them did return to the community and converted later. Excursions are attractive, efficient and powerful in the transnational missionary work.

3.6.6 Website

The CCCL has a website: <http://www.chinesen-in-leipzig.de/>

At the beginning, it was a website which focused on the community activities. There were online forums for members to discuss religious questions. Later there was much practical information on the website, for example, how to register in the students' office, or how to apply for the student dormitory. The website name indicates the change of focus. It became a popular website, which serves all Chinese in Leipzig. It provides useful information for the Chinese, especially the Chinese students. On the website, there is information about how to buy a bike, where to apply for internet service, where to find the cheap clothing stores, where Asian supermarkets are located, what the differences between different insurance companies are, etc.

Recently, especially since 2008, there has been a lot of information about pregnancy and childcare, because some community members are having babies. Most of the informal social services are considered useful information, which the local Chinese need in daily life.

The community activity is announced on the website, too. For example, on the Chinese traditional moon festival, the community invites new students to have dinner together. Chinese always celebrate the moon festival together with their families. For the students, who are far away from their homes, the dinner night is attractive and the exchange of information during the dinner may be helpful to get useful information about their studies and jobs.

The use of Internet technique serves not only as information flow, but also for religious education purposes. The community members share the websites with each other where

they find good sermons and theological teaching. These websites are usually in Chinese, and supported by Chinese Christians overseas. Sermons of some Chinese pastors overseas are popular in the community, for example, Stephen Tang (唐崇荣).⁴⁷ His sermon is shared by the community members in Leipzig through online space and portable music data, for example mp3.

The use of the Internet is one of the details of the community's transnational traits. Without the convenient access to online resources, the sermons of pastors in Indonesia or in the USA could not be heard in Germany. It was hardly possible 100 years ago. Sometimes the community members gather and watch religious movies, which are downloaded from the Internet. They share them with each other and make the viewing a small ritual religious practice.

A shared global religious education resource is only possible in the Internet age. The Internet makes exchanging knowledge and information transnationally much easier. It also means that the community members can choose to hear the sermons they are interested in. The pastor in Leipzig is not the only resource of sermons.

3.6.7 Wedding

Wedding service is one of the informal social services. The organization of the wedding is done by the bride and bridegroom, and the members of the diaconal committee. The wedding took place in the rented church. A Christian wedding ceremony was held under guidance of the pastor. After the ceremony, a buffet was given in another room. Almost every community member brought a self-made dish, which were enough for all participants to eat. Everyone helped and everyone had fun. During the wedding feast that I attended, some traditional Chinese wedding plays were preformed, like letting the bridegroom distinguish his bride with closed eyes by touching hands.

When the parents of the community members visit them in Germany, they are welcome to take part in all the community activities. During one community member's wedding,

⁴⁷ Stephen Tang was born in China and migrated to Indonesia when he was nine years old. He is the founder of the Indonesian Reformed Evangelical Church, one of the largest Chinese Christian evangelical church facilities in the world. He is active in missionary work among the Chinese and is able to preach in Mandarin, English and Indonesian.

her parent came to Germany to visit her. Her father was suddenly sick and had an emergency operation in a hospital; other community members were there to help take care of the parents. Finally, he decided to convert during his visit in Germany.

3.7 Language

The commonly used language in the community is Mandarin. Sometimes dialects are used between people who come from the same province.

A noticeable phenomenon of language is the usage of biblical expressions in daily life. As mentioned before, there are several versions of the Bible in Chinese language. The classical Chinese expressions are often used in daily conversations between community members. Biblical language is like a coded language that everyone inside the community is able to recognize and speak. In the mail between members, the sender writes letters with classical biblical expressions. Team leaders speak with these expressions during prayer, but when they talk to me or have a conversation with people outside the community, these biblical expressions disappear. They use these words only on religious occasions, and by using the particular classical Chinese biblical expressions, they are creating a religious field. The coded language with certain phrases and words serve as communication between the community members who are able to understand it. It creates and reinforces the identity of the community member as a Christian who reads the Bible and understands its meaning.

In the publications of the community handout there are two kinds of direction. One is half-monthly news in the Bible reading groups. Every group has a bi-weekly newspaper, which is written by one certain member. He or she should call the other members during the week and write down what they are busy with, such as pet raising, preparing a report, etc. The “half-monthly newspaper” is often hand written, color-printed and copied, aimed at delivering a happy mood and personal emotions. The language of these newspapers is colloquial language, which makes the newspaper familiar to its readers. Another is a handout of religious studying notes, which are often prepared by team leaders. The language of the handout is serious formal, as in the textbooks.

The separation of language use is an interesting phenomenon in the community. It will be analyzed in the interviews.

3.8 Communication with German Churches

The cooperation with German churches is not only with borrowing the church building on Sunday afternoon, but also the community organized sport activities for members. A German-Chinese basketball competition was held. Football competitions are held twice a year. Having dinner together is a regular program every six months.

3.9 Communication with Transnational Missionary Institutions

3.9.1 Transnational Missionary Groups

Each year, two or three missionary groups come and visit the Chinese Christian communities in Germany. The missionary groups come from the USA and Canada. There are Chinese and Americans in the groups. Most of them are Chinese Christians, who have worked and lived in North America for a long time. They pay for the flights themselves and organize a “Europe missionary tour” with the support of local Chinese Christian communities in Europe. The transnational missionary network plays an important role in the activities.

The visiting groups are organized by full-time missionary workers and normal co-workers in America. There are professors from the Chinese Church in Christ-San Jose in California; there are members from the Dallas Chinese Fellowship Church in Texas. Most of them were born in China, and became migrants, and then Christians in America. How these Chinese Christian communities in North America organize the missionary groups and come to Germany is worth studying. It is open for future study.

My focus is the encounter of the transnational missionary groups and the community in Leipzig. I participated in a “communication night” with a transnational missionary group. It took place in a big activity room in a student dormitory building. There were

three people in the missionary group. The first two were a man who works for a big company in America, and his wife. He was a leader of a Chinese Christian community in Switzerland when he worked there. The third person was a woman who works as an architect. The language of communication was Mandarin.

There were about 20 persons in the room. On the table were some Chinese cakes, which were brought from America and could not be found in Germany. Cola and orange juice were served. The three of them shared their religious experiences with the others and answered the questions raised by participants. The community members who were already baptized kept silent in the communication night. Questions were often raised by people who were new to the community. They had not yet believed in God. A student said he just wants a faith, and asked for opinions on Jehovah's Witnesses. Another student said that psychology was able to answer all human questions too. A discussion about Chinese traditional religions began with a story of "half-god" people. A community member told a story from his childhood. He had met a "half-god" person who could talk to ghosts and demons. People slept around him at night in order to be influenced by his magic. He told the story so vividly and people forgot to ask the questions about Christianity.

The three members of the transnational group lost the control of the conversation. They were not well trained theologically. From my point of view, they could not answer most of the questions, for example, whether the word "God" (上帝) already exists in Chinese language. The others respected them but did not regard them as spiritual authority. The "communication night" remained a chatting night.

3.9.2 Chinese Biblical Seminary in Europe

The Chinese biblical seminary in Europe (欧华神学院) was established in Barcelona, Spain, and has been opened since October 2007. It is the first Chinese biblical seminary in Europe. The Leipzig community is related to the seminary because two community members were recommended by the pastor and now are studying in Chinese biblical seminary. There are more and more young Chinese students studying theology in the

biblical seminary. It is one part of transnational mission for Chinese in Europe.

The Motto of the biblical seminary is: “In Europe, for the world”. It claims its non-denominational position. The teachers are professors and pastors from America, Australian, Malaysia and Taiwan who have good theological education.

The biblical seminary recruits students to apply for its courses, and to participate in summer camping as well as in local Chinese Christian communities. The registration fee is 785 Euros every year. And the tuition fee is 450 Euros every semester. A full accommodation with food and bed costs 460 Euros every month. There are three terms in a year. Scholarships are available for students who are recommended by their local communities.

The establishment of the Chinese biblical seminary in Europe is a big move in transnational mission, because the missionary institutions in North America can educate professional missionary workers directly in Europe.

The Chinese biblical seminary in Europe focuses on the young generation and organizes “Youth Leader Camping”. It is becoming an influential institution among Chinese Christians in Europe. In order to enhance the network of Chinese Christians in Europe, the seminary organized a “Chinese-Europe night” in Paris. The camping in Germany is supported by the seminary as well, financially and also by staff. The Leipzig community benefits from the support of the Chinese biblical seminary in Barcelona.

The local communities recommend active community members to study in the Chinese biblical seminary. After the study, the students will be professional missionary workers in Europe and in China. They come directly from the Chinese Christian community and are familiar with the European circumstances. Therefore the reproduction of professional missionary workers can be achieved. The Chinese biblical seminary works transnationally and its impact is felt on a global scale, too.

The ethnographic description of the community is based on participating observation and the interviews of the community members. It provides a general background of the individual agent’s life in the Chinese Christian Community in Leipzig. The information is useful for analyzing different individual decisions of joining the community.

From the ethnographic description, it is clear that the community has formed its institutional structure and daily routines in the past few years.

Transnational resources play different roles in the formation of the community; transnational missionary groups and the Chinese biblical seminary in Europe have a limited influence on the local community. More important elements in the formation of the community are the community members. Therefore, with the general knowledge of the community, the next step is to explore individual agents in the community.

4 Field Work and Reflection on Methods

4.1 Process of Field Work

The field work started with my first successful contact with the community in May 2007. The first contact was established with the pastor. He brought me directly to a Bible reading group on the day we met. With his consent, I conducted the interview with the pastor in May as an expert interview.

Through constant participation in the activities of the community, I got to know many community members, and some of them accepted my invitation for an interview. I carried out most of my interviews from August to September 2007. In February 2008 and April 2009, I did two important complementary interviews separately.

I participated constantly in Sunday worships of the community, Sunday school, different Bible reading groups, an excursion to Berlin and two weddings of the community members. Moreover, I collected the self-made newspapers from the community and different paper materials of the community in addition. I visited the members' homes, so that I could have the chance to observe the environment of their daily lives. Participant observation was done during the whole process.

1.2 Reflection on the approach to the field

Due to my long attendance in the community, some community members regard and treat me like one of them, and invite me to their home, not for an interview, but for casual conversation and developing a private friendship. During the casual conversation, I feel I am regarded as a friend by the host. When the "object of research" approaches the observer and is about to develop a friendship between them, it is a dilemma situation for the researcher. Maybe I would reveal information that is not meant for public, which I got from the informal conversations. Should I quote the comment of the host, who regards me as reliable friend, and told me his or her personal feelings about other people.? On the other side, I must prevent myself from the impact of the comment when I meet the other interviewees. Should I use the information, which I got from the former

interviews, and guide the interviewee to make an unprepared response, which might reveal his or her thoughts more in depth? Or is it a discipline of field work, in order to conduct the research thoroughly? How far should the necessary distance between researcher and research objects be? These questions are also important for the self reflection of the research aspect and the position of observer in the whole field research. In order to avoid the observer dilemma, I will also reflect on my activity in the community and the dynamic response from the community members. This part should be taken into consideration, too. There is no absolute neutrality and objectivity in social scientific studies; my position, my perspective and my part in it should be known by the reader who should be aware that the field work is conducted within my knowledge horizon, and is bound to a particular historical time and geographical space. My activity within the community should also be treated as data materials of the research equal to the interviewees. That is why I report the process of how I got to know the community, and how I conducted the research. This research is influenced by the time and space of its procedure. It is not only important but also necessary to indicate and reflect on the researcher's position, in order to provide a more solid ground to explore further in future research.

4.2 Interviews

Because I decided to use objective hermeneutics as the interview analysis method, I always began my interviews with the impulse question: How did you join the community? A short introduction of objective hermeneutics is in the following chapter.

The community members should feel free to talk. I tried to let them not be influenced by my opinion, so I did not interrupt them in their narratives. When they stopped talking I asked some prepared questions to motivate them to go on further. At last they were asked some standard questions. Diaconal members were asked more questions about the development of the community. It is a combination of narrative interview and targeted questions. The collection of data is made under scientifically binding standards,

according to objective hermeneutics method.⁴⁸

I have made 22 interviews with 24 community members; two interviews were made with two people at the same time. With their permission, 21 interviews were recorded by a sound recorder. The average length of the interviews is about 90 minutes. Some interviews are more than 2 hours. The interviews are transcribed as information data after being taken on the recorder.

Here is a short description about the age of the interviewees, their careers, religious backgrounds and their official roles in the community. The 22 interviews are with:

The pastor.

Miss Q⁴⁹, 25, student, has some Christian family members in China.

Miss F, 26, student, with atheistic background, was interested in Buddhism.

Miss E, 32, student, comes from Taiwan Presbyterian Church.

Mr. R, 31, student, has been in a relationship with a Chinese Christian girlfriend since he was in China, key member and leader of the community.

Mr. W and Ms. W, both 33, students, they had already become Christians in China. They are the former founders of the community.

Miss M, 29, student, was active at the beginning, now totally resigned.

Mr. H, 26, student, was in community for 3 years but not baptized.

Mr. Y, 28, with atheistic background, key member and leader of the community.

Mr. X, 27, student, with atheistic background.

Miss L, 24, student, has a Buddhist family member.

Miss Z, 28, student, was active at the beginning, later she kept distance from the community.

Miss S, 25, student, transferred from Berlin Chinese Christian Church.

Mr. L, 30, student, key member and leader of community.

Miss R, 27, student, with atheistic background.

Mr. W, 28, student, with atheistic background, key member and leader of community.

⁴⁸ Oevermann, Ulrich. März, 2002. *Klinische Soziologie auf der Basis der Methodologie der objektiven Hermeneutik - Manifest der objektiv hermeneutischen Sozialforschung (Manuskript)*.

⁴⁹ All names are anonymized.

Miss E, 26, student, with atheistic background.

Mr. G, 26, student, with atheistic background, is in the process of becoming a leading member.

Ms. J, 48, and Mr. Z, 16, son of Ms. J, they are both with atheistic backgrounds. Ms. J became familiar with Christianity in America, and now is now a migrant in Germany.

Miss. X, 26, student, comes from Malaysia, was already a Christian in Malaysia.

Miss K, 28, student, was a Buddhist.

Miss J, 26, student, had her wedding in the Church. Her father was converted during his visit in Germany.

During the community activities, I also talked to members who did not accept a formal interview but were open to conversations. This was so I could get more information besides the interviews.

The representative interviews are evaluated and analyzed by objective hermeneutics, in order to reconstruct the subjective dimension and indicate the formation and diversity of the community.

In order to research the “possible trajectories”⁵⁰ of the community members in the migration situation, different types of the community members should be taken into consideration. The representative interviews should be differentiated from the others. The representative interviews can be in contrast to each other. For example if there is a community member who has Christian family members, like Miss Q, the contrast person should be someone who has an atheistic background or has a Buddhist family member (Miss F). If there is a community member who comes from mainland China, the contrast person should come from Taiwan or Malaysia (Miss E). If there is a key member of the community (Mr. R), the contrast person should be someone who was in the community and later left the community (Miss M).

I did not intentionally search for my interviewees during my research; rather, they appeared and came along during the research. Among the 22 Interviews, 7 interviews are analyzed and reconstructed with the method of objective hermeneutics, and in

⁵⁰ Vertovec, Steven. 2009. *Transnationalism*, New York: Routledge.

combination with the documentary method.⁵¹ The chosen 7 interviews are not at random. The representativeness of the chosen interviews is considered theoretical representativeness.

4.3 Objective Hermeneutics

4.3.1 A Short Guide to Objective Hermeneutics

The term “objective hermeneutics” refers to a complex theoretical, methodological and operational concept, which derives from the work of Ulrich Oevermann.⁵² Oevermann’s invention of objective hermeneutics was considered to be a critique on quantitatively focused sociological measurement, and later it turned into a new methodological approach of analysis, which became prominent in German-speaking countries.⁵³ Objective hermeneutics can be used in different sociological researches, including texts, architecture and paintings, etc. The object of objective hermeneutics is “*text*” in a wide sense.⁵⁴

Oevermann applies Lévi-Strauss’ concept of structuralism.⁵⁵ His analysis focuses on “action generating latent meaning structures”, which can be understood as John Searle’s concept of constitutive rules.⁵⁶ So objective hermeneutics is based on the idea that human actions are results of a collective meaning generating structure, which is a social reality for the agent. The aim of objective hermeneutics is to find out the agent’s subjective meaning generating rules and structure.

⁵¹ I became familiar with the objective hermeneutic and documentary method as reconstructive method in 2006. Professor Annette Wilke and Dr. Albrecht Schöll are my teachers in learning objective hermeneutics. After I gathered the information data, Professor Wilke offered me a seminar in one semester, and a workshop in another seminar to analyze my materials. Both of them helped me a lot to grasp the method and analyze the materials with the help of a group discussion, which is necessary for starting the analysis and grasping the method.

⁵² Oevermann, Ulrich, Allert, Tilman, Konau, Elisabeth, Krambeck, Jürgen. 1979. "Die Methodologie einer "objektiven Hermeneutik" und ihre allgemeine forschungslogische Bedeutung in den Sozialwissenschaften . " In: Hans-Georg Soeffner (ed.), *Interpretative Verfahren in den Sozial- und Textwissenschaft*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 352-434.

⁵³ Knoblauch, Hubert. 2003. *Qualitative Religionsforschung*, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.

⁵⁴ Oevermann, Ulrich, Allert, Tilman, Konau, Elisabeth, Krambeck, Jürgen. 1979. "Die Methodologie einer "objektiven Hermeneutik" und ihre allgemeine forschungslogische Bedeutung in den Sozialwissenschaften . " In: Hans-Georg Soeffner (ed.), *Interpretative Verfahren in den Sozial- und Textwissenschaft*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 352-434.

⁵⁵ Reckwitz, Andreas. 2006. *Die Transformation der Kulturtheorien*, Göttingen: Velbrück Wissenschaft, Weilerswist.

⁵⁶ According to Searle, social rules can be regulative or constitutive. Regulative rules regulate an activity, such as driving a car. Constitutive rules create the possibility of an activity, such as rules of playing a baseball game, by which people understand the possibilities of their body movements. Constitutive rules provide a structure for institutional facts.

In an in depth interview, the interviewee is under a circumstance to tell his story with his own logic and own words. So it guarantees the authentic structure of his decisions of actions in his narrative. In the narrative, every decision of the agent's action is a choice among many possibilities of actions. Objective hermeneutics asks why the agent makes this choice instead of that choice. The selection of choices forms a chain of decisions, so the agent's narrative of his story is a chain of decisions of action. The chain of decisions is the result of the action generating latent meaning structure, which guides the agent to make a certain decision. Objective hermeneutics is a method to achieve a reconstruction of latent meaning generating rules and structures.

The evaluation process is an important part of the work. Objective hermeneutics requires a representation of the thinking process; therefore the method needs time and patience. Many *Lesart* (variant readings) are constructed during the phase. This method requires presenting every step of variant reading and hypothesis conceiving. Every variant reading is a possibility among other possibilities of actions, so every speculation should be written as a variant or option of possible actions.⁵⁷ The method can raise such questions: What could the interviewee have said, but did not say? What could be other possible formulations of his expressions? etc. The speculations of variant readings form possible spectrum options of action. A discussion with a group is very helpful to contribute many variant readings. The evaluation procedure could be very long, because every word can be discussed for one hundred latent possibilities. The speculations may be arbitrary and even contradictory. Like displaying every detail in a surgery, objective hermeneutics requires an "anatomical attitude".

During the evaluation and analysis of the interview, sentence after sentence is analyzed. The sequential analysis is the key analysis in finding latent meaning generating rules and structures. Sequential analysis determines the difference between the variant possibilities and the executed decision. After analyzing a few sentences, the researcher comes up with a basic hypothesis of latent rules generating structure. By sequential analysis the *Fallstruktur* (structure of the case) can be achieved. The *Fallstruktur* can be

⁵⁷ Jo Reichertz. 1997. "Objektive Hermeneutik." In: Ronald Hitzler (ed.), *Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik*, Opladen: Leske und Budrich.

tested in the following narratives, because as a *Fallstruktur*, the latent meaning generating rules repeats itself during the agent's action. Then the hypothesis is proved, falsified, modified and extended in the following narrative sequences. If more than one instance confirms the hypothesis of the latent meaning generating rules, then the *Fallstruktur* is tested as valid.⁵⁸

Prognoses of an action can be made according to the generative rules. This is why during the evaluation and analysis of the following interviews, "experimental thoughts" ("*Gedankenexperiment*") are allowed and made. The possibilities of the agent's decision are within the frame of his or her generative rules. A deterministic statement is however not possible. An absolute causality does not exist.

Objective hermeneutics achieves a generalization of structure from the reconstruction of the structure of single case by means of heuristic falsification. Oevermann insists: Only the correct treatment of a text makes the thing "speak for itself".⁵⁹ The results cannot be achieved without the elaborate process. The strict sequential analysis of objective hermeneutics is the guarantee of "objectivity" of the findings. The "objectivity" is not the objectivity in the sense of natural science, but in the sense of "inter-subjectivity". The hypothesis of case structure (*Fallstrukturehypothese*) is the discovery and description of the generative rules (*Deutungsmuster*), which are valid for general and single-case specific.⁶⁰

4.3.2 The Advantage of Applying Objective Hermeneutics

Objective hermeneutics is famous for its ability to make intensive interpretations and powerful conclusions by only a few cases, so it is ideal for establishing a typology of community members, which may explain the diversity of their choices.⁶¹ Unlike other

⁵⁸ Schöll, Albrecht, Feige, Andreas, Dressler, Bernhard, Lukatis, Wolfgang. 2000. *'Religion' bei ReligionslehrerInnen: Religionspädagogische Zielvorstellungen und religiöses Selbstverständnis in empirisch-soziologischen Zugängen; Berufsbiographische Fallanalysen und eine repräsentative Meinungserhebung unter evangelischen ReligionslehrerInnen in Niedersachsen*, Münster: Lit Verlag.

⁵⁹ Oevermann, Ulrich. März, 2002. *Klinische Soziologie auf der Basis der Methodologie der objektiven Hermeneutik - Manifest der objektiv hermeneutischen Sozialforschung (Manuskript)*.

⁶⁰ Wernet, Andreas. 2006. *Einführung in die Interpretationstechnik der Objektiven Hermeneutik*, Wiesbaden: GWV Fachverlage.

⁶¹ Schöll, Albrecht. 1994. *Lebenspraxis und Religion: Fallanalysen zur subjektiven Religiosität von Jugendlichen*,

quantitative research, objective hermeneutics does not have a hypothesis at the beginning of the research. Objective hermeneutics generates a hypothesis after analyzing some materials. The hypothesis is based on real cases.

My question concerns the reasons why the community members joined the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig. Did the members join the community merely according to religious reasons? Or are the reasons related to cultural, ethnical, or historical background? What kind of role does the transnational mission play in this decision? Divergence and choices among all the possibilities of action variants can be explained by reconstructing the agent's subjective understanding, which includes religion.

This typology is concerned with the general phenomena of transnational religious communities as well as this community's special situation. By means of using objective hermeneutics a specific analysis about this community can be achieved as well as a general mode of transnational religious community.

Different community members contribute to the diversity in their choices and motivations of joining the community. This research is about to take a close look at the diversity of their choice of joining the community, and tries to establish a theoretical frame of the diversity in choices and possible trajectories of their actions. It is of course not a complete list of all the possibilities and types of community members, but it is possible to establish a useful model to explain the transnational phenomena and meanwhile make some theoretical contribution in this field of research.

What objective hermeneutics can achieve is a representative typology by means of analyzing a few community members. This community is expanding with unpredictable numbers. From time to time there are new members showing up in the community, and meanwhile some old members who gave up attending the group activities. A quantitative research is difficult to carry out, so I choose to make a qualitative analysis by means of objective hermeneutics, to observe the trajectories of the community members in a relative long term.

I try to find out the possibilities of dynamic relationships in a transnational religious community. The reasons of joining the community are diverse, so it must be treated in detail.

The aim of the research is to develop a typology of community members, which includes the trajectories of their activities. The reconstruction of community member types can build a bridge between the individual experience and structure analysis. In traditional social science, type is usually derived by induction.⁶² The goal of objective hermeneutics is structure generalization instead of inductive empirical generalization. Every type, which is generated by objective hermeneutics, is a real and genuine type.⁶³ Instead of describing the object, objective hermeneutics reconstructs the latent meaning generating rules. Objective hermeneutics tries to achieve the origin of every practice of life (*Lebenspraxis*).⁶⁴

Different types of members have different trajectories in the transnational religious field. My task is to understand the trajectories and provide a typology to analyze the different trajectories.

By evaluating representative community members, a typology of them can be achieved. The typology is a basic tool for explaining the diversity of the community. It cannot be fully representative. The typology can not cover all the community members and activities within the community. These types are open for discussion and modification. They may be basic types of transnational religious community. The reconstruction can be used to analyze not only this particular Chinese Christian community, but it can also be applied to other transnational religious communities.

This typology is analytical results from analyzing the interviews and a scientific product and tool for the further community analysis. The typology is like all the other results of objective hermeneutics, open to further modification and completion.

⁶² Kluge, Susann. 1999. *Empirisch begründete Typenbildung: Zur Konstruktion von Typen und Typologien in der qualitativen Sozialforschung*, Opladen: Leske und Budrich.

⁶³ Oevermann, Ulrich. März, 2002. *Klinische Soziologie auf der Basis der Methodologie der objektiven Hermeneutik - Manifest der objektiv hermeneutischen Sozialforschung (Manuskript)*.

⁶⁴ Oevermann, Ulrich. März, 2002. *Klinische Soziologie auf der Basis der Methodologie der objektiven Hermeneutik - Manifest der objektiv hermeneutischen Sozialforschung (Manuskript)*.

4.3.3 Reflection on the Method

The disadvantage of applying objective hermeneutics is the highly time-consuming evaluation method with enormous text production. Some scholars criticize objective hermeneutics bears the risk of totalizing a single text to a life-long discipline. The critiques focus on the problem that objective hermeneutics has neglected inconsistency and the possibility of occasionality of human behavior.⁶⁵ The latent meaning generating structure exists only in the course of its reproduction during the action sequence. The generative rules are dependent on the routinized latent rules. Action can only be understandable when the action is based on subjective understanding. There is a force to make the selection meaningful and reasonable. In order to explain the transformation of generative rules, Oevermann has to solve the problem of handling the new meaning element. He intends to treat cultural alteration as a particular situation and marginalize it.⁶⁶ He insists that the findings of objective hermeneutics is social reality; the question of whether it corresponds to the “reality of the text” is regarded as meaningless.⁶⁷ In order to prevent the problem, a broader context should be introduced into the whole analysis. A detailed description of the community is necessary. The description is based on my participating observation. The description can provide an ethnographic view of the community; it is helpful to understand the transnationality of the community. Chapter 3 is a broader context of the following chapters. The analysis of interviews has taken the ethnographical description of the community into consideration.

4.4 Documentary Method

In analyzing the interviews, besides the objective hermeneutics, the documentary method is applied,⁶⁸ to prove the hypothesis, which is generated by using objective hermeneutics. With the combination of two reconstructive methods, the objectivity of

⁶⁵ Reckwitz, Andreas. 2006. *Die Transformation der Kulturtheorien*, Göttingen: Velbrück Wissenschaft, Weilerswist.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Hitzler, Ronald (ed.). 1997. *Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik*, Opladen: Leske und Budrich.

⁶⁸ Bohnsack, Ralf. 1993. *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung: Einführung in Methodologie und Praxis qualitativer Forschung*, Opladen: Leske und Budrich.

the analysis can be achieved in a better way.

The documentary method is a reconstructive method, too. Karl Mannheim contributed to its theory and basic process. Ralf Bohnsack developed the documentary method as a standard evaluation and interpretation method in qualitative empiric social research.

The basic idea of the documentary method is to regard human actions and statements as “documents” for something. The more important element is how things are documented, not what are documented. The researcher is interested in how an agent describes and treats one theme in his statements. In the agent’s narratives there is a latent meaning generating structure which determines his understanding of his experiences. The latent meaning generating structure might be a collective knowledge from the agent’s milieu.

The documentary method requires “*reflektierende Interpretation im Diskursverlauf*” (reflective interpretation during developing discourse)⁶⁹. It means a reformulation of what is described in the narrative with reflective interpretation, in order to shed light on how the agent handles a subject. The process of the method usually includes the following steps: Segmentation of a text according to its content; description of the content and revealing the subtext; abstraction of the found results, in order to constitute a meaning generating structure; analysis with the structure regarding the agent’s narrative; comparison with other agent’s structure, in order to develop new theoretical category; construction of a theoretical model.

Because the documentary method also researches the subjective meaning structure, it can be applied to test the hypothesis of latent meaning generating rules and structures, which are results of objective hermeneutics.

Therefore, after the hypothesis of latent meaning generating rules and structure is established, the rest of the narratives are materials for indication and complementation. By using the documentary method, the transcripts of interview narratives are segmented according to content and reorganized according to certain subjects that are relevant to each other. By re-description of the content and revealing the subtext, an abstraction of the results can be achieved. It could be a confirmation or a falsification of the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

hypothesis.

A combination of objective hermeneutics and the documentary method allows the researcher to find out the deepest hidden latent meaning generating rules and structures, which are very valuable for the research.

On one hand, the documentary method is applied to confirm or falsify the hypothesis, on the other hand, the documentary method contributes its own advantage, to complete the *Fallstruktur* (structure of the case) as a strong support of supplementary analysis, and for example, the comparison with other agent's structure is one step of the documentary method of dealing with the interview materials.

5 Analysis of Pastor H

5.1 Biographical Outline of Pastor H

H is born in Taiwan and became a Christian when he was 14. His father is a pastor, too. After his theological education in a Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary, H worked in Taiwan for 14 years. During this period he attended several foreign conferences, and did a lot of research on missionary work abroad. H came to Germany in 1991, and spent eight years carrying out missionary work. In 1999, he went to Canada to work as a pastor. In 2004, H came back to Germany to continue his missionary work. In 2006, he joined China Evangelistic Mission (the “CEM”) and cooperated with CEM in many aspects of missionary work in Germany.

5.2 Analysis of Beginning Sequences

5.2.1 The Beginning Stimulus

H: You want to take a tape?

H raises a question about tape taking. It might be a question due to acoustic problem; he repeats what the interviewer said. He might be surprised by the presence of the recorder on the table, although he knew it was an interview. To record an interview on tape means there is liability and authenticity of what is said. It is possible that H has prepared to have a conversation with the interviewer and to introduce information about the community, but he has not prepared for a recorded interview. He might be afraid of religious or political tracing. If an unexpected recorder appears, he might need to prepare himself for accepting the existence of it. The reluctance in his question can have two different consequences: accept or reject. The question also shows the distance between H and interviewer. The interviewer does not have absolute trust from H, so he has doubt about using a recorder.

S: The name and the personal details can be concealed if you request.

The interviewer uses reassurance as a strategy to build trust between them. The possibility of anonymity can be chosen if H requests. The interviewer's aim is to persuade H to accept an interview on tape. The interviewer shows the understanding of H's question and H's doubt. Although the interviewer is not sure whether anonymity is H's concern, it is nevertheless offered to indicate interviewer's sincerity: The interview will not do harm to anybody.

H: All right then.

H chooses to accept the interview without any additional conditions. He may not be afraid of religious or political tracing, or he might be familiar with interviews. The interviewer's reassurance works. H is aware of the situation of this interview: Being recorded. What he says is irrevocable on tape. He realizes that and accepts it. The trust between H and interviewer is built.

5.2.2 The Narrative Opens

H: How a Christian understands the will of God, the guidance of God, and the will of God, can be understood from four aspects.

The interviewer does not raise any questions yet, since H begins his own narrative instead of waiting for a question. It indicates a subtle change of roles in the interview. Now H is trying to control the conversation. H begins his narrative with a didactic question and answers that himself. He shows his expertise and dominance in this field. He did not expect any questions on "*How a Christian understands the will of God*", because he knows the answer and preaches it as truth.

His confidential narrative is like a beginning of a speech, and indicates his understanding of this dialogue: At this moment, the interviewer is not an interviewer, but a listener to his sermon. He is trying to teach something instead of accepting a question and answering it.

There are "*four aspects*" in his speech. It is a systematical speech, rather than a

spontaneous answer. It is very possible that H has prepared and used the “*four aspects*” for such a long time that he has memorized them. The four aspects are already a fixed conception of H; he is so familiar with the conception that he can use it anytime anywhere and talk to anyone. He might want to send the signal that he is an authority on theology. He might be preparing himself for the interview by repeating his doctrines. H believes in the “*four aspects*”, because he uses it whenever he needs.

H does not tell any personal stories in his narrative. He begins with opinions. He takes the position as a preacher, not as a counterpart in a dialogue. H’s personal character is not represented in the conversation; rather, his identity as a pastor is instead shown in his narrative. H is aware of his role and plays his role as a pastor by providing theological opinions.

H’s awareness of being a pastor is very strong and he also acts like a full-time pastor, even outside the church in conversation. His pastor habitus has permeated every detail in his life. He handles things by his pastor’s way.

“*Four aspects*” are not H’s personal opinions. H does not say “I think”, but he speaks as if these were official opinions. As a pastor, H accepts and respects the “*Four aspects*”, and regards them higher than personal opinions. For him, the “*Four aspects*” are doctrines that are general rules, which should be protected and taught.

He regards himself first as a pastor, who knows the religious teaching, then as a person, whose name is H. Identity as a pastor and identity as H are not the same. The relationship between these two identities is important to understand H’s role and function in the community. When he talks about the “*four aspects*”, he is using the identity as a pastor, or as a representative of the community, not as an individual person H. H himself hides behind the role as a pastor, and H’s personal opinion is not obvious in the conversation. H applies the available theological opinions to express his religious understanding.

H: The first one is to listen to the words of God from the Bible and prove the words of God.

H regards the Bible as the first authority. So H might be an evangelical pastor. His

narrative is as fluent as a sermon, as if he has memorized every single sentence. It is sure that he had already given the speech on other occasions many times. Before the interviewer raises questions, before he begins the interview, H puts his highest principle ahead. It is like a ritual. It can be a reminder for himself, that what he says should correspond to the Bible.

H: The second is to pray. You yourself pray to God. You'll find that your prayer will be the words of God which time and time again remind you, touch you.

Prayer is one of the most important elements of H's understanding as a Christian. Prayer can be understood as the memorizing of God's word, and it can also be understood that prayer is God's word. It may lead to a fundamental theology.

H: You have such strong feelings more and more in the prayer.

Experience is especially emphasized. Internalization of God's word becomes an important part of a Christian's life. Emotions and feelings are important experiences for a Christian. This point can be influenced by evangelical theology.

H: The third is that you should consult some spiritual elders, like the pastors or the Christians who are relatively mature in the church.

The first aspect is about the basics of belief: the Bible is the canon of Christianity, the absolute authority. The second aspect is related to religious practice. The third aspect deals with people in the community.

"Community" appears for the first time in his narrative. In H's priorities, the Bible and the prayer practice are more important than community. For H, being a Christian means to accept a priority of "Bible prayer community" in his religious life.

The authority in a community is "*some spiritual elders*". H regards himself as one of the spiritual elders. He regards himself responsible for religious education of the community members. He is the one with the answers. He also mentions that other "*mature*" Christians can be an alternative to ask when community members have questions. According to his description, the pastor and "*mature*" Christians are

responsible for leading and guiding the community members. The relationship of the pastor and “*mature*” Christians is parallel. There are different possibilities: The pastor can be counted as one mature Christian; but H uses the word “*or*” in the narrative, which means the mature Christian can also be a spiritual authority besides the pastor. It might be a competition between the two authorities.

According to H’s narrative, the structure of the community can be: “pastor-mature Christians-community members”. It is not a vertical pyramid structure, because there is an overlap between pastors and mature Christians, and there can be an overlap between mature Christians and community members. It is not a fixed structure; it is a structure with the possibility of floating from one level to another. How is it possible to move from “community members” level to “*mature Christians*” level? The religious education plays an important role. Only by reproducing “*mature Christians*” could the community have a stable middle level. H values the middle level very much; his missionary work might have a focus on educating “*mature Christians*”. The “*mature Christians*” is related to experiences, which emphasizes on a practical level instead of a theological level. The pastor remains as the theological authority.

H: The fourth is to prove by means of people and things and the environment.

The fourth aspect is a transition from theological opinion to practice, a transition from a big aspect to a smaller one. “*People and things and the environment*” are concrete examples of proof. When H talks about “*people and things and the environment*”, there are two possibilities: It can be people and things and environment inside the community; it can also be people and things and environment in general, inside and outside the community. If he means people and things inside the community, he may regard the community as a special place where people can be saved by God. In contrast, the secular world is a big dark corrupted place. He may have a “religious community vs. profane secular world” model in his theological understanding, which is also his principle for building the community. If he refers to “*people and things and the environment*” in general, this means everything can be proof of God, and then he has another theological understanding, which is less related to the community. In the

following interview, it can be proved which possibility he means.

Because in the third aspect, H has mentioned the elder and mature Christians in the community, it is very possible that he refers to people and things inside the community.

H: When these four aspects are all fulfilled, it will be relatively reliable. That is to say, this is the guidance of God; this is the Will of God. It is always like that.

H regards the four aspects as reliable criteria for being a true Christian. This is the conception of H's understanding of Christianity, and he represents himself as a supporter and protector of this criteria.

H: Now you may ask your questions. What do you want to know?

H finishes his teaching of the four aspects and is ready to get back to the conversation. H speaks about the "four aspects" at the beginning of the interview. It is not only to share his belief with interviewer, but also a reassurance of himself. It is like a ritual in which he repeats what he deeply believes, and only after that he has prepared himself for the interview. The sentence indicates that now H is giving the control of the conversation back to the interviewer, but not totally. He acts as if he is conducting the interview, as if he is arranging the procedure of the interview. He arranges the roles in this situation, he arranges "who and when and what to do": Now the interviewer may ask him questions. His habitus as a community leader shows his inclination to take control of situations and his tendency to assign the other tasks. His job as a pastor is deeply internalized into his personal character and his details. H handles almost everything and every situation as a pastor. For H, being a pastor is not only a job, but also a calling, which cannot separated from his life.

He lets the interviewer raise questions by asking "What do you want to know". He plays the role of an offerer who has answers, recourses and support. During the interview he is aware of his role as information offerer. As a pastor of a community, he is often asked questions by community members. He is the one in the community, whom people can ask questions and seek for help. He shows the habitus of a supplier. So he asks: "What do you want to know". It implies that he has a lot more information than interviewer

desires. He shows his authority and dominance again by applying the offerer role. This question is meanwhile a signal of his willingness to cooperate in the interview.

5.3 The Hypothesis of Latent Meaning Generating Rules and Structure

H has a strong awareness of his social identity as a pastor. In the interview he sends the signal as an expert in his field. He tries to take control of the conversation and before the interview begins he makes a speech like a sermon without being asked. All these behaviors indicate that H's habitus of pastor permeates into his life and his thoughts. He plays the role as a pastor during the interview. H's private story can not be expected to be told in the interview.

H's opinion is deeply influenced by evangelical theology. In his criteria of being a Christian, the priority of important things is: Bible first, prayer second, community third and at last, people and things around as proof of God. His missionary work strategy most likely also corresponds to his criteria. Community may not be the most important element in his criteria. Community is an important chain of H's transnational mission. For H, construction of the community is a method to spread Gospels; it might not be the final goal of his transnational missionary work.

H's missionary strategy is consistent with his theology. According to H's understanding of the community structure, pastor and "mature Christian" are responsible for the development of the community and other community members. They are the spiritual authority and administration leaders within the community. The relationship between pastor and mature Christian is not clear in H's speech. It can be a complementary structure; it can also be a competition in sharing power.

According to H's understanding of the community, a "two-worlds model" is possible in his theology. That means the community is a sacred place and the secular world is a tainted world. It shows the influence from evangelical theology.

How H carries out his missionary work transnationally and meanwhile keep his practices consistent to his theology is the question to be asked in the analysis. H came to

Germany with the goal of proselytizing Chinese people. He is under a transnational situation, so he has to apply different strategies to solve different difficulties. His solutions must remain consistent to his theology. If H cannot remain consistent to his theology due to local conditions, he might adapt to the transnational situation and change his strategy. It will be researched and proved, whether his adaptation works by analyzing other community members.

To analyze H's strategy in his missionary work and his adaptation to the transnational situation is the task of this analysis.

5.4 Indications from the Interview

5.4.1 China Mission as a Goal of Transnational Mission

S: How do you deal with the problem of the high mobility of the believers?

H: Generally speaking, the communication with students, no matter in the west or the east of Germany, faces the same difficulty: The high mobility. ...Our mission is to introduce the best to them, to introduce the gospel to them. We do not care very much where they go later. We are in the hope that one day they may go to China, and bring the good news to a higher level in China. Then China, I think, could be changed by the right thoughts, by the education of love, by the true and good belief, and filled by these, China could be a truly blessed country. This is also our expectation.

H says “*our mission*”. He regards himself as one of a group, whose mission is to introduce the gospel to the Chinese. He acknowledges the “mission” as systematically organized project, which is carried out by a group of people. It proves his relationship with the transnational missionary group. He acknowledges his membership and responsibility in the “mission”, too. The most important thing for H is to bring the gospel to Chinese people. It corresponds to “Bible first” in his theology. H does not mention any wish of the local community. His wish is to make China a blessed country. Community development is not the goal of his mission.

He says blatantly: “*We do not care very much where they go later*”. He uses the word “We” again, to indicate his belonging to an organization, who has and carries out the “*mission*”. H has a strong identity of belonging to this group. He has prepared for high mobility of the community members in Germany. H is fully aware of the situations of the Chinese in Germany. His mission is different from that of local churches, which serve people who have a permanent residence. He has a transnational mission strategy. From the beginning he has prepared for a mission, which confronts the high mobility of its members. It does not matter where the community member goes later, because his mission is not to keep them in the community, but to evangelize them. The community is the place where the “*mission*” is accomplished.

In his wish H emphasizes the future expectation of turning China into a blessed land by more and more Christians bringing gospels back to China. H actually cares about where people go later. He wishes the evangelized Chinese go back to China, in order to make China a blessed land. His not caring where people go is a compromise to the reality that high mobility exists in transnational religious communities. Meanwhile the high mobility is the premise by which his wish can be realized, because only by mobilizing people could they go back to China in the future.

H’s attitude towards high mobility of community members is to regard it as a chance, not a problem. It is a special character of the transnational mission.

High mobility actually has two consequences. The first means people go back to China, the second means that people move from Leipzig to other German cities. Only the first case of high mobility is helpful for H’s missionary work. The second consequence has hardly any influence on the “China Mission”.

S: Do you want to change China with Christianity?

H: Christian religion can hardly change anything. First, what we believe is not a religion, not a dogma. What we believe in is life, is the truth, is the true life, is the perfect life, which God teaches human and supplies human, and then changes human.... You have to believe in heart first, and in change, and your thoughts and words will have a new form. Of course it does not happen in one night, it happens gradually, becoming

more and more mature, gradually eliminating the human weakness of the “old -I”, to welcome God’s perfection living in ourselves. In this way the people can be changed.

H denies the intention of changing China, but he emphasizes the impact of Christianity on people. He describes his understanding of how Christianity changes a person: From heart to thoughts, and gradually the “old -I” becomes a new one. H believes that people can be changed through their belief in God. It is corresponding to his theology.

He rejects the word “*religion*”. In Chinese language “*religion*”(宗教) is often related to dogma and institution. H emphasizes truth and life, which is influenced by evangelical theology. It is corresponding to the “four aspects” in his speech: “*People and things and the environment*” can be proof of God.

His main goal is religious, not political. Institution is not his ambition. He is not planning to influence China by building a religious institution. Organizing a systematical and direct impact on a country through religious institution is not H’s scheme. His scheme is to influence people with the hope that these people spread gospels in China later. He has no concrete plan about how to make China a blessed land. He believes people can be changed by believing God, so he concentrates his effort on converting Chinese people in Germany. But he believes his transnational missionary work in Germany is related to the final goal.

H regards his work as a link of a chain: The link is doing transnational missionary work, the chain is the mission of turning China into a blessed land. The more people believe in God when they are back to China, the more China could benefit from these Chinese Christians.

H: Human beings are all adherents of egoism, quite selfish. Particularly now in post modernism, totally set themselves as the centre, totally without regard to others. This state of mind has great influence on our country, on our society and on the whole world. If there is a good belief, it is to let them know that human beings are not individually living on the earth, but are together living in a huge community. And everyone in this community should have loving care, because the love of every individual is limited, so the love of a permanent transcending God will be needed, to move and call the people.

So that people can live in a balanced, healthy and harmonic way, a better way, not in this world that is full of hate and competition.

H explains again the relation between his mission and his work. Because “*state of mind*” has influence on country and society and the whole world, if people change their minds, then country and society and the whole world can be changed. Converting people is the way to change the minds of people. H’s plan is to change the world by influencing people. He chooses to influence the Chinese in Germany. His missionary work is related to his goal of a better country and a better world.

H regards the world as one that is “*full of hate and competition*”, because “*human beings are all adherents of egoism*”. Only belief can make them overcome the selfish individualism and realize that they are living in a huge community and they should love each other. It is an idealistic picture of the world. From hypothesis of latent rules generating structure, there are two possibilities of H’s understanding of his world view. With his description of his world picture, one possibility can be ruled out. The fourth aspect of “*people and things and the environment*” does not refer to the general things around. He refers to a smaller range of people and things. The community is a different place in comparison to the secular world. A “two-worlds model” is possible, and it corresponds to his theology.

5.4.2 Transnational Missionary Detour in Germany

S: You have said that Germany is most “worthy of investing”? Why?

H: I make this judgment according to all the missionary works in the world. I’ve done some research on this question. I think there are only these few foreign countries, where most of students and scholars gather. Of all these countries, Germany has the highest ratio of people who return to China.

But those countries that have a high number of people who go back to China will have the biggest influence on China. Then China will be a great evangelical nation, a nation that is blessed by God. This is the beginning. This is a very good chance, very good way. Those who go back to China have more or less influence. These intellectuals may be

leaders in the middle, even in the upper class. They will be relatively able to touch, to change China. Then there will be a better China.

So to be patriotic is the duty of every one. He should love his own country. But this is not our main task. Our work will influence this aspect. It means that our main work is to spread the gospel, to bring people the good news. This good news will have an impact on the lives and thoughts of people, towards a positive, healthy, and better future: To the individual, to society, to the country. It will have a positive impact on all of them. So I regard the missionary work in Germany as important.

H explains the reasons for his coming to Germany. His goal is turning China into a blessed country and making a better world. He believes that converting people is the way to change people. In his research the transnational migration flow catches his attention. H pays attention to the ratio of Chinese returning to China. Germany has the highest ratio, which means most Chinese do not stay in Germany and go back to China. Among these Chinese there are many well educated people who might become important in China. H thinks they “*may be leaders in the middle, even in the upper class*”, who have influence on society and the country. If H proselytizes them, they can not only bring gospels back to China, but also have a larger impact on Chinese society, “*there will be a better China*”. The impact can be religious; it can also be political and cultural. They could have a function of lever by their influence. H does not have a concrete plan of how Chinese Christians change society, but he believes that it can be a change if more well educated Chinese Christians return to China. “*China will be a great evangelical nation, a nation that is blessed by God.*”

So he chooses a detour: To do transnational missionary work in Germany, in order to make China become an evangelical nation. He believes that this goal can be achieved by his effort and work in Germany. H’s decision is directly related to transnational migration landscape, especially Chinese migration in Europe. He believes that the missionary work in Germany is rewarding, is “*a very good chance, very good way*”.

Again H points out that he has no ambition regarding institution: “*Our main work is to spread gospel, to bring people the good news*”. It remains consistent with his theology. He represents his organization and is clear on his task. He mentions neither the

community development nor Chinese migrants in his task. For him community and migrants are of secondary importance. The main goal is to spread the gospel and to have more influence on the individual, on society and on the country as well.

H: There are two aspects. The students here will go back; the ratio is very high. There are a few who go to America or England or stay, but 80% of them return to China. In America it is the other way around: 80%-90% of the students stay there. So Germany will offer a better chance of missionary work, because the German people are special, they are not like ordinary people. It is a relatively serious nation. The foreigners in Germany, especially the Asians, do not easily adapt to it. The more difficult it is to adapt, the more eagerly they want to go back home. Both make them want to go back to their home country. Now China is well-developed country; there are a lot of jobs there.

H deepens the reasons further. He tries to explain why Germany is ideal for transnational missionary work. In his analysis Germany as a host society is difficult for migrants to adapt to. The statement that German people are not like “ordinary people” might be H’s prejudice against German people, but it is an important assessment of his theory of possibility and feasibility of the transnational missionary detour in Germany.

A difficult host society fosters the needs of transnational missionary work and enables the possibility of a transnational missionary detour. According to H, Germany is a difficult host society. It is the premise of his theory, so Germany offers “a better chance of missionary work”. Because the proselytized Chinese will go back to China and spread the gospel, just as he wishes. If the proselytized Chinese stay in Germany, then his wish of turning China into a blessed country cannot be realized.

H’s attitude towards the difficulties of the migration situation is ambivalent. He comments on the difficult situation of migrants as a chance to spread the gospel: “The more difficult it is to adapt, the more eagerly they want to go back home”. H does not regard the integration to the host society as a positive element in his missionary work. His missionary work may have little to do with integration into the host society. Also integration is a key issue for migrants, H does not want to handle the issue, and he takes the difficulty of integration as a general condition of migrants and uses it as an element

of his theory of feasibility of transnational missionary detour.

It is corresponding to his theology and his mission. His main task is spreading the gospel. If migrants do not stay in the host society and go back to their original country, it is favorable for transnational missionary detour, because they can then spread the gospel in China. But if the community members may want to stay in Germany, it is not consistent with H's wish of evangelizing China. H may not take all different needs of the community members into consideration. H's strategy and mission could have a tension with the integration of migrants.

5.4.3 Strategies in Transnational Mission

5.4.3.1 Active Approach of Young Students

S: How did you begin your search for the young student believers?

H: I came back to Germany in the summer of 2004. A long time before I had already heard that here, in the east, there are thousands of foreign students. Chinese students. There are barely more than 1,000 Chinese in Leipzig and 700 or 800 of them are students. There are quite a few cities in the vicinity and together they make thousands of students. At the beginning I had to explore, to search, to attract them by some activities. Then you have to actively find people, on the streets, in the supermarkets; many students are reachable in a lot of places. After that, by using some flyers and information materials, some of them gradually developed an interest in the belief, and they will be more and more attracted by the belief. God makes the Holy Spirit work here to touch people and attract people, to create a good atmosphere in the church. Only with together being with God and the love of God can people be attracted. What can be the real help to the foreign students is to let them find a home, with the love of God.

H carries out his missionary work in Germany, where Chinese people are the minority. To find his target is the first step of his strategy. He can “*explore, search and attract them by some activities*”. An active approach is necessary. He finds people on the streets, in the supermarkets, purposefully and targeted. H distributes flyers and information

materials, and tries to develop their interests on Christianity. It is a traditional missionary method, but the difference is the missionary work takes place in Germany, from Chinese for Chinese.

According to interviews with other community members, a small Bible reading group already existed before H came to Leipzig. H could have built a new group, but he chose to develop a community, which was based on the original small group. This is an important step in his missionary strategy, because he was not familiar with Leipzig in the beginning. H came to Leipzig and found the group; he joined them and took the lead position of it. It belongs to his active approach strategy: Find a local Chinese Christian group, support and take the lead. A local Chinese Christian group means an available local network and a group of potential community co-workers and potential missionary work helpers. H can reach as many Chinese as possible through the small group.

A special character of transnational missionary detour is the form of spontaneous and flexible collaboration. It is a collaboration of different resources. H represents transnational financial and spiritual resources; the local Chinese Christian group has an available human resource and local network. H and the local Chinese Christian group collaborate with each other, so that each side meets their needs.

H does not forget to emphasize his theology that only with “*love of God*” people can be attracted. He regards conversion of people as the work of the Holy Spirit. He relates his work to his theology, the conversions are proof of God.

H does not forget the practical aspect of his work, either. He knows what his potential target needs: “*The real help*” is to “*let them find a home*”. H tries to build a home-like community. He is clear about the migrant situation of potential community members. They need a home. If there is any organization of migrants that can provide the same offer, there could be a competition between the community and the organization. The “home-like” community is attractive for migrants. In transnational missionary work, building a “home-like” community is one step of H’s strategy. If we make an experimental thought, if there was already a “home-like” community in Leipzig, H would have to compete with the former community and establish his authority.

H: Today is actually different from two years ago. The ages and layers are different. Those who come to Germany are younger and younger. The students now are younger than before. In the past they were almost over 30, now most of them are in their twenties. There are also 30 something people, but only very few. So if the age is different, your work object is also different.

H's missionary strategy includes adaptation to the temporary local situation. H had missionary experiences in Germany in the 1990's. People were over 30. Now his "work object" is different. People are younger students and have different needs. H must discover their needs and give them the care they want. Demographic change plays a significant role in his missionary work, his methods and his ways of approaching targets are adapting to the new situation. Again, simultaneous incorporation becomes a significant character of transnational missionary detour. Adaptation and change of strategy is common and necessary. The question of whether his adaptation works will be analyzed in interviews of other community members.

5.4.3.2 Local and Transnational Religious Education

S: I have seen an announcement for a camping excursion from 3rd August to 6th August.

H: Oh, that is to train the co-workers. Some students who are leaders should be educated. They are relatively, the people should be relatively mature, then they can have an advanced training.

S: Are the courses different from time to time?

H: Yes, yes, yes, the Christian training camping excursion in August is the co-worker camp, for the mature, for the leaders or those who will be the leaders in Bible reading groups. We fit them to become stronger.

Religious education is a part of H's missionary strategy. There are courses and training camps for leaders and co-workers, who are supposed to be mature or to be trained to become mature in spirituality.

H came to Germany as a pastor. There was little religious teaching in the community

before he came. Theological knowledge was unsystematically learnt. H's task is to support the religious education of the community members. His work as a pastor fulfills the task by leading Bible reading groups and giving sermons during Sunday worship. He plans more than his role of pastor. He motivates the community members, especially leaders of Bible reading groups and co-workers of the community to participate in the training camps. An "*advanced training*" can help them become more mature and be able to perform more works in the community. This is H's strategy for the reproduction of mature Christians.

He chooses those who are active in the service of the community to a better and more systematic theological training. He may regard them as his successors. Successors must have a better theological understanding and be better trained. According to H's point of view, they can have more influence on the others. So H has a criteria of defining whether a community member is active or not. Those who are chosen to take part in the training camps are on his list.

It also corresponds to his theology. He mentions that pastor and "*mature*" Christians are responsible for leading and guiding the community members. If there were few "*mature*" Christians, he can train some. Only by reproducing "*mature Christians*", H's work as a pastor can be distributed to other mature community members. The community can have a stable middle level. So H's missionary work focuses on educating "*mature Christians*". It belongs to his transnational missionary strategy.

H: We do have some speakers and pastors who live overseas. If there are proper themes, we will invite them to come and give speeches.

Because we are a student community, we do not have money to pay for their flight tickets. We can provide accommodation and food at camp. But they have to pay for the flight tickets themselves, or their church assumes the costs. They must find the solution themselves. This is the situation in Germany; it is different in America and other places like Asia.

Transnational religious teaching requires a lot of cooperation. H expresses his worry of difficulty in financing the training camps. As a community that is mainly composed of

students, it is hard to afford flight costs for transnational teachers. What H and the community have is accommodation and food supply. H's task is to coordinate all the resources: Teachers get food supply; the community members get high quality lessons.

To persuade these teachers to pay for their trips on their own is a part of his job.

H coordinates not only on material resources, but he is also responsible for planning and coordinating the content of the training course. He should choose “*proper themes*”, and search for corresponding teachers or pastors, then invite them to come and give speeches. A transnational religious teaching program is only possible when students and teachers are well coordinated.

The need for a transnational religious teaching program indicates the lack of religious teaching staff in Chinese Christian communities in Germany. On one hand, H does not look to the local religious teaching staff for help, for example, German pastors; but H would rather invite Chinese teachers and pastors from overseas. It may be a problem of language. The Chinese want to be trained by fellow Chinese. It can also be a theological exclusion on missionary strategy. The fact is that H is inclined to “import” Chinese religious teaching transnationally, and collaboration with the German church is not favored. H shows his inclination to build a Chinese community: By Chinese, for Chinese, speaking Chinese. It works transnationally, but not multi-nationally. The people who get involved are Chinese.

H's coordination is based on his premise of “by Chinese for Chinese”. He is aware of the different situation in Germany, because he has experienced in Asia and America, where the resources may be easier to coordinate. He adapts to the “German situation”, and works smarter and harder.

5.4.3.3 Structure Construction of the Community

H: *In the beginning I was the leader of each group, until the believers were familiar with the Bible: Why the Bible is systematic, which are the focal points of each volume. With some training and practice, they were able to lead themselves, and have done very well.*

S: How did you divide these four groups?

H: First of all it is mainly according to where they live, according to the region. Second, some people who are in the middle of two regions can go to this group and they can also go to that group. These people will be divided and balanced according to their levels and conditions into different groups. Every group must take the ration between Christians and religious investigators⁷⁰ into consideration. All this will be considered. Most of the members are students. Two or three Chinese, who work in Germany, also joined. But it is still a student and scholar group. L118-125

The strategy of reproducing mature community members succeeds. H can hand over to them the work of leading Bible reading groups. The mature community members construct a stable middle layer of the community.

The formation of the community is accompanied with expanding of scale. It means complication of community structure. The community began with a small Bible reading group, and after the pastor came it developed quickly. H has his way of managing the community construction. When too many people stay in one Bible reading group, H decides to divide the group into smaller groups. On one hand, smaller groups is flexible; on the other hand, the well trained mature community members can take over leading the Bible reading, and later even become leaders of small groups, and later maybe H's successor.

H's plan of formation of the community is to develop the next layer of community by authorization, for example, by nominating some active co-workers to lead Bible reading. H regards himself as designer of the community, and the center of community administration. He is clear of the orientation and is responsible for the development of the community.

H takes various elements into consideration. For example, convenience of transportation is important for group division. It is an adaptation to the local situation. Another important element is the ratio of Christians and religious investigators in small groups.

⁷⁰ Religious investigators are people who are interested in the religious activities of the community and participate in the activities. They have not decided whether they are going to convert. A regular attendance in the community activities is required.

It means the groups are designed and divided by a ratio that religious investigators can be evenly distributed to each group. There is not a group dominated by religious investigators. It corresponds to H's theology, that the mature Christians are responsible for leading the group. More and more mature Christians who are able to lead Bible reading groups and religious investigators can ask them questions. So each group should have enough mature well trained Christians who can answer the questions, influence religious investigators, and then proselytize them.

By building small groups, H reproduces several self-organized groups, which are then able to organize activities and create missionary work spaces autonomously. The group leaders are able to manage his or her group administration and become the authority of a group.

In this formation process, the community has a huge development, and H's role undergoes a transformation. He was a direct leader, spiritually and administratively. He held a Bible reading group at his home, he knew the names and character of every community member. Later H became a coordinator in charge of administration. Due to the expansion of the community, H authorizes the well-trained and active community co-workers to take over his work. Gradually he has less direct contact with the community members. He is becoming an indirect leader spiritually. The problem is that without direct contact with the community members, it becomes difficult to know and understand community members individually. H might ignore the individual needs of different members.

Construction of the community structure has two aspects: On one hand, an increase of members leads to expansion of the community, a component middle layer which is composed of mature community members ensures the stability of small groups; on the other hand, the increased autonomy of small groups may replace the center position of H. H is not the only power center of the community. New community members are more attached to small groups, where people have direct contacts and communication. For them, H is the pastor who appears on Sunday worship. He has few personal contacts with new members. He is becoming a coordinator, an indirect leader. His authority could be more weakened than before.

5.4.3.4 Community Activities

S: What kind of activities did you hold?

H: First, when it comes to students, the activities should be vivid and cannot be stiff. Second is the cooperation of the singing of psalms. We've sung relatively traditional psalms before, the traditional hymns. Now the younger and newer, more lively psalms are applied. Their own needs will be taken into consideration. What they are interested in and all other aspects are complementary. We also teach the old psalms, but only selectively.

To go from singing traditional psalms to applying new lively psalms is an adaptation to the community members. H has a selection of various psalms to offer the community. He observes the reaction of the community members. The result is clear, that the younger generation is more interested in new psalms, which may bring a better atmosphere to a group gathering. So gradually the old and traditional hymns are applied less and less often, while lively and new psalms become popular in the community.

The example of psalm indicates a very important character of this transnational community: H's offers and changes of offers are community member-oriented. There is a process from old psalms to new psalms, and the criteria of applying what kind of psalm is whether the psalms attract the community members. The response of the community members helps H to make the decision of selection. It is a dynamical selection process. H pays attention to the response of the community members and chooses the better offers. H's decision is flexible and simultaneous with the change of community members' needs. The premise of H's adaptation is a community member-oriented observation and selection of offers. It is a dynamic "needs and offers" relationship between the community members and H. H may apply the dynamic community member-oriented strategy also in religious teaching and organizing activities.

H knows that the activities should be "*vivid and cannot be stiff*". He takes the demographic change into consideration. The "*younger and new*" community members need new offers. Although H had missionary experience in the 1990s in Germany, he

needs observe and research the new generation. He is open and ready for adaptation. This belongs to his whole missionary strategy.

S: Do people in this community have some “helping-each-other” activities?

H: Yes, we do. If someone moves house, or somebody needs some counseling, we will provide some information.

Yes, we do often offer some help, like moving house, or providing some help to a limited extent. Because we are not a charity institution. Church is not a charity institution, but church should helpfully contribute to society. But this is not the main intent of the community. The community is for spreading the belief of Jesus, this means we spread to the people what we think is best.

Although H knows the “*real help*” for the students is to make them feel at home, he does not want to emphasize the social function of the community. He lists some “*helping-each-other*” activities like moving house and information consulting. His attitude towards these activities shows his reservation. He emphasizes that the community is not “*a charity institution*”. He distinguishes between the act of helping each other in the community and charity organization. Helping each other is encouraged, but is not the main intent of the community. According to H, contributions of the community to the society are not by charity but by other means: Spreading the gospel. This is what the community should do.

There are some very practical helpful offers for the community members. For migrants in the host society, moving house and useful information are helpful and important. H admits the community can provide these practical offers. But he does not attach much importance to these practical services. According to H, helping people with practical things is not the best thing for the community, but evangelizing people is the best thing. There could be a discrepancy of H’s wish and the community members’ needs. H insists on the importance of missionary work, but the community members may rather like to get help from the community. H’s point of view is corresponding to his theology that the Bible is number one on the priority list. H’s goal of developing the community is to evangelize more people. People joining the community should be looking for God.

S: I've heard one of the activities is to visit the thermal spring?

H: That is just once a year. Information is provided on the Internet. We rent a big bus. It can only hold 50 people, so we limit the number of the community members, and provide some place for the people outside the community. It's cheap, one person, for 10 Euros, for a visit to a gorgeous place. So this is also a service. Many people did not take an interest in the belief, they came just once, and then never again. They came just when there were good activities. But our attitude is that we do not reject anyone, despite a few people who are like that. We keep an open mind. Maybe one day, the call of God will work on them.

Visiting the thermal spring activity is an example of H's strategy of attracting the people outside the community.

He controls the number of participants and always leaves some places for those who are outside the community. It is an activity, which is an offer for both insider and outsider of the community. H wants to expand the influence of the community and recruit more people, so he organizes an attractive trip for all Chinese in Leipzig. Those who are interested in this trip can register and visit the thermal spring. It enhances the communication between the community members and people who are outside the community. Private contact can be established by means of holding these activities.

The activity has several functions: It enhances the relationships of community members, and serves as an activity of community solidarity; it provides people outside the community a window to get to know the community; it offers an attractive and cheap trip for students, who otherwise could not afford it. H makes the most of the activity. Resource coordination means not only coordinating different transnational resources, but also making the most of local resources. The activity combines different functions which are important for H's missionary work.

That H intentionally keeps seats for outsiders of the community indicates his intention of the activity. He always tries to attract more people to the community, in order to convert them. Also "*many people did not take an interest in the belief, they came just once*". H describes another group of people outside the community, which only take part

in the attractive activities but are not interested in joining the community. It clearly indicates that the community is one of many social spaces of Chinese migrant society in Leipzig. There are other social spaces for them to spend time and organize activities. The Chinese Christian Community is one of various social organizations, which are visited by Chinese. In order to attract more Chinese to visit the community, attractive activities are offered for people who are outside the community.

Despite the fact that many participants of the activity do not have an interest in joining the community, H regards them as potential community members and potential converts. He believes that maybe one day “*the call of God will work on them*”. The relationship between the community and outsiders of the community is interesting. The latter is the aim of the community.

H mentions the use of the Internet. In the 21st century the Internet is becoming a powerful communication instrument. The community has its own website and information is shared online. There is information which is relevant to the community members, and there is information which is relevant to people who are outside the community. An Internet website enlarges its public. It becomes a powerful additional method to introduce itself to people besides door-to-door searches, personal contact on the streets and flyer distribution. It provides the possibility of being known by people outside the community without having personal contact, and meanwhile it offers services for them. People outside the community have the choice to participate in community activities without being bound to any community obligation.

5.4.3.5 Concurrence with Other Communities

S: Is there a competition between the Chinese church and the Jehovah’s witnesses?

H: Yes. There are many Jehovah’s witnesses and Mormons in the east and in some cities in the vicinity. They spread their word to the dormitories, and knock on doors. So it disturbs us. When we later go and knock on the doors of these students, they will be afraid and think: Why is such a thing coming again? They cannot figure that out. Some of them will have such a bad attitude, that they lock the door, and touch nothing of any

religious kind. Then they become totally disinterested in any belief. Because once you open the door for the members of Jehovah's witnesses, they will visit you every week. This calls up some difficulties. I do not think it is a problem.

S: What is your attitude to the Jehovah's witnesses?

H: We won't attack them. We fulfill our duty. If someone has an interest to ask, we will point out the errors of the Jehovah's witnesses. But we should speak out.

H's attitude towards Jehovah's witnesses is negative. The main reason he mentions is not about theology of Jehovah's witnesses, but about the additional difficulties it brings to H's missionary work. H's rejection of Jehovah's witnesses could be caused by theological differences, but what bothers him is that it disturbs his work in Germany. H is confident in the concurrence; he regards the missionary work of Jehovah's witnesses and Mormons as disturbance, not concurrence.

When H visits students who were visited by Jehovah's witnesses' missionary members, some of the students develop a negative impression of religion. Because they may mistake H's missionary work as the same work of Jehovah's witnesses'. Jehovah's witnesses' missionary workers visit potential targets and knock their doors regularly. Those who regard this as a disturbance may resist all kinds of missionary works later. H's approach becomes more difficult to convince them that his missionary work is different from Jehovah's witnesses'. It means more work and explanations. H's negative impression on Jehovah's witnesses is due to the extra difficulties in recruiting new community members.

Theological differences are not emphasized in the interview. H has few comments on Jehovah's witnesses. The basic line is certain: Although H does not proactively attack it, he regards it as "erroneous". H's missionary work has no compatibility for Jehovah's witnesses. The latter is for him an annoying disturbance.

The fact that the students were visited by H and by Jehovah's witnesses indicates their migration situation. They are exposed to a different social context; different religious communities can reach them by active missionary work, which is quite different from religious culture in China. For those students, who did not have any idea of religion, it can be difficult to understand and handle religious pluralism in Germany. This is an

important character of transnational mission: H's missionary work confronts a concurrence of different religious communities. Meanwhile it is a challenge for the community members, who face a task of understanding and dealing with religious diversity. If H takes his spiritual leader's position, his experience and theology can play a significant role in shaping views towards religious diversity. If H's experience cannot handle the challenge or cannot convince the community members, H's approach to them may provoke misunderstanding. Whether H is capable of handling religious diversity is a crucial element in developing the community. His understanding and attitude has a big influence on the other community members.

S: What is your opinion about Pentecostalism?

H: That is a few Pentecostals here. We do not have very much communication with each other. I myself do not know much. What to say? I know that there is a Pentecostal sect in Germany. We have only little contact, but we do not have a so called contradiction either. They do what they do; we do what we should do. If there is some individual exchange in knowledge and communication, it is ok.

H knows little about Pentecostalism. H does not regard Pentecostal communities as a disturbance and even allows some communication on knowledge level. H does not think that Pentecostalism has any contradiction with his spiritual guide of baptism. Due to lack of theological knowledge about Pentecostalism H cannot make clear statements on his attitude or position. He recognizes Pentecostalism's proper position in Christianity and treats it as an equal counterpart. According to H, Pentecostal communities have a parallel relation with his community. H's attitude towards Pentecostalism is open, but he does not actively approach other communities. There is little communication on the meso-level, so there is no actual exchange of knowledge or activity as far as H knows. If there is community member, who practices glossolalia, speaks in tongues, H's reaction can be his true attitude towards Pentecostalism. It can be an indication of the limit of community diversity.

S: Are there some Chinese students who join the German church and community?

H: Most of the Chinese are in the Chinese church. There are a few of them who, owing to their character, like for example they do not want to have contact with Chinese, will go to the German churches. Maybe they have the motivation of looking for a German partner. Maybe their initial motivation is not the best, but God will guide them. But it will still be difficult. It is not that easy for them to integrate into that community. They may stay two years or three years, and it can still feel difficult to move deeply into the German community.

This paragraph is about H's opinion on Chinese in German Christian communities. He considers that they have many other motives of joining a German Christian community, like "owing to their character" or "to look for a German partner". H regards their joining a German Christian community as a less considerable decision. According to H, their best choice should be to join a Chinese Christian Community.

H's description of Chinese in German Christian communities is on one side his observation, on the other side a conviction of his work in Germany. The difficulty of getting deeply into the German community becomes a chance for H to recruit his community members, and becomes a necessity of developing a Chinese religious community for Chinese migrants. His intention is to attract a Chinese community for Chinese migrants in Germany. If they join German communities, he would have fewer Chinese members in the community.

A good integration of Chinese in a German community could be an obstacle for H to develop the Chinese community. A concurrence does exist between the Chinese Christian community and German Christian communities. H seems to be confident because he is sure that Chinese cannot integrate to German community well. Advantages of H's missionary strategy make the Chinese Christian community their best choice to join.

Integration into German society becomes a contradiction in the community. The deeper the community members get involved in the community, the less of a possibility they have to get involved in a German community.

S: Does this community belong to any denomination?

H: We are an evangelical free church. We are different from the German national churches. They are quite traditional. Their meetings are similar to the Catholic's. Many things are already fixed, like what kind of speech should be used. The forms are almost same. They have their advantages; they talk about the Bible and social gospels. They have very good things, which we could apply. For example, they have very good analogies, which we could apply a sermon. But if this is taken as the main theme and you talk little about the Bible, it cannot change the people a lot. So the German national churches have become relatively traditional. It is not a bad thing, but not lively enough.

H's comments on German national churches shows that he appreciates the well-developed content of sermons. He would like to use some of them to complement his sermons during Sunday worship. It also indicates that he realizes the religious teaching in the community requires content improvement. H criticizes the sermons and institutionalized procedure in German national churches due to the long tradition. H regards it as an opportunity for his missionary work in Germany. H considers his community to be a more lively community in comparison to the German national churches, although the persuasive sermons are worth learning.

“Being lively” has two meanings. One is the emphasis on authority of the Bible; to H, the German national churches mention too little of the Bible. For H, only through the word of the Bible could the community be lively and blessed. It is corresponding to his theology. The second meaning of being lively is that the community creates a lively communication among its members and offers lively activities. In this sense, being lively is one of H's strategies of his missionary work.

H's understanding of German national churches indicates that there is little communication between he and the Chinese Christian community. Relationships between national churches in a host society and migrants religious communities are always complicated. The relationship between the Chinese Christian community and German national churches is a parallel relationship, which can hardly form any information and communication exchange, or any remarkable concurrence. It may be a barrier of integration for the community members.

5.5 Summary

5.5.1 Motive of Joining the Community

5.5.1.1 Community as a Chain of Transnational Mission

H's joining the community has an obvious missionary goal. He came to Germany to evangelize Chinese people. As he mentions in the interview, according to his research on missionary work abroad, a large amount of Chinese in Germany return to China. Also according to his observation, the returning Chinese are mostly well educated, who are possibly going to have an impact on Chinese society. If the returning Chinese are evangelized, they could later spread the gospels in China widely. H regards Germany as a place worthy of missionary investment, so he came to Germany again since 2004 to resume his missionary work.

H's decision cannot be understood separately from transnational migration flow. His goal of evangelizing the Chinese in Germany is to serve his ultimate goal of making China a blessed land. His missionary work in Germany is a chain of a big China mission. His missionary effort in Germany is a transnational missionary detour.

Concerning the big China mission, H has no concrete plan of how to influence the religious situations inside China. H and the organizations he joins set the China mission as a remote goal, which might be accomplished through different and constant efforts abroad. He has no systematic or organized plan about how the Chinese Christians do in China. It is beyond his reach. H's strategy of his mission is to convert Chinese outside of China. Transnational missionary detour is an explicit strategy of China mission.

H's task is to develop and to complete a transnational missionary chain for this missionary detour. Joining the community and developing it are the following steps.

H has the resources a transnational religious community needs. As mentioned before when H came to Germany in 2004, in the city there was a small Bible reading group which was looking for improvement of their religious life. H found them and was recognized as a leader among them due to his rich experiences as a pastor and the

resources he brought to the community. It was a natural process of demand meeting offer. H's decision to join the community is serving his ultimate goal. The possibility of his succeeding in developing the community based on Chinese migration conditions in Germany. H's coming was the group's wish. It was a proof of H's assumption of necessity of missionary work for Chinese in Germany. It may be a model of transnational missionary work in construction of community: Finding a local religious group and taking the lead position, like implantation. H brings different resources like transnational religious teaching, financial support, and spiritual guidance. H helped the small group develop to a larger scale, which is now able to call itself a community and fulfill its different functions.

The community is now able to organize different activities for the community members and outsiders. It has regular missionary work in the city. It keeps contact with transnational missionary groups through H's networking. There are more and more people recruited in the community. Some elder community members are able to lead the Bible reading and initiate community activities. The community is gradually institutionalized and works autonomously even without direct support of H; it becomes an institutional agent in the transnational missionary work, a functional chain of it. H creates and produces Chinese religious communities in Germany in order to complete the transnational missionary work.

5.5.1.2 Strategies of Developing a Transnational Religious Community

H's strategies of developing the transnational religious community correspond to his theology. He tries to keep his missionary work unanimous to his theology, but his strategies could have to adapt to transnational and local conditions. His strategies and adaptations are both worthy of research.

H's missionary strategies have two principles. One principle is on the theological level; it means his missionary work shall be unanimous with his theology. The other principle is on practical level, that his missionary work shall have efficiency.

H's theology emphasizes authority of the Bible, importance of prayer and guidance by

mature Christians in the community. H's identity as the community pastor makes him a theological authority in the community. He has the responsibility of developing the community according to his theology.

H's attitude towards other communities in Leipzig is based on H's theological position and practical concern. H regards Jehovah's witnesses as disturbance, a belief with errors; his missionary work has no compatibility for it. H considers it acceptable to exchange knowledge with Pentecostals. These judgments are made by H's theological position. H's ambivalent attitude towards German national churches indicates his concern on a practical level. H regards German communities as a potential competitor, which is not optimal for Chinese Christians. H's opinion is that the Chinese should stay in the Chinese religious community; those Chinese who join German communities cannot really integrate into them. H plays an important role in shaping views of the community members on issues of religious diversity.

H does missionary work practically. He approaches young students actively, organizes interesting activities for local Chinese, coordinates local and transnational resources to arrange religious teaching courses and other relevant training camps. The community becomes interesting and attractive for the Chinese who are away from home and in a migrant situation. The community is not only a religious organization, but also a social space for Chinese migrants.

H combines transnational financial and teaching resources with local demands. Through regular religious teaching and intensive training camps, H achieves the goal of reproduction of mature Christians, who are able to take lead of the community. H authorizes his power to them, in order to let the community and small groups to work autonomously. The community structure becomes gradually complicated by more and more authorizations and autonomous activities.

H is ready for adaptation, which belongs to his strategy. H pays attention to the demographic change of Chinese migrants in Germany. In comparison to his missionary experience in the 1990s, the community members are much younger. He changes the programs in Sunday worship. During Bible reading he employs new and lively hymns to inspire young students.

H observes the needs of the community members, and tries to provide corresponding support, spiritually and financially. There is a dynamic “needs and offers” relationship between H and the community members. H has simultaneous incorporation with local conditions.

H is tackling a migrant community, whose members are mostly without permanent residency of the host society. Simultaneously incorporation is a practical solution for changing situations. H regards it as a challenge as well as a chance. The more Christian returnees go back to China, the more H accomplishes his China mission. On the other side, H needs to develop communities abroad to organize the transnational missionary chain. Liquidity of community member flow is required. There could be tension between keeping stability of the community and high mobility of the community members. H’s solution would be trying his best to recruit new community members. If there is a decrease in the number of community members, it might mean the threat of the community vanishing and a rupture of the transnational missionary chain. H could be under pressure of recruiting members to avert the situation.

For H it is hard to pay attention to a particular community member. H has limited time and his main task, as mentioned before, is to recruit new members. H is more interested in structure of community. He wants to expand the quantity of the community. He is more interested in the abstract huge goal: To proselytize Chinese is the necessary procedure to turn China into a blessed land, to achieve the goal of China mission.

H’s missionary strategies are member-oriented, but are not specific enough. He does not mention any particular person in the community. He handles the community member as a homogenous unit. There is no differentiated treatment to different community members. The consequences could be difficult for H to establish personal relationship with the community members. He remains a pastor and only a pastor. H as a private person is invisible in the community. His function as a pastor is his existence and presence in the community.

H accentuates that helping each other in the community is not the most important thing for a religious community. The most important issue is the Bible and evangelizing people. Therefore, his member-oriented activities are within the purpose of serving his

religious goal. The member-oriented principles are secondary because theological principles are his first priority. Member-oriented means providing practical services to the community members and help them to adapt German society. According to H's theology, the community is a pure place which is different from the corrupted secular world. It is his image of the community. The community should be Bible-oriented. To be Bible-oriented means to place an emphasis on theology and doctrines. Sometimes there could be a discrepancy between Bible-oriented and member-oriented principles, if there were some activities, which are unanimous to member-oriented principles but not are unanimous to Bible-oriented principles. It raises the possibility of instability in the community, which is one of the characters of transnational religious communities.

5.5.2 The Type of Pastor H and its Function in the Community

H's function in the community determines his type in the community. He is a decisive element of development of the community. His type cannot be separated from his functions.

He is a leader type of the community.

Firstly, H is a facilitator and enabler in the construction of the community. He came to Germany and brings transnational missionary resources to the community. H raises funding in North America for his missionary work in Germany. His salary and community administrative expenses are mostly covered by transnational missionary organizations. H designs courses of religious teaching for the community members⁷¹, and arranges training camps for the community co-workers. H does bring vital resources to the community. When the community was a small Bible reading group and was in need of a pastor, H came and brought his whole missionary plan, which facilitates the community development and helps it join a transnational missionary chain. H deals with spontaneous and flexible collaboration of different recourses. The community becomes a functional stop of the transnational missionary detour. It fulfills H's goal of turning China into a blessed land.

⁷¹ See chapter 3.

Secondly, H is a motivator and supplier in the relationships with the community members. H motivates people to join the community and evangelize them. He employs flexible strategies to organize local activities, which shall be attractive for people inside and outside the community. He is ready to adapt to local conditions and takes the needs of the community members into consideration. He is open for change as long as the adaptation is unanimous with his theology.

Thirdly, H is a spiritual authority and the power center of the community. H's identity as a pastor makes him the spiritual authority among the less experienced community members. H's contribution to the community made him an absolute power center of the community, because he is the one who has and allocates transnational financial and religious teaching resources. H's theology represents the community's theological position and influences the new community members. H plays the role of a coach, by training active community members. H reproduces some mature Christians, who are able to share his work in the community. By authorization his power of leading Bible reading, H can develop a stable middle layer of the community. After reproduction, H becomes administrative center. The premise of a smooth expanding of the community structure is a unanimous recognition on H's decision. If there is any unsatisfactory rejection on H's authorization, it could cause conflict in the community. Diversity in the community may be a problem.

H has a pastor personality. During the interview and in life H is totally aware of his identity as a pastor. He represents the opinion of a pastor; he deals with things and treats people in his pastoral ways. He is a committed pastor in the community and the awareness has internalized in his life. H is willing to instrumentalize himself and his life to the missionary work. H's personal character and opinion are hardly to be found in his words and his deeds. What can be found is a dedicated pastor who promotes his missionary work in every aspect of his life.

H is a leader type of the community, and he is a multifunctional leader. H's function in the community was indispensable in the formation of the community. In the development of the community, H tries to authorize his functions as well as his power to different community members. As long as the community is dependant on transnational

resources, and as long as H is in charge of resources and allocating them, H is indispensable for the community.

H is a moving point of juncture, which combines transnational resources and local demands. H turns the community into a transition station, which connects micro- and meso-levels of transnational missionary work. It is H's function in the transnational missionary work. A wider missionary world picture could be realized by H's transnational missionary detour.

At last but not least is that despite the fact that H's strategies are member-oriented, he has few concerns for migration integration in German host society. H's idea of building a Chinese community for Chinese, could be a nice service for migrants, and meanwhile a barrier for the community members to explore the host society.

What are the consequences of his strategies? What are the responses of different members? These are going to be proved in the following analysis.

6 Analysis of Mr. R

6.1 Biographical Outline of Mr. R

Mr. R is a student who studies environment science in Leipzig. After his study in China, Mr. R came to Germany with his girlfriend together to further his studies. He became a Christian in Germany. He joined the community earlier than the pastor. He is one of the members who has stayed in the community for the longest time. Mr. R helped develop the community and he is one of the core members of the community.

6.2 Analysis of Beginning Sequences

6.2.1 The Beginning Stimulus

S: How did you join this community?

R: I came to Germany in February 2002 with my girlfriend, who is now my wife.

Mr. R does not answer the question directly. When he was asked about his motive of joining the community, he begins to talk about his wife. He describes the time exactly: In February 2002. He did not come to Germany alone, he came with a women, his girlfriend, who became his wife later. As the interview was taken in 2007, it had been 5 years. There had been some changes of Mr. R within five years. One of the changes is his girlfriend became his wife, which might be related to his joining the community. Otherwise he would not have answered the question in the first sentence by mentioning his wife. His wife could play an important role in his decision of joining the community. Mr. R emphasizes the role transformation. His girlfriend becomes his wife, and he himself becomes a husband. He is aware of his change of social roles.

6.2.2 The Narrative Opens

R: We were classmates together in senior high school. I knew that her grandfather, as

well as the rest of her family is Christian.

Mr. R describes his story with his girlfriend at the beginning. They had known each other since senior high school when they were teenagers. His girlfriend accompanied him for a long time. Since she and her family are Christians, it might relate to Mr. R's later conversion. At the beginning of his romantic relationship with his girlfriend, Mr. R's had a vague impression of Christianity. He knew his girlfriend came from a Christian family and he was not confronting a Christian, but a Christian community in China. He mentions her grandfather was a Christian. During the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 in China, Christians were persecuted due to political reasons. If the grandfather was converted before the Cultural Revolution, it is very likely that the grandfather was persecuted during the crucial years, too. The grandfather survived the Cultural Revolution and so did his family. He might be extremely pious in his faith. Mr. R's girlfriend comes from a family with pious religious faith, which could be Mr. R's approach to Christianity. She could have a big impact on his thoughts and life.

R: When we were in China my girlfriend told me that due to our different faiths, our relationship might not be possible.

Surprisingly, Christianity seemed to be an obstacle in Mr. R's pursuit of his love. That means that Mr. R has a different religious background. His girlfriend told him that it might be difficult to adjust to each other. His girlfriend's attitude represented her family's attitude that Christians should marry Christians. She was not confident in their relationship, because she might be taught this dogma in her Christian family. She had no intention to change her own religious conversion, so the only option was to let Mr. R convert. She became Mr. R's wife later. So it is possible that Mr. R let himself convert to Christianity for the love for his girlfriend.

R: At that time we had feelings for each other so we tried to have a relationship. At that point, I neither knew about God, nor was a Christian. I thought we could give the relationship a try, but she thought that we wouldn't have a chance, as, according to the Bible, a person who believes in God is different from the people who do not believe.

They have different values in life, which could cause conflict.

Mr. R and his girlfriend had different perspectives on their relationship. Mr. R regarded relationship as religious irrelevant. He did not think the relationship was impossible due to different faiths. He cared about only one thing, and that was whether she was willing to give him a chance. He acted on his emotion.

She thought like a Christian, and tried to behave according to the Bible. She regarded relationship as religious decisive. She considered that religion influenced value could cause family conflict between them. At that time Mr. R had no idea about God or Christianity, which influenced and formed his girlfriend's world view. She had a clear religious attitude towards the relationship. Mr. R might think that love conquers all. Mr. R lacked knowledge about Christianity, which led him to underestimate the influence of religion on his girlfriend as well as the relationship. Mr. R got involved in a relationship without considering the social background of both sides. It could be an emotional decision like all young men who are in love, or it could also because he was really confident in himself and was initiating the pursuit of his girlfriend.

R: She took me to the local church and tried to proselytize me.

Mr. R's girlfriend seemed to be in love with Mr. R, too. She gave him a chance to begin their relationship with the intention of converting him. She took him to the local church. Her attitude as a Christian had not changed from the beginning. Her action of bringing Mr. R to a local church indicates her criteria of her future life partner: He should be one of a religious community, in which she stays. He should be accepted by the community in which she grew up. The premise of their relationship was the acceptance of her family, a Christian family. Her intention of proselytizing him was natural and understandable. If Mr. R converted and joined the local church, it was not a guarantee that they would have less conflict. But being in a relationship with Mr. R would be no longer contradictory to her religious teaching and her family's opinion. Her role in their relationship is not only a lover, but also an religious teacher, who did missionary work to Mr. R. Mr. R's girlfriend realized that if Mr. R wanted to be with her, he must deal with and accept her religion. If he joined her community, there would be no conflict any

more.

R: The impression that I got about Christianity was that it was full of love, but I come from a rural Buddhist area and my mother is Buddhist.

Mr. R had a good impression of his girlfriend's local community. His understanding of Christianity was not theological and had nothing to do with God. The local church of his girlfriend made a positive impression on him, but it was not attractive enough to make him a member of the community. Mr. R's worldview was not influenced by Christianity or his girlfriend.

He had a different religious background. His mother, his family and his neighbors are Buddhists. He did not directly say that he was a Buddhist. It may imply that he did not believe in Buddhism despite his family background. Since Mr. R grew up in a Buddhist family, there could be a potential tension between Mr. R's mother and his girlfriend due to different religious beliefs.

Mr. R's mother and his girlfriend represent two directions of Mr. R's spiritual life. Mr. R's mother represents the spiritual starting point of Mr. R, which was related to traditional Buddhism, and was bound with kindred relationship. It was a given factor of Mr. R's life. He is born with it and lives with it, without reflecting it. His girlfriend represents a possibility of new spiritual development of Mr. R, which is related to Christianity, and is bound with marriage and promise, which Mr. R needs to pursue.

Since the local church of his girlfriend was not attractive enough, Mr. R was satisfactory with his original world view. He did not want to replace it when he was in China. So his conversion is related to his life in Germany. Something happened and motivated him to pursue another world view and spiritual system. Mr. R's conversion to Christianity is a process of tuning from his original world view to a second system.

His mother and his wife represent two spiritual options. It is interesting to explore the compatibility of two systems in Mr. R's life. Is it a complete replacement of spiritual system, or might there be a chance for a co-existence? After Mr. R's conversion the way he manages his relationship with his mother represents how he deals with his original spiritual system.

R: I regarded faith as a spiritual relief for people of a certain age. At that time I was living in a good environment and had friends. I was an extroverted person with a great life and skills. I thought I did not need such a thing.

Mr. R regards faith as something which is needed by people who are getting old, like his mother. His opinion implies that he does not think he is at the age which people need “*spiritual relief*”. So Mr. R did not reject religion and he recognized the necessity of religion in some circumstances. He regarded Christian as an identity label of people and he had no idea of Christianity. He puts himself in a category in which people are not in need of religion. He describes the characters of the category: People who live in a good environment, have friends, and life skills. Religion is a “*thing*”, which these people do not need. Mr. R was satisfied with his life when he was in this category. As long as he stays in this category, he is self-sufficient in spirituality and in life. It implies that if Mr. R fell out of this category, he might be in need of a religion. His later conversion might relate to this category.

R: After having finished studying at college, we decided we wanted to study abroad, so we came to Germany.

Mr. R starts to tell his story after college. In his narratives he switches his subject from “*I*” to “*We*”. It means that he and his girlfriend have been together since they started their relationship. They became closer than the last stage so he is able to use the word “*we*” to express a new status of their relationship. To study in Germany was a mutual decision, because they both wanted to go abroad and came to Germany together. In his narrative, Mr. R and his girlfriend became a unanimous unit of these serial decisions.

Since his girlfriend wished that he would convert to Christianity, Mr. R might become a Christian during his relationship with his girlfriend. Maybe his girlfriend made a compromise that it was not necessary for Mr. R to join her community, because they had a deeply romantic relationship. Mr. R and his girlfriend wanted to plan their future together and were willing to do things together.

Germany is a new element in his narrative and appears as a place for study. After they

decided to go abroad, Germany was chosen as an aim. It is possible that they considered other countries as candidates. It is not mentioned why they did not choose other countries, like America, Canada or Japan, the most popular countries for Chinese to study abroad. They chose Germany for a couple of reasons. They may have learned German language in China so they were able to apply that skill in Germany. They may know some relatives in Germany so that they could be taken good care of by the relatives. They may want to pursue some special areas of expertise, which can only be studied in Germany. Maybe it was cheaper to study in Germany than in other countries. The reason why they chose Germany is not clear.

If Mr. R did not convert in China, how is Germany as a place to study related to Mr. R's conversion? It might relate to Germany's long religious tradition, or it can also be a result of the pastor's transnational missionary work.

R: We then came to Germany together, and, after arriving in February we studied language for four months.

Mr. R and his girlfriend must learn the German language first after they came to Germany. So they did not have an advantage in language. It must be some other reason why they chose to come to Germany. Mr. R remembers the date clearly. He came to Germany in February. It could be a special date for him, since he remembers it so clearly. His girlfriend did not have an advantage of German language, either. So they studied language together for four months. Four months for language studying is a relatively short time. So Mr. R must have confronted some difficulties in his language study and his life as well.

R: At the end of June, a missionary group came, who proselytized me, and then I began believing in God.

Again the date is mentioned: June. It is probably a special date for Mr. R. It had been several months after he came to Germany. Some thing special happened in June: A missionary group came and proselytized him. This is the first time in his narrative to mention a missionary group. It could be a German missionary group that worked in

Leipzig. It could be a Chinese missionary group. In the relationship between Mr. R and the missionary group, the missionary group was the initiative. The missionary group took the move: They came, and they proselytized people. It is not mentioned whether they left after their missionary work. Mr. R did not search for a religious group actively. But Mr. R accepted the missionary group without a hitch and began believing in God. When he was in China it has been a long time that Mr. R did not want to believe any religion, because he regarded religion as something for people of a certain age and he was not in this category. There must have been a difference between the missionary group in Germany and the Christian community in Mr. R's girlfriend's hometown, or there must have been a difference between Mr. R's situation in China and in Germany. Something changed during Mr. R's stay in Germany, so he was willing to accept a religion, which he had not needed in China. His girlfriend is not a variable element in Mr. R's life in Germany, because they had been together a long time. The variable element exists in other aspects of Mr. R's life, which can be proved in the following narratives. He did not directly mention his girlfriend in his process of conversion; it is probably because he regarded his decision of believing in God as a decision that was not influenced by her. It is also possible that he did not want to admit her influence on him. But he ascribed his conversion directly to the missionary group. He confirmed the causality between his conversion and the missionary group's work.

Mr. R was converted to Christianity under the condition that he was in Germany and met a missionary group. His migrant status could have contributed to his decision.

6.3 The Hypothesis of Latent Meaning Generating Rules and Structure

Mr. R started to know about Christianity since he met his girlfriend, who is a Christian. Although he regarded religion as an irrelevant element in this relationship, he agreed to visit a local Christian community while accompanying his girlfriend. His later conversion could have something to do with his girlfriend's active invitation and constant company. His girlfriend did a great deal of work of preparation of his

conversion. Because she comes from a family with a long Christian tradition, he could have joined her community and become one of them, but he did not join.

Mr. R's not converting to Christianity in China has two reasons. One is his family background. His mother is a pious Buddhist, which might have influenced Mr. R's religious inclination. One is his perception of religion. Mr. R regarded religion as something for people of a certain age and he was not one of them. He chose neither his mother's nor his girlfriend's option. He did not need a religion in his life when he was in China although he was exposed to Buddhism and Christianity.

A group of contrasts in Mr. R's life can be established: His mother and his girlfriend; Mr. R's Buddhist family background and his girlfriend's Christian background; Mr. R's happy and satisfied life in China and his life in Germany. When Mr. R was in China, he was satisfied with his life and world view. Even though his girlfriend made him get to know Christianity, he did not convert. The role of his girlfriend should not be underestimated in his decision, because it was the start of his turning to a new spiritual system and away from his mother's influence.

Mr. R's conversion took place in Germany after he studied and lived for a couple of months. So Mr. R's migrant status is probably related to his conversion. Things changed when he came to Germany. A transnational dimension can be reflected on this point. A missionary group proselytized Mr. R. It is not known yet whether it was a German missionary group or a Chinese missionary group, but the missionary group attracted Mr. R and became an inducement of his decision of conversion. Mr. R chose an option which was provided to him for a long time.

Mr. R achieves his transformation during his stay in Germany: Mr. R gives up his former spiritual system and turns to a new one in Germany; He chooses to be a Christian while he was in Germany. It will be explored in the analysis: How does he deal with the two different systems in his life? The two different systems happen to be presented by the two most important women in his life, his mother and his wife. Mr. R's solution might provide an answer to the co-existence of religions.

6.4 Indications from the Interview

6.4.1 Conversion as an Adaptation to the New Environment

R: Because of my accent, I struggled to learn the language, and I only got a 6⁷² on my listening test. At first, I wasn't even sure if I would be able to pass the exam. ...Even though I worked very hard, I did not have a good basis of the language, and there was a possibility I might not reach it.

R: Five years ago, internet access wasn't as convenient as it is today, so, in order to speak to our family and friends we had to use our cell phones, which was really expensive, and meant that we couldn't talk for long.

R: I was satisfied with Leipzig, but my girlfriend thought that we should move to West Germany. Every day we spent time together: ... as a result, we argued and argued over lots of little things. This relationship seemed fragile.

R: I can't rationally explain why I only believed in God during this time, but I felt something inside, and I knew somebody loved me. Because the end of human is the beginning of God, when people are in predicaments, they look for God. When they are in favorable circumstances, people think they just have a good life.

Mr. R came to a new country and struggled with typical migrant's difficulties: Language difficulty, strong homesickness, problems in close relationships, etc. He describes his situation as a "predicament". As he was in China, he regards himself outside the category of people who need a religion, because he had a good environment and was satisfied with his friends and family. The situation changed since he came to Germany because he is no longer in a "favorable circumstance". Mr. R faced the hardest predicament in his life. He did not know whether he could pass his exam. Expensive telephone calls made it impossible for Mr. R to have a long conversation with his family thousands of miles away. Although his girlfriend was with him in Germany, they had conflicts too, due to different plans of places to study. He was isolated and frustrated,

⁷² According to German test system, marks of examination are leveled from 1 to 6. 1 is the best score. 6 is the worst score.

helpless and powerless in dealing with his migrant's predicaments. He felt his weakness in the plight and as a result he looked for strength and power that could help him.

According to Mr. R's explanation, "*the end of human is the beginning of God*". His plight made him feel the need for help. He tried to adapt to his new environment but was full of frustration. His life was full of uncertainty, so he was seeking hope and support, which finally led him to God. It is important for Mr. R that he obtains some emotional support through his conversion: "*I knew somebody loved me*". In his unhappy struggling days a love with certainty was a great relief for him. He found what he needed: Somebody loves him wherever he is, whenever he needs. His conversion is a consequence of his adaptation to the new environment. It is an instrument for R to fight against the "*predicaments*". Mr. R looked for the support and guidance of a transcendental power, in order to be more confident and powerful in dealing with the migrant's plights.

Mr. R did not choose Buddhism as his support or guidance, although he was familiar with Buddhism due to his family background. It may be that Buddhism does not emphasize the love that Mr. R was seeking. His Christian conversion must have something that Buddhism does not provide. A religion that promised to give him love was especially attractive when Mr. R was craving emotional support. What R learned from Buddhism was not sufficient for him to deal with his plights in Germany. It is also possible that there was no Buddhist community in Leipzig, so Mr. R did not have the chance to seek help in it. However, R decided to convert to Christianity. Mr. R's conversion is a consequence of his adaptation strategy of German environment. Mr. R believed he could find something in the new conversion to conquer all the difficulties in his migrant's status. At the beginning the conversion was an attempt to adapt to the new environment.

6.4.2 God as Guidance in Reorientation of Life

6.4.2.1 Adjustment in Relationships

R: However my environment upset me: I was totally alone, with a girlfriend who did not

understand me and who had different goals in life.

R: My character has changed since believing in God. My goals have gradually become the same as my wife's goals. We are now able to understand each other, and, even though we still quarrel sometimes, when I am in front of God, I try to find out my problems first.

R: I had a roommate who my girlfriend and I used to eat with. He was an introverted person, and I am extroverted. When people share the same space, different personal characteristics can cause a lot of problems. We came to Germany together as friends and, after arriving, I always thought of myself and protected myself from being taken advantage of by others. Therefore, our differences became too big to live with, and even though occasionally I was to blame, I did not think so at the time. After three months, I stopped speaking to him. ...I was just thinking about myself. This is how our friendship ended.

When I prayed, there was a voice inside me telling me that I should reconcile with my friend.... After apologizing, I was able to find peace in my heart and my heart was freed. He forgave me, and we were able to be friends again.

Mr. R had a difficult time with his girlfriend and his roommate before his conversion. Mr. R has made some adjustments in dealing with relationships after his conversion. Later he achieved a better understanding with his girlfriend and reconciliation with his friend under his faith. Mr. R regards these as changes of his character.

Mr. R's wife is a Christian who always wished that Mr. R could be a Christian one day; otherwise she was afraid of the conflicts in their mutual future. Her role in Mr. R's conversion can be described as a constant preparation. She accompanied Mr. R the entire time, from China to Germany, from their school time to their study abroad. Despite her effort of trying to proselytize Mr. R in China, he was not convinced by her and her community. Her accompaniment serves as a constant available spiritual resource in Mr. R's life. He had accepted Christianity as a part of his life already, because she was a part of his life. He did not establish a relationship between him and Christianity until he was seeking help during plights. Mr. R's conversion means his decision of joining her religious practice. Her efforts now have a positive result. Mr. R gave up his

former opinions on religion that religion was for people in certain age. He became the Christian she always wished for. Mr. R's life goals have gradually become the same as his wife's goals. It may be the reason why their relationship became better than before. Another reason why Mr. R achieved a better close relationship is that he became less selfish under the guidance of God. His conversion motivated him to reflect on himself. The reconciliation with his friend indicates Mr. R's change in self-reflection. He is able to think about his behaviors when he deals with close relationships. Reading the Bible and believing in God provide him a new perspective of life, and he can rethink the way of dealing with people. He achieves a new orientation of personal relationships. Mr. R regards the adjustments as contribution of his conversion.

6.4.2.2 Reorientation in Career Choice

R: My reason for coming to Germany wasn't to study. In Junior High School I studied well, but later in Senior High School and college I did not study very much. I come from the Fujian province in China, where a lot of people do business, and all of my friends and my family are business people. I had looked to develop my career in this direction, and, at the time, I had a lot of business ideas.

R: As I never finished my senior year of school in China, I wasn't able to apply for German universities. I was only able to apply for FH⁷³. I prayed that I would be accepted... God let me know that he had a great plan, and that his will was higher than any human's wish, and his guidance was good for me.

However, I did not pass the second exam, and, even though I was very upset... I relied on God so I was peaceful inside. Later, a German Christian told me, that in HTWK⁷⁴ there was the department I could apply for if I wanted to. He himself was, and still is, a student of this university, so he knew about the departments. He helped me a lot. It is through God's guidance that I found my course. I wanted to do business, but from then on I let God guide me through the five-year course.

⁷³ Fachhochschule: University of applied sciences

⁷⁴ HTWK: Hochschule für Technik, Wirtschaft und Kultur. University of Technique, Economics and Culture

R: My family has a tradition of doing business, and even though doing business may seem fabulous from the outside, you have to pay for the price by sacrificing time with family members, as you are always on the go. When I took the exam for college, my mother suggested that I should become a teacher, a job which includes two holidays every year. My father is so busy; that there isn't a day in the year for him to have a rest. The products from China are very cheap; so many people are in business. I believe that God will guide me.

Influenced by hometown culture, Mr. R wanted to be a business man as he came to Germany. Mr. R's former milieu was that of a businessmen; he regarded himself as one of this milieu, so his future plan was bound to a business career, which he looked for as he came to Germany.

Mr. R knows it is not easy to be a businessman, because it means to always be on the go. His father is an example of sacrificing time with family for doing business. The suggestion to become a teacher was made by his mother, because being a teacher means having more time for the family. Mr. R did not accept the suggestion because he still had other options. He did not give up the idea of doing business because "*The products from China are very cheap*" so it could be a good chance to do business. Mr. R's career choice was based on his hometown culture and his judgment on the business, but he had not found a way to step into the business world.

As Mr. R came to Germany, his career choices were strongly reduced because his applications for enrollment at the university were almost rejected. He had failed in some applications and was not able to study in Germany. Then he had to go back to China. He had almost no other options at all in the plight of application. A German Christian happened to know the information which Mr. R needed. It was Mr. R's only option in the situation. Mr. R applied for the university and was accepted. He regarded the option as the plan of God: God left him only one option to choose, so all failures of former applications were meaningful. Mr. R accepted a change of his career and began to study something that had nothing to do with business.

Mr. R received the helpful information of application through a German Christian, whom Mr. R might get to know in the community. The community played an important

role as an information resource in his search for options.

Mr. R makes a reorientation of his career choice because he had no other choices under his migrant's circumstances. He could have given up his study and started a businessman career. But it could have been more difficult to do business in Germany than to study. Mr. R made a choice of a better adaptation in the new environment. In order to convince himself to accept the change, he regarded it as God's plan for him.

R: God took good care of me and thanks to his care, step by step; I got to where I am now. So God changed my view of life, my values and my character. I thought I was supposed to go another way, but God led me to choose this direction. This path makes me face lots of difficulties, but the Bible teaches that although there are sufferings on earth, with Jesus there is peace. I am now in the last phase of my studies. God will guide me to the finish.

Mr. R convinces himself that his career reorientation is led by God, who changes Mr. R's values and character.

Mr. R did not stick to his former plan of being a businessman. It could be regarded as a failure. But Mr. R understood it was a higher and inevitable power that forced him to choose to give up his former plan, so it was not a failure. According to his narrative Mr. R does not know exactly what he will do next and has no concrete career plan. He leaves the choice to God, who had left Mr. R only one option to give up his plan of business career.

The consequences of his reorientation of career are more than a career choice. Mr. R achieves a new identity through a non-business course of study, which enables him to loosen his attachment to his hometown culture. He realized and practiced the possibility of other options. Mr. R is able to choose a career according to his own will instead of according to the influence of his family tradition. It is an individual decision, which was initiated by Mr. R's isolated migrant's status and his reconsideration on his life.

Mr. R achieves his independency from his hometown milieu as well as his independency of spiritual pursuit. He no longer has the wish to be a businessman like the others in his hometown. Mr. R has a new plan for the future, which in his opinion is

under God's guidance.

Mr. R achieves his individuality through his conversion and becomes a member who does not follow the hometown milieu's rules. Chinese people are very closely bound to their families and their hometown milieus. People are inclined to do things according to others' expectations.

Mr. R is able to achieve his individuality and his independency because his difficult migrant's status made it possible and his conversion made it realized. He was so far away from his hometown that the expectation from parents became less powerful and less influential in his decision-making. His conversion might provide him with a solid basis to start a new orientation.

6.4.3 Embeddedness of Mr. R in the Community

6.4.3.1 Growth with Development of the Community

R: Since starting to believe in God, I have always supported the community. For example, the church hall can now hold 150 people; before, it was a small Bible reading group, which consisted of 5 to 6 people, who sat beside the piano reading the Bible. I found it so moving. At the beginning God put the responsibility of the community in my heart.

S: How do you organize your work in the community?

R: Three or four years ago, I could only listen to the other people, as I was learning from others. Now I have grown up spiritually, so I try to share what I have learnt as much as possible. We now live like this in a small group and we share our lives together, and in order for everyone to find God, we try to encourage everyone to read the Bible themselves, and only when they do so can they grow.

Mr. R was one of the earliest members in the community, which at the beginning was a small Bible reading group. Unlike the members who later joined the community, Mr. R could not get practical support from the group he joined, as the group was so small that he could not imagine that one day it could be an officially recognized institution. Mr. R joining the community was without purpose of seeking practical help. He was trying to

find a way to practice his religion. His conversion gives him the emotional support he needs for fighting against the migrant's plight. His joining the group was to practice his new conversion. He knew he should read the Bible, and so then he began to read. He did things that he thought should be done. On one side, his religious practice includes some improvised elements due to lack of theological and institutional support, but on the other side his religious practice just indicates an important feature of transnational religious community: Simultaneously incorporation. It is a strategy of transnational migrants to adjust to the local condition, in order to practice their religion.

He accompanied the community growth from a small group of six people to a group of more than 150 people. The small group underwent not only a change in quantity, but also in quality. It is not only a Bible reading group which "*sat beside the piano reading the Bible*"; it becomes an institution that has more functions and its own organizational structure. Mr. R contributes his efforts in the change of the group.

Mr. R himself was a listener and learner in the small group. He had a change of quality, too. With the development of the group he develops his importance in the group. He develops his authority on theological study by teaching himself and leading one small Bible reading group. His growth accompanies the development of the community.

Mr. R becomes an organizer of the community and a leader of a Bible reading group, although he was a beginner when he joined the community and was a listener when he began his religious pursuit. He must have a great involvement in the community so that he is able to be a core member in the community. Mr. R's embeddedness in the community could be very profound.

6.4.3.2 Involvement as Executive Authority in the Community

R: After a period of time, after the division into small groups, we needed to review our work. For example, what we did, what we should keep the same and what we should change or correct. So we had to write reports. That is why everyone had to be registered when they joined, so that if someone was absent, or if they needed some help, we could talk with them about their studies and life. People came together and united and in the

end we knew a lot more about each other. A small group should have clear goals, so that it does not become conventional. So every now and then each individual group had a "life discussion". With this, we were able to develop the good sides and correct the mistakes.

Mr. R describes his work in the community in detail. It is about how he organized a Bible reading group. It has undergone a remarkable change in comparison to the beginning status, which was a small group of people sitting beside a piano and sharing feelings. Now there is an obvious routine of Bible reading. The community members come to a place where the Bible reading takes place, and they register themselves on a name list. The group leader checks the list and moderates the reading. The structure of the reading is well organized under the guidance of the leader. Mr. R as a leader reviews the past sessions of the Bible reading and writes reports of the current session for later review. He is aware of his role as a moderator and a leader of the Bible reading activity. He has the power of designing and controlling the content of what is going to be read. He is the authority of the small Bible reading group.

Mr. R did not have any theological education background but he could be a core member in the community. According to his narratives Mr. R did a lot of work in the development of the community. His involvement gives him an important role in the community. He joined the community in its early stage. Mr. R has stayed in the community for a long time, so he knows almost everything about the community and is responsible for many organizational issues.

He has a strong leader consciousness, which is quite goal-oriented: "*A small group should have clear goals*". He knows exactly what should be done in the Bible reading and what these activities are for. An attendance registration list is to keep a track of members, in order to observe their needs. The absence of a member might mean he or she needs help. It is a method of keeping track of every member in a social network and every one can be taken care of by the community. He assigns homework for the Bible reading group members and prepares for the next session. Mr. R does a lot of work to routinize the community daily work. He is the authority of executive. He accompanies the community from casual chatting beside the piano to a session full of programs; he

experienced all the changes. So he knows every detail of how to operate a session. Mr. R contributes his efforts to routinizing some of the community activities. It is possible that someone else designed the routinized program of the Bible reading, for example the pastor. Mr. R is still a loyal and a good executive member to carry out the routinized programs.

Mr. R's authority is based on his involvement in the community administration rather than his theological knowledge. Because of the insufficient facilities and staff, a transnational religious community requires much active involvement from members. Those who are active and take responsibilities are candidates to lead the community. Mr. R is an example for being regarded as a community leader for his work in organizing and forming the community. Mr. R is an executive type, who simultaneously forms the community with local conditions. The result that the community is systematically organized should give Mr. R some credit.

6.4.3.3 His Identity as a Community Member

R: Usually people do not tell their friends what they are worrying about, but in our gatherings it is easier to share these worries. If you are happy, we are happy for you, if you are worried, we can share your problem with you, and try to help you. Sharing happiness can be at any time, but only when a person really trusts you do they tell you what they are worrying about. So the small group is a real active body; we accept each other, and do not leak information to people outside the group.

Mr. R emphasizes the emotional dimension between community members: “*in our gatherings it is easier to share these worries.*” People can get emotional support in the community. Mr. R does not accentuate his own experience in the narratives. He describes the community's emotional sharing in a general way without an explicit example. What is worth attention is the exclusiveness of the “worry-sharing”. Mr. R emphasizes that they do not “*leak information to people outside the group*”. So there is a distinguishing mark of members inside the group and people outside the group. Whoever has the right to share his or her worries in the group is one of them, and they

keep the information discreet inside the community.

In Mr. R's opinion, emotional communication is important in the Bible reading group as well as knowledge learning. To be able to share worries with each other is a feature of being a community member. Mr. R appreciates this feature very much and enjoys being a community member. His identity of being a community member is related to the emotional sharing with others. He has a deep embeddedness in the community not only with the administration but also in emotional attachment.

Interestingly Mr. R does not mention the function of religion in emotion sharing. Being a Christian is not the premise for sharing things with each other. Being a community member is decisive in joining the group and being one of them. It is possible that people who are not interested in religion but want to share feelings can seek emotional support in the community without converting to Christianity.

Mr. R's identity of a community member is related to a firm group belonging. Mr. R's identity of being a community member is more related to sharing things with other community members than being a Christian. His understanding of being a community member is less substantial, and it is very functional, or on a very practical level.

6.4.3.4 Role Awareness as a Community Leader

S: You are a leader of a small group. How do you do your job?

R: The Bible tells us that Jesus served his disciples. The church has a clear structure; the community consists of the people who have been called there by God. These people have their own structure: The Pastor, co-workers, and brothers and sisters. Private firms and companies outside the church also have their own structure; there is a bottom layer and a top layer, like a pyramid. The church is a pyramid too, but an upside down pyramid. The pastor is great because he serves most, but because the pastor is over 60, he takes care of the brothers and sisters spiritually. As many co-workers as possible help the pastor to deal with the administrative tasks, for example, somebody prepares before a Bible reading activity. This kind of duty does affect me, as it takes time, but the time it takes is protected by God. I believe that God will guide me. Whatever I do later,

either working or doing business; I have my responsibility to this community.

R: Members of the diaconal committee in the community are selected by the brothers and sisters. Some of the congregation is selected to work as co-workers, and after a while other people are selected to take over their position. Other churches have permanent co-workers, but our community is different. A person's progression in life helps us to choose new co-workers.

Mr. R's understands his role in the community according to his understanding of its structure. He describes the structure as "an upside down pyramid". The pastor serves full time, so he is at the top of the pyramid as a leader of the community. But he is at the bottom of the "upside down pyramid" structure because he sacrifices the most. The co-workers help the pastor organize the community activities and they serve the community and other members too. The co-workers are the backbones of the community because of the fact that their involvement the community must be able to hold a variety of activities without becoming a huge burden of the pastor. Mr. R regards himself as one of the co-workers who support the pastor in doing his work and serving the other community members. Mr. R emphasizes that the progress of a community member is decisive in being selected as a co-worker. Those who are more active in the community activities and theological studying have the chance to become a co-worker. Co-workers are expected to take over the organizational work of the community. This is how the community forms its administrative structures. Encouraging involvement of the community members is a clever strategy of recruiting human resource.

Mr. R is a member of diaconal committee, which has the power to decide the development of the community. The community members select members of the diaconal committee. It is common that the elder community members who serve the community more than others are selected and elected. Not every co-worker can be a member of the diaconal committee. Co-workers are recommended by the diaconal committee and selected by the community members.

So there are two systems of administrative members inside the community. One is diaconal committee, the other is co-worker system. Despite the fact that members of both systems are selected by the community members, the diaconal committee has more

power than the co-worker system. The diaconal committee discusses the development of the community and assigns work for co-workers. Co-workers are executive members of different activities and they may make suggestions on the community issues but do not have the right to make decisions.

The mechanism of the “*upside down pyramid*” is actually a hierarchical system: “The pastor- the diaconal committee- the co-workers- the community members.” If a new community member wants to join the decision-making process on community issues, he or she needs to be a co-worker first, and later he or she could be able to be selected in the diaconal committee, then he or she has the right and power to make decisions for the community. The hierarchical system might be common in many other religious communities. It is still worth paying attention to the formation of the hierarchical structure, because at the beginning Mr. R was neither a co-worker nor a member of the diaconal committee. He was a participant in an informal Bible reading group. During the last years, because of his active involvement in the community, he became a co-worker and later became a member of the diaconal committee. It is his trajectory in the community: From a participant to an organizer, from a follower to a leader. After the pastor came, Mr. R establishes his position in the community and he has a clear awareness of his position as an organizer and a leader.

He cares about the future development of the community, so he tries to encourage other members to join co-workers. The development of the community requires more work and staffing. Co-workers need corresponding experiences and organizational abilities, which Mr. R learned from his involvement in the community. He knows what it requires to become a person who is able to serve the community. So the two systems of the “*upside down pyramid*” is a mechanism of recruiting and training community members, in order to foster the next backbone of the community. Embeddedness and involvement are the criterion for choosing co-workers. It is how Mr. R was chosen to be a core member of the community. He accepts and acknowledges the rules of choosing the next backbone of the community.

Mr. R agrees with the rules because it was his own trajectory to becoming a leader. It is how he simultaneously cooperates with local conditions and contributes to the

formation the community. He identifies that his trajectory in the community can be a general trajectory or rule for other members. It may be a mode of reproduction for the next backbone of the community.

The pastor is mentioned in the narrative as an old man who needs support for his missionary work. The pastor serves as a functional position in the “*upside down pyramid*”. A personal relationship between Mr. R and the pastor is not mentioned.

S: Who is in charge of money?

R: In German churches there are small baskets that are used to collect money and our church has a bank account. We do not have a legal representative, but we use a bank account which is under my name, but I give out the bank card. There is one person who is in charge of money and another who is responsible for bookkeeping. When people handle money, Satan comes to test them; therefore we have three people to manage the financial administration.

Donations are transferred from my bank account to the community bank account. There is a special category especially for this transfer. For some people it isn't convenient to use the bank transfer system, so they put their money into an envelope and put it into the community mailbox. We encourage bank transfers. We try to do free cash donations.

The fact that Mr. R is in charge of the community bank account indicates two points. One point is obvious: that Mr. R is important in the community. He has the trust of the community members as well as the pastor, so he is responsible for the financial administration. It corresponds to his role of administrative authority in the community.

The second point is that until the time this interview was made, the community did not have its own bank account for donation. The community is in a transformation phase of a self-organized group to an official registered religious institution as a Free Church. Before the community registered as an official religious institution, it did not have a bank account as an institution. The relation between organizers and members is still a personal relationship. The community members know Mr. R and trust him as a money keeper for the community. A personal relationship is trustful. The fact that the community does not have its own bank account does not seem to bother them. The

community expands its scale and correspondingly increases the complexity of organizing members and finance. Mr. R is not a trained missionary worker, so he had no idea of how to manage a religious community abroad. He has to teach himself about managing community issues and discusses with other core members in the community, and they decide on a solution together. He offers his bank account as the community bank account. In order to be transparent and trustful, a system of separation of powers is applied in dealing with money. Mr. R has the bank account but does not have the bank card, so he is not able to disburse money. The second person has the bank card but does not have the bank account. A third person is responsible for bookkeeping and meanwhile plays a monitoring role. The system separates the power in dealing with the money and responsibility is shared between the three of them. It is a clever solution to establish a healthy and transparent financial administration. Mr. R and the other members provide such a solution to guarantee the trust of the community members. It is also the way of the community's adaptation to the local condition. If an official bank account is not available, how could they provide a transparent and trustworthy administrative system to manage the money of the community? The principle of dealing with practical issues in the community is: What works can be applied? Mr. R learns how to do his executive work in the community mostly by experimenting; therefore simultaneous corporations are always applied. Despite the fact that Mr. R's experience may be gained on occasion, it still has the chance to become a standard for the community.

Mr. R and the community members adjust to the modernized ways of online banking transfers. Some community members prefer to make the donation with cash. So they put the money in an envelope and put them in the community mail box. Mr. R is probably responsible for gathering the envelopes and depositing the money. Different forms of donations are accepted in the communities.

Mr. R is aware of his role as a leader. He provides his bank account as the community bank account, and leads the Bible reading group, and actively organizes the community activities. He has a deep structural embeddedness in the community due to his involvement in executing different administrative tasks.

6.4.3.5 Mr. R's Religious Practice

R: Prayer seems like talking into air, but I feel very intimate with God when I pray. If I pray while preparing for an examination, it makes me feel closer to God.

R: Prayer takes time, which we could use for watching a movie, but if I pray, it pleases God, and he protects me, and makes me efficient when I prepare for an examination.

Despite Mr. R's involvement in the executive branch of the community administration, he emphasizes religious practice and experience, too. One of his practices is to pray. In his narratives Mr. R does not mention much about other religious practices, but he values prayer as an important daily religious practice. He feels intimate with God when he prays. It could be influenced by the pastor's theology; it might be Mr. R's own opinion, because as Mr. R converted the pastor had not come to Leipzig yet. So Mr. R's religious practice might have been influenced by several directions: His wife, who is a Christian; his Chinese Christian friends; local German communities; and later from the pastor. Mr. R represents the type who converts while abroad and seeks places and rules of practicing a new religious conversion. He has to adjust to the local condition and cooperate with it. He combines different elements from different directions and creates his own way. Because he is the oldest member of the community, he is participating in the formation of the community. His religious practice is almost "learning by doing".

6.4.4 Transnational Missionary Work and the Role of the Pastor

6.4.4.1 Transnational Missionary Group

R: I looked on the Internet at the university and met a couple of peers who were in a missionary group from Taiwan who were the same age as me. They used their holidays to do missionary work here. They had a book stand where they distributed books. One day I walked by their book stand and they caught my attention.

R: After arriving in Germany, I found that anything I saw that had Chinese symbols on it, I would like to take a look. They told me there was going to be a "Taiwanese Night", where people could gather together, watch performances, and eat Taiwanese food.

Because they spoke the same Southern Min dialect that I speak, there was an affinity among us. As I knew they were Christians, I asked my girlfriend if she wanted to come too, and we went together.

At night there were lectures, and after the lectures there was the calling for whoever wanted to believe in God. I am very appreciative of God; I raised my hand and decided to believe in him.

Mr. R describes his first encounter with the transnational missionary group in detail. It was a missionary group from Taiwan. Mr. R was attracted to their book stand because due to his migrant's status, he was interested in everything that was written in Chinese. It indicates that a Chinese missionary group could get attention from Chinese in Germany. As Mr. R talked to people in the missionary group, he found out that they came from Taiwan. Taiwan is near the Fujian Province, where Mr. R comes from. So Mr. R and they spoke the same Southern Min dialect, which achieved an emotional bond between them. So he accepted their invitation and went to the "*Taiwanese Night*", where he decided to convert.

His girlfriend acts as another bond between Mr. R and the missionary group. Mr. R thought that she might be interested in the activity of a Chinese Christian group, because she is a Christian. He asked her and they went together. Mr. R had already regarded Christianity as something related to him. He was always related to Christianity because his girlfriend is a Christian. He did not think that he was directly related to the religion. The "*Taiwanese Night*" was an occasion for Mr. R to realize the connection between him and Christian religion. Mr. R made a decision to build a direct connection between him and the Christian religion.

Mr. R's status as a migrant is decisive in his decision. When he was in China he never thought to believe any religion, neither Buddhism nor Christianity. He was satisfied with his environment and relationships. When he came to Germany and encountered a relatively isolated environment, he did not have as many close relationships as he had in China. All he had was his girlfriend and some new friends. So he was interested in exploring and looking for new relationships; it could be friendship, or it could be a spiritual relationship, too.

The desire to meet new Chinese friends and to speak the mother tongue drove Mr. R go to the “Taiwanese Night”, and the yearning for a safe and reliable relationship made Mr. R decide to believe in God. He wanted to have a try at a new relationship that could support him in a new difficult environment. Another advantage of his decision is that this is a deed that his girlfriend always wished for. It was possible that Mr. R had considered the possibility of being a Christian, but in Germany he had no proper chance to convert. So the “Taiwanese Night” was the chance that Mr. R had waited for for a long time. The transnational missionary group gave Mr. R a possibility to join their activity, and then guided Mr. R to make his decision. It was a platform for which Mr. R came just in time. The Chinese transnational missionary group was an important platform in motivating Chinese abroad to further their spiritual pursuits. It provided people like Mr. R a place to realize their desires of establishing a relationship with God in a trustful atmosphere.

S: How were you baptized?

R: Our Pastor was not yet in our community when I was baptized. My wife was baptized in China, by the pastor there. I started to believe in God in June, and my birthday is July the eighth. At that time I regarded the pastor as someone in a very high position. He can ask me to do things, but I shouldn't ask him to do things. The preacher in the missionary group told me that if you believe in God in your heart, and admit it out loud, then you are able to become God's son or daughter, and to be baptized and united with Jesus. I decided to get baptized. Then, I went to Berlin with the missionary group and was baptized in the bathtub in the bathroom that was upstairs in a church in Berlin.

Mr. R was baptized under the instruction of a member from the transnational missionary group. From his narrative there are three facts worth taking notice of. The first fact is that the missionary group stayed for about a month, from June (when Mr. R decided to believe) to July (when Mr. R was baptized). The second fact is that the missionary group moved within Germany from city (Leipzig) to city (Berlin). The group had cooperation with the local church so they could use the bathroom to baptize Mr. R. The third fact is that the missionary group organized not only dinner night and lectures, they

also followed newly converted members to a further step. After Mr. R decided to convert, a member of the group taught Mr. R the meaning of being baptized and arranged it for Mr. R. The missionary group had a full plan of time, space and progress of proselytizing people.

The three facts indicate that the missionary group has a group of experienced missionary workers and a well-designed missionary program. The program includes a missionary tour in different cities in Germany and a good preparation and process to proselytize new members. It means the missionary group had close cooperation with the local Chinese or German Christian communities; otherwise their missionary work could be less efficient. For example, a room was rented for holding a “Taiwanese Night”, and the facility of a local church was used to baptize Mr. R. There could be more members being baptized in the bathtub. The missionary group adapts to local situations and with the support of local communities, the transnational missionary group is able to make the missionary tour. It may be a method of how transnational missionary work is transnationally organized.

Mr. R’s reaction to the missionary group’s work indicates the possible trajectory of a member who converts abroad. He felt awe toward a pastor, because he did not know the role and function of a pastor. Mr. R regarded a pastor as an authority with “*very high position*”, and followed his suggestion with a respectful heart. He regarded himself as someone who needed guidance. His attitude towards a pastor was very humble at the beginning. It may influence his relationship with the pastor who came to the community. Mr. R could intend to accept everything the pastor taught, because Mr. R was ready to learn with a humble heart.

An important question is what happened after Mr. R was baptized. Mr. R became a Christian. The transnational missionary might have proselytized a few of Chinese in Germany within their short visit. But what were the newly converted people going to do when the missionary group left Germany? The goals of the transnational missionary group are achieved. The transnational missionary group cannot have constant contact with the newly converted Christians. If we make an experimental thought, the newly converted Christians might join a local Chinese Christian community, but if there is no

local community, they have to form one. If it takes too much time, they might just give up establishing a religious organization, and later assimilate into a German Christian community, or just give up joining any religious community. Without continual organizational and spiritual support for the newly converted people, the effort of the transnational missionary group could be wasted.

R: After the missionary group came in June 2002, more people were proselytized. I believed in God when he was in China and, as he knew more than us, he could lead us. There was also an American pastor who helped us. We gathered together. When I look back to the history of the community, I can see that God really led the community. At the time when we started to meet with each other, we were confronted with difficulties, because we felt that there wasn't much progress with our spiritual lives. So God led us to meet a missionary group from America. We met them three times a year. We never looked for them; they always came to us, to our Bible reading group. God used a blessed missionary group to lead us to compatriots from China. Although we did not have a pastor, we continued to gather together. With help from friends we borrowed a church building, which the church provided us for free, including heating in winter. Thanks to God, Pastor H and his wife came in 2004; he called us together and supported us. The community grew and soon we had more than 50 people coming to Sunday Worship.

After a year we divided ourselves into small groups. The pastor's home was big, but it was only big enough for 20 people. Last year, we were two small groups, but more recently, God brought the saved ones to us. More and more people, so now we are four small groups.

S: Tell me something about the missionary groups.

R: They all speak Chinese. They are all Chinese people who live in America.

S: Do you have close contact with them?

R: Yes. The missionary groups keep coming, and they do give us some support. They are not the decisive part, God is decisive. Reading the Bible is the most important thing, as only then can real life be established. In the whole belief system, there can be a heretic

or paranoid element, but, if we read the Bible carefully, we won't be influenced by those things.

The missionary group left Germany after several people were proselytized. They started to gather together regularly without any institutional instructions. Mr. R was among them. Mr. R did not regard the group of gathering as an official community, because the community was not yet formed. It was a casual gathering for the purpose of practicing religion.

There are three reasons why Mr. R thought that God blessed the development of the community.

The first reason is W, who converted in China and came to Leipzig. W might have some experience in organizing the community so he was able to lead the gathering. It is an accidental factor that W was in Leipzig. If W were not in Leipzig, it would be more difficult to organize the gathering for a group of religious beginners. “*An American pastor*” also helped in their activities. Mr. R joined a group which was led by an experienced Christian. A local religious representative plays an important role in supporting a sustainable development of newly converted members. In Mr. R's narrative the American pastor did not play an important role. It indicates that the small group needed spiritual guidance and institutional instructions.

The second reason is the constant support of a missionary group from America, which visited Mr. R's small group three times a year. Although the Taiwan missionary group left, more missionary groups come to Germany. Mr. R regarded the communication between his group and the missionary group as a blessing of God. It was not mentioned in the interview how the American missionary group found Mr. R's group. If W's appearance in Leipzig is an incidental factor, the American missionary group is not an accidental one. The missionary group established a constant contact with Mr. R's group. It connected Mr. R to a transnational network. The American group's support was limited both in time and quantity. Mr. R's group always waited for being visited, so Mr. R's group was passive in the relationship with the American group. Due to the long distance, despite the three visits a year, Mr. R could not get a quick and direct response when he had questions or difficulties. The missionary group cannot be a substitute of a

local religious representative.

Mr. R's group had contact with a local German church and borrowed a church for the Bible reading. The local German church played a role as a room provider, not a spiritual guidance. Mr. R did not think about the possibility of joining a German community. The communication between Mr. R's group and local the German church was established, but only on an administrative level. The local German community did not have any influence of the development of Mr. R's group.

A feature of Mr. R's religious group is self-organizing for a few people and self-supporting by a few people. Mr. R and his friends organized themselves to read the Bible and to start a community life. Experiences of being a Christian was valued in the group, so W was the leader of this small group because he had the experience of being a Christian in China. The problem of a completely self-organizing group is that as Mr. R said, "*there wasn't much progress with spiritual lives*". It means that they needed support to learn about religion, otherwise Mr. R did not know how to practice the religion in his life. The difficulty of developing a self-organized transnational religious group is its insufficient resources. It has neither concrete programs nor helpful instructions to develop the community.

The third reason is the arrival of the Chinese pastor H. Pastor H's arrival was a decisive turning point of the group. With the efforts of the pastor as a local religious representative, the group increased in members, and had gradually formed as a community with different functions.

The three reasons indicate the unfavorable and favorable conditions in formation of a transnational religious community. The support of transnational missionary groups is helpful but not decisive. A competent local religious leader is necessary in forming the community.

Mr. R's opinion is: "*God is decisive*". He regards the support of the missionary group and the coming of the pastor as a blessing of God.

6.4.4.2 The Role of the Pastor

S: How does the community support itself financially?

R: The pastor comes from a missionary institution in North America. He was sent to here to develop the community, so the churches of North America support him. We are not able to pay him. The community's fund relied on donations from brothers and sisters. The Bible says that is with God's blessing.

The pastor is assigned by a missionary institution in North America to come to Germany in order to conduct missionary work. He is financially supported by the institution in North America because Mr. R's group was small and composed of poor students who did not have enough money to pay the pastor's salary. So the pastor is aware of the missionary situation in Germany. His role is that of a long-term representative of transnational missionary work. He does not only the things that the transnational missionary groups do, but also applies new strategies, in order to realize some long-term goals, for example, to establish a stable community.

The pastor makes a lot of effort to motivate people to join the community and believe God. As the narrative mentioned above, the small group turned to be a community with an administrative structure and the community members increased enormously. The quantity and the quality of the community have changed since the pastor came.

The pastor is the bridge between Mr. R's group and the transnational missionary network, because he brings support from missionary institutions in North America, and guarantees different resources in sufficient time.

In Mr. R's narrative, the pastor is like an administrative leader. Mr. R does not mention any personal or emotional relationship with the pastor. He accepts the fact that the pastor is not supported by the community. That means he accepts the fact that the transnational missionary group in North America takes some constant financial responsibility of the community. Then the community has a closer relationship and a deeper involvement with the transnational missionary network. The pastor is the connecting channel, which connects the local Chinese Christian community to the

transnational missionary network. Through the pastor, the Leipzig community becomes an active part of the network.

R: I took part in a camping trip once, which was for the brothers and sisters who lived in East Germany and are interested in Gospels. I also attended a camping in Nuremberg, which at the time consisted of over 300 people who came from all over Germany.

L208-211

During the trip, which lasts several days, there are good lectures, teachers from theology schools and pastors who preach the truth of the Bible. During this time, we are able to learn a lot, so we encourage members of the community, who are willing to serve, to join the trip. The community reimburses them for their accommodation, food and travel costs. Everyone can get some sort of financial support from the community.

After the pastor came, some activities were available for the group. Mr. R himself took part in a camping trip. During the camping he learned religious teaching intensively from teachers from theology schools and pastors. Without the arrangement of the pastor H, it would have almost been impossible to take part in such a camping trip. In Mr. R's narrative the camping seems to become a regular activity for the community members because members are encouraged to join the camping trip. It means that the camping becomes a regular offer for the community members who have potential to serve the community.

It also indicates that a reproduction system is established in the community. Mr. R attended the camping and became an active and important role in the community. Learning during a camping trip is a new form of supporting communities in Germany by transnational groups. The transnational resource helps the community in religious teaching and theological study. Because the pastor, who is familiar with the local situation, allocates the transnational religious resources, they can be used in a more targeted way than the institutions in North America do.

Mr. R and the pastor recruit other members to attend the camping trip and encourage them to serve the community. The community reimburses them for their accommodation, food and travel costs. So the camping trip as a religious teaching

program has been systematically integrated in the community as a strategy to reproduce the next backbone of the community. Those who are active and willing to serve the community will be recommended to join the camp and might shoulder more responsibility in the community.

Religious education in the community was strengthened after the pastor came. One difficulty of developing the community was overcome. Mr. R regards the camping trip as a helpful method of religious teaching and learning. Mr. R had no religious education at all when he was in China, so any kind of religious teaching might be a helpful guidance for him. The fact that the camping trip is so welcomed indicates that the most of participants are newly converted members. For those who had religious backgrounds, the camping trip might not be necessary or helpful. It largely depends on the quality of the teachers.

The pastor creates the condition and Mr. R gained his religious teaching. Besides the camping trip, the regular programs are the Bible reading, Sunday worship and Sunday schools. The activities are offered for the community members. Mr. R is satisfied with what he gets. Mr. R's involvement and his leader position in the community is a result of the pastor's reproduction of the community members. The pastor does not only recruit people to join the community and to convert to Christianity, but also pays attention to reproducing the leadership of potential members. For example, Mr. R could be one of the pastor's successors.

Mr. R himself recognizes the rules of reproduction and encourages the others to follow his trajectory. The pastor creates the possibility of the reproduction.

To realize the goal that the small Bible reading group is able to grow and become a community with an administrative structure, a group of active members is needed for the development. The structure of the community had two layers at the beginning: The pastor and a group of Christian members. Later the structure expanded to a more complicated one in order to adjust to the increase of the community members. The structure increases its layers after successful reproduction. More layers construct the community: The pastor, the first group of community leaders, the new backbone, the community members, the religious investigators, etc. To improve the flow among layers,

the religious education and active involvement are required. A systematic reproduction is formed in the community.

R: Without order or force, we have enough money, which means we can even help some Bible reading groups in other cities in East Germany. When they organize activities, or do missionary work, we can help them.

S: How does the community continue to develop with this instability?

R: For the community to develop, it should bring new members into it. We grow, people come, and we accept them. Everybody is led by God and moved by the Holy Spirit. We are merely the instruments that God uses.

The reproduction takes place not only inside the community in Leipzig, but also in other cities. The community members are reproduced, and the community is reproduced, too. As the Leipzig community develops, it is able to help other small groups in the cities near Leipzig. There is a close network among the Chinese Christians in different German cities. The Leipzig community supports other groups financially. The Leipzig community does the same thing to other groups as the transnational missionary institution in North America did to it. The whole transnational mission works like a reproductive chain, which forms a deepened level of transnational missionary network. With the help of transnational missionary institutions, the Leipzig community is established by the pastor and the community members. Then with the help of the Leipzig community, the other groups of different cities are going to establish their own community. The transnational mission is passed on from institutions in North America to local Chinese religious communities in Germany. From a global aspect, the Leipzig community is like a dandelion, which spreads its seeds around when it becomes mature. A deepened level is thus formed. It is one of the consequences of developing a transnational religious community. Therefore, every group is influenced by the transnational missionary group, regardless of whether the group realizes it or not.

It could be one method of how the transnational missionary work is done in 21st century: To search for the potential groups worldwide, to establish a big network among cities, or even nationwide, and support them in different aspects as long as the groups are able to

support the other groups.

6.4.5 Influence on the Family

R: Ancestor worship is not allowed in Christianity, and this seems to contradict the Chinese moral of “obey your elders”. Actually, the Bible says: “You should respect your parents.” I have had a more intimate relationship with my family since I’ve believed God. I enjoy the silent love they give me. My father is just not good at expressing his emotions. I call my family now every weekend, and, you know, they always say the same thing. I listen to them; and now there is more love and more listening.

As mentioned in the hypothesis, Mr. R’s conversion might lead to a conflict with his family background, which is related to Buddhism. According to Mr. R’s narrative, leaning the Bible helped him to achieve a better understanding and a more intimate relationship with his parents. But the confrontation of two religious systems comes sooner or later. What could happen when Mr. R comes back with a new conversion? How Mr. R deals with the differences indicates the possibility of his religious trajectory when he later comes back to China.

R: When I was back at home for the first time, my mother did not agree with my conversion, but she was not against it; she saw that I had changed, so I introduced her to read the Gospels. They are such a good thing, and I really wanted to share them with my family, and lead them to know Jesus. One time my wife and I visited my mother, and, as my mother is a Buddhist, she does worship rituals on the first day and the fifteenth day of every month. She did not force my wife to join in with the rituals, because she knew my wife was a Christian. The time before we visited, we held a wedding ceremony at home, and my father invited the big Buddha from the temple to our house. We did not use it. On the second day we were supposed go to ancestral hall to worship our ancestors. We were upset, because we are not supposed to worship our ancestors. We can miss our ancestors, but not worship them. Later my wife discussed this with my mother, and she agreed to not worship them. My mother saw our changes; how we had

grown up and become responsible. They are happy too.

Mr. R's encounter with his family in his hometown is an encounter between a Christian and a local culture with strong Buddhist background. His reaction indicates the future possibility of his conversion when he is back in China. The reaction of his family indicates the possibility of acceptance or rejection of a different religious culture. During the encounter Mr. R's family is the dominant side because the family represents the local culture. Mr. R could have conflict with them. Can Mr. R integrate into his family again despite his different religious conversion?

At first Mr. R's mother did not agree with Mr. R's decision to convert, but she did not force him to change his decision. Her attitude was tolerant. She still regards him as a part of the family and was not fully aware of the consequences of her son's conversion. Mr. R tried to introduce the Gospels to her with the hope of proselytizing her. Mr. R is the one who wants to change the other side. His strategy of integrating into his family is to try to proselytize them, in order to share his belief. At the beginning he failed. Due to the long Buddhist tradition of his family, his efforts were in vain.

The encounter continues at the wedding of Mr. R and his wife. Mr. R's father "*invited the big Buddha from the temple*" to their home. A big Buddha statue was moved from a temple to Mr. R's house, in order to bring the blessing to the married couple. It might be a local tradition of the procedure of a wedding. Mr. R and his wife regarded the ritual as a contradiction to the Christian religion. Consequently he did not use the Buddha statue in his wedding, despite the fact that the "invitation" of the Buddha cost his father a lot of money. Mr. R made his choice as he handled the conflict between Christian teaching and Buddhist local customs. His choice meant much more than a choice between two religions. The Buddhist local customs represent Mr. R's family culture and his village culture. If he abandons following the local customs that are related to Buddhism, he abandons also his religious identity in his family as well as in the village. Mr. R's conversion led him to make a choice that separated him from his local customs and culture. Although he is still one member of the family by kindred relation, his cultural and religious identity is no longer one of the family and the village.

The separation of Mr. R and his former culture is reflected again in his rejection of

worshipping the ancestor. Mr. R does not want to follow his mother's ritual of worshipping his ancestor as he always did before. Now with a new Christian identity Mr. R makes his position clear, he wants to obey the Christian teaching. To worship the ancestor is a family activity, which brings family members together. Mr. R's absence could make him estrange his family and the village culture.

Mr. R's wife plays an important role in his decision. Mr. R does not need to feel alone when he estranges his family culture and village culture. His wife is by his side, which reminds Mr. R that he is now in another culture and has another identity.

The consequences of Mr. R's conversion are visible. He is no longer a part of the local village culture, and not even a part of the family culture. Between the two religious systems, Mr. R makes his choice and becomes an individual outside the hometown culture.

His family accepts him and his choice, for now. His mother does not show any exclusive sign of Mr. R's conversion.

R: To convince family members to believe in God is not done by talking, as they know you too well. Only when your life really changes, can they be moved to do something. I have two brothers, and I have more chances to talk to my mother. I talk to her on the phone about my faith, and my mother is gradually starting to respect me, and so I am appreciative of God. I hope my family can believe in God at some point, but their domestic environment makes it difficult for them to get know the Gospel.

Mr. R plans to continue to proselytize his mother as well as his family members. He talks to her on the phone a lot about his life and Christian religion. His efforts indicate two facts.

One is the improvement of communication technology. Thanks to Internet technology, Mr. R is now able to call his mother often and talk for a relatively longer time. In comparison to the days when he first came to Germany, he did not have such a frequent communication with his family. The influence of transnational missionary work can be spread very far within seconds with the development of communication technology. The transnational missionary group from North America has indirect influence on Mr. R's

mother.

The second fact is that Mr. R is going to do missionary work in China, at least on a family scale. He hopes that his brothers and his parent can believe in God. The effect of his efforts is the respect of his mother. Mr. R knows that his family is in an unfavorable environment for his mission: *“Their domestic environment makes it difficult for them to get know the Gospel”*. Mr. R realizes that his family is deeply embedded in the local Buddhism culture, which has a long tradition. He might have little chance to make them believe God just by talking. So he is aware of the importance of religious practice in life. *“Only when your life really changes, can they be moved”*. Mr. R wants to make himself a providence to convince his family. He is ready for his future missionary work. He wants to influence his family by his own deeds and practice.

If we make an experimental thought, if Mr. R’s family would not proselytized by him, Mr. R would find himself outside the family culture and village culture. When he is back to China, he would probably join a local Christian community, for example, the community that his wife once brought him to. After Mr. R’s conversion, he moves gradually away from his hometown culture; he loosens his spiritual connection with his family. He establishes a life with his wife in Germany; his spiritual connection is built with the Leipzig community. So Mr. R’s trajectory is moving from a Buddhist family to a Christian community.

6.5 Summary

6.5.1 Motive of Joining the Community

6.5.1.1 Adaptation and Reorientation with New Conversion

Mr. R’s motive for joining the community is related to his conversion in Germany. He did not want to join a Christian community despite the fact that his girlfriend, a Christian, insisted on the importance of having the same belief of a couple. He regarded religion as a relief for people in certain age group, but not for him. He enjoyed his relations with his family and friends in China and was confident of his life. His

confidence was hit by many predicaments as he came to Germany. The migrant situation made him struggle against isolation, loneliness, powerlessness and frustration. As a result of realizing his weakness he looked for the strength and power that could help him. His girlfriend's constant company was a sufficient preparation for his acceptance of Christianity.

Mr. R was attracted to the Taiwanese missionary group first due to their use of the same language. Mr. R decided to convert on the night when the Taiwanese missionary group tried to proselytize people. His decision of converting to Christianity was an attempt to obtain the strength that he needed. And he realized his wishes.

After Mr. R's conversion he achieved a successful adjustment on his close relationships. He reconciled with his former roommate, and had less conflict with his girlfriend. He regards the adjustments as contributions of his conversion.

Mr. R had planned to become a businessman as he came to Germany, but there was no possibility to realize his wish. Through the information from a German Christian Mr. R found an application possibility in a university, as he failed almost all other applications. He regarded the only option to be the guidance of God, and so he had a smooth reorientation of career choice.

In his migrant status Mr. R achieves successful adjustment and he explains them as the guidance of God. His conversion is an adaptation to fight against the predicaments he encounters in Germany.

Through his independency of spiritual pursuit, Mr. R achieves individuality by being outside of his hometown milieu. Therefore, his Buddhist mother has less influence on him. The consequence of his reorientation of career is to loosen his attachment to his hometown culture.

His migrant status is related to his conversion as well as his joining the community. If he is compared with the above-analyzed followers, the community was a very small group when Mr. R joined. Mr. R joined the community without the purpose of seeking practical help. Mr. R could not and did not want to get something from the community. Mr. R wants to practice his religion so he joined the community without thinking about the benefits he might get from the community. He was among the first ones who joined

the community; his motive is a religious one. He achieves his adjustment and reorientation of life by converting to Christianity and joining the community.

6.5.1.2 Embeddedness in the Community as Spiritual Growth

Mr. R has a deep embeddedness in the community and he regards his contribution as growth in spirituality. He has a strong identity as a member of the community and meanwhile he regards himself as a leader of it.

Mr. R's trajectory in the community is from periphery to center, from a member to a leader. He was a listener in the Bible reading activity, but later he became a leader of a small Bible reading group. He is one of the three people who are responsible for the financial administration of the community. Mr. R might not be the spiritual leader of the community, but he is an executive authority in the community due to his active involvement and long-time contribution.

Although Mr. R was in the beginning phase of casual talk during the Bible reading, later he helps to routinize the programs of the Bible reading activity. He is clearly aware of his responsibility of developing the community and is willing to take over the task. So he becomes goal-oriented in leading the group.

Mr. R's identity of being a community member is related to the emotional sharing with other members. He has a deep attachment to the community, both with administration and emotion.

Mr. R's involvement in the community can be described as simultaneous incorporation because the community needs to adapt to the local conditions; for example, to create a transparent financial administration, Mr. R's own bank account is used as the community bank account, but the others have the bank card and the code, and Mr. R has no control of this account. Mr. R and the community members create ways to adapt to the local situation and later the solution becomes a standard. Self-organizing is a feature of this transnational religious community.

His role awareness as a leader is related to his trajectory in the community. Mr. R understands the structure of the community as "*an upside down pyramid*", which is a

hierarchical system of “pastor- diaconal committee – co-workers –the community members”. Mr. R agrees with the recruiting and training system of the community members because it is his own trajectory. He agrees with the system because he is the one who is reproduced by this system. Embeddedness and involvement are the criterion of fostering the next backbone of the community. Mr. R encourages the community members to take part in religious education, in order to foster the co-workers. He hence turns out to be a stable part of the reproduction system.

Hence, Mr. R has a structural embeddedness in the community. His embeddedness in the community is on one side the result of his spiritual pursuit by active involvement in the community, on the other side the result of a successful reproduction system. The more Mr. R contributes to the community, the more important he becomes in it. The spiritual growth and value that he feels is related to his position and importance in the community.

6.5.2 The Type of Mr. R

6.5.2.1 Mr. R as a Reproduced Leader Type

Mr. R's type is a reproduced leader type, because Mr. R's trajectory in the community is strongly influenced by his social conditions. He converted to Christianity because a transnational missionary group provided the chance. After the pastor came, Mr. R organized more community activities and had a deeper embeddedness in the community due to his active involvement.

The role of the transnational missionary group is an important element in constructing Mr. R's type. The transnational missionary group Mr. R met in Leipzig came from Taiwan; the group attracted Mr. R to visit its activity due to the same cultural background. The missionary group provides a platform to motivate Chinese people to convert to Christianity. Whether Mr. R had considered the possibility of converting does not matter. What matters is the form of a platform for Chinese to profess their spiritual pursuits. The form is like a ritual that makes Mr. R confirm his religious identity. Without the platform, Mr. R could not profess and confirm his religious identity. So Mr.

R's identity as a Christian was introduced by the transnational missionary group. In order to enhance Mr. R's recognition of his religious identity, the transnational missionary group provided the possibility of baptizing him. Mr. R accepted the process in spite of the less than ideal facilities. He was baptized in a bathtub in a borrowed church.

The transnational missionary group has a well-designed missionary program, which includes a missionary tour in different cities in Germany and a process for proselytizing new members. Mr. R went along according to the process that the missionary group prepared. The problem of the transnational missionary groups is that they do not stay in Germany for long. It is only possible for a local community to be established when there is continual organizational instruction and spiritual support. Otherwise the newly converted members like Mr. R are not able to become leaders. The mode of the transnational missionary group's work has its limitation.

The role of the pastor is another important element in constructing Mr. R's type. The pastor creates the conditions which are necessary to foster Mr. R to become a leader. Mr. R regards himself as a humble learner and listens to the guidance of the pastor. He intends to obey and accept the teachings from the pastor and rules of the community. Therefore, when the pastor came later, Mr. R was ready to accept the pastor's teaching. Mr. R follows the pastor as a learner in religion. The pastor leads the community as a local religious representative who connects with transnational resources. The pastor makes a sustainable development of the community possible, so Mr. R is able to have a regular religious field to practice religion and have spiritual growth. The pastor, the local religious representative, is able to overcome the limitation of supporting newly converted members. The transnational missionary groups are not able to devote a constant support of time and care. A local religious representative could be able to take care of the community members in emotional needs as well as in spiritual needs.

The pastor is an administrative leader, who connects the local Chinese Christian community to the transnational missionary network. He allocates resources more targeted than other transnational missionary groups. The pastor designs a learning program for the community members, and Mr. R follow the program by visiting a

religious camping trip, which is systematically integrated into the community as a strategy to reproduce the next backbones.

Mr. R's trajectory is from a participant to an organizer, from a follower to a leader. His trajectory proves a successful reproduction of the community structure. The pastor establishes a reproductive chain with different transnational resources. Mr. R moves along the chain, and becomes a leader. So Mr. R is a reproduced leader type. He could be a successor of the pastor, because he follows all the rules and ideas of the pastor.

6.5.2.2 The Function of Mr. R's Type

As a reproduced leader type, Mr. R has functional importance in developing the community.

Because Mr. R joined the community in its early stage, his embeddedness of the community is deep. He was able to be in charge of some important aspects of the community, for example, the financial administration. If he joined the community a few years later, he might not have had the chance to join the formation of the community. His experiences of the community are learnt by doing.

Mr. R participates in the formation of the community by his active involvement. Mr. R simultaneously incorporates the resources from outside to form the community. His effort in these attempts forms some standards for the other community members. He organizes activities, follows the teachings of the transnational missionary group and finishes the assignment of the pastor.

Mr. R becomes an organizer and a leader. He might not be a theological authority in the community, but he is an executive authority in community administration. So Mr. R becomes a "mature Christian" as the pastor expected. He does not have any conflict with the pastor, neither theological nor administrative conflict. Mr. R is a reproduced leader and shares the work of the pastor in developing the community.

Mr. R's understanding of the structure of the community is an upside down pyramid. He is the one who supports the pastor as well as the other community members. Mr. R's trajectory proves a successful reproduction of the community structure. He contributes

to form a stable layer between the pastor and the community members.

After the community in Leipzig moves to a stable stage, it helps other Chinese Christian groups in other cities to develop their communities. The reproduction of the community is further carried out. Mr. R's type could be reproduced in other communities and become leader of a community in other cities. By reproducing the leader type, the community itself can be reproduced. A reproductive chain is possible by fostering a reproduced leader type like Mr. R.

The pastor's transnational missionary detour is to achieve a transnational religious network which works automatically. The reproduced leader type like Mr. R is an important structural component of the reproductive chain. This could be a mode of the transnational missionary work.

By comparing the pastor and Mr. R's function, it is obvious that the pastor is indispensable in the community while Mr. R is replaceable. The pastor is the condition of the reproduced leader type. The reproduced leader type guarantees the successful reproduction of the pastor's successor.

The consequences of Mr. R's religious practice in Germany are influencing his relationship with his family. His encounter with his family as he came back to his hometown indicates the future possibility of his religious practice in China. Mr. R deals with the Buddhist local culture with rejection. His conversion separates him from his hometown culture. He changes his career orientation and he practices another religion. He is still related to his family by kindred relation, but his cultural and religious identity is no longer one of his hometown. Mr. R tries to integrate himself by proselytizing his family despite the fact that he is estranging his family. Mr. R tries to proselytize his family even when he is in Germany.

The pastor's "China mission" plan is being realized by Mr. R, but it could be very difficult for Mr. R to achieve.

7 Analysis of Miss Q

7.1 Biographical Outline

Miss Q is a student, age 25, who studies music. After her graduation from a music school in China, she came to Germany to pursue her music study. Miss Q joined the community soon after she came to Leipzig. In China, she neither attended the Sunday worship nor was she interested in Christianity, despite that her grandmother was a pious Christian.

My aim is to find out how she joined this community in Germany, how it changed her life and in which way she corresponds to the pastor's expectation regarding the China mission.

7.2 Analysis of the Beginning Sequences

7.2.1 The Beginning Stimulus

Q: Is the tape already recording? Should I say that once again?

S: No, just go on. How did you join the community?

With the Beginning stimulus, it becomes clear for both the interviewer and Miss Q that their talk will be tape recorded. Miss Q is aware of her position as a storyteller, so she asks whether the tape has begun. The interviewer does not want to interrupt Miss Q's narrative. The interviewer repeats the impulse question and tries to focus Miss Q's attention on this very question.

7.2.2 The Narrative Opens

Q: I haven't had a conversion before, because my studies were too busy. I believed in it when I was in my fifth class in primary school. And my grandma and mother are Christians. So I knew this Christian religion already in my fifth class in primary school.

Moreover, I wasn't influenced by any other religions. I haven't this conversion because my I was really busy with my studies; I had to study and practice playing the violin. I hadn't got this energy. But in my heart this (Jesus) always exists, he is always in my heart.

Miss Q does not answer the question with a description of how she joined the community, but begins with an explanation of her late conversion.

The understanding of “conversion” for Miss Q has at least two levels:

- “this conversion now”: It is a conversion with reflection, which means a clear decision of religious belonging. Miss Q regards her joining the community in Germany as a real conversion.
- “the situations before”: It is a conversion without clear awareness of religious belonging. She might know something about Christianity due to her family background; she might even have experienced of religious practice, but she had not formed awareness of membership to a community.

Miss Q considers that an active decision with awareness is very important in order to enter a community. The time-consuming study during her university period prevented her from an intensive involvement with a religious group, although she had gotten to know something about Christianity in her childhood. She says that she was not influenced by any other religion. The conversion experience in Germany seems to be her affirmation and acknowledgement of her early vague knowledge on Christianity.

But why did she have time in Germany to join the community? Was the studying in Germany not harder and more demanding? Why are the busy studies no longer the excuse for her absence of religious activity?

Q: Later, I came to Germany; I felt it was so marvelous. I came here to take the exam at the music academic school. It was impossible to pass the exam directly. There was someone who passed the exam directly, but it was very difficult. I came to Germany on February the first, took the exam on February the eighth in Leipzig, and I passed. After that, I came to Leipzig.

Miss Q starts with her experience in Germany. She passed the exam despite the

disadvantage of her short stay there. The exam must have been very difficult, but she passed it, so she felt there was something special about her successful test. She emphasizes it as “*marvelous*”. Her studies always play an important role in her life. In her religious life, her studies would also be an important part.

Q: On the first day I came to Leipzig, I applied for the student dormitory. A boy led me to the office. I got a room in a dormitory on the day I applied. I was worried because I had nowhere to sleep that night. A friend laughed at me and said that I could stay overnight in the boy's home. But that day I got my place to stay. My neighbor is a person in this community. So it was effortless for me to find this community.

The dormitory story is the first of a continuing narrative of her “success story”. Miss Q’s way of story telling is always with a difficult beginning which leads her into a difficult situation, and the story always has a surprising and happy end. It was “*effortless*” for her to find the community, which means she was in search of one and she was open and ready to be approached. It is also common for people who come to foreign countries to want to find a group to belong to. The main criterion for Miss Q to attend a group was that it should be a Chinese and Christian organization. The conversion is not an obligation for her to obtain entry to the community, but is part of her own religious pursuit.

Q: Then it was very natural for me to decide to pray, to have the conversion and have this belief.

The formulation “*very natural*” indicates that her joining the community can be seen as an active search.

There are two possibilities of the relationship between Miss Q’s religious pursuit and Miss Q’s decision to join the community. The first possibility: Miss Q searches for a group, which she needs in a foreign environment. She has found this community, and joined in, and then she undertook the rules and the whole religious system of this community. The second possibility: Miss Q already had her own perception of belief. She searched for a group which corresponds to her perception. That is why she joined

this community.

7.3 The Hypothesis of Latent Meaning Generating Rules and Structure

Miss Q came to Germany and soon afterwards joined the community. Her main purpose of coming to Germany consists of an intensifying of her music studies. Her entry into the community does not seem to have a direct relation to her studies. The relation between her studies and religious practice was not that constructive when she was in China. In her view, her busy studying in China has prevented her from a deep involvement with the Christian religion.

Although her family members are Christians, she did not feel it necessary to have a connection with a special religious group in China. Her awareness of the membership in a religious group was obtained after her coming to Leipzig and joining this community.

When she told about her decision of joining, she talked about her study and family. Her family and studies may have played an important role in her process of conversion and her religious practice, which needs to be proved in the interview.

In her story, she always begins with a difficult situation in an alien environment, and ends up with a surprising but happy solution. She regards the overcoming of her difficulties as a divine miracle. Her understanding of her life is deeply influenced by her present religious conviction. To understand and explain how she understands the relation between life and religion is the main work of this analysis.

7.4 Indications from the Interview

7.4.1 Community as a Family Substitute

S: How do you feel about the community?

Q: Good.

Q: The community is like a family, it is really like a family. Particularly because there is

Shi-Mu (the wife of the pastor). At the very beginning of my arrival, she asked us to visit her home whenever she cooked something delicious. She took special care of me, because I was the new there. I never felt it was hard to study and to live abroad. Never feel that.

Miss Q never felt that it was “*hard to study and to live in abroad*”, because she is in the community, which provides the concern and care she needs as a foreign student. The pastor’s wife plays the role of a substitute mother to Miss Q.

One of the most popular and important social forms of communication among Chinese people in the community is to have dinner together. People talk and share their stories at the table, like family members do. Gathering for dinner is one of the community members’ favorite activities. Most of the foreign students in Germany have a very humble budget for daily food. Some of them just have bread and water for dinner for weeks. For Miss Q, to have dinner at the pastor’s home does not only mean to have a decent dinner with meat and fish, but also to have cozy and comfortable conversations with people who use the same language and share the same living conditions. She feels treated like a family member. In this family, people do care about the other and share emotions and daily routine. She expresses this feeling by using the phrase “*it is really like a family*”. The emotional needs are satisfied despite the long distance away from home. She found a family substitute in Germany, on which she can rely emotionally and concerning her daily life.

The form of gathering together at home for dinner is a combination of Chinese tradition and missionary activities. Not every dinner serves the purpose of serious religious mission, but the participants often discuss religious matters. For those who are already members of the community, it is also an occasion to exchange knowledge and religious experience. For those who have not converted yet, it might be a simple traditional dinner for social activities, because they are not forced to speak about religion. The gathering for dinner is always an attractive event. At the beginning, people come because of interest in decent and delicious food, and later for the mutual bond between them; finally it is everything. For Miss Q, it had already become a part of her life to be

one of these people who sit at the table and have different things to share.

The community is an important support for the young students who study abroad. For most of them, this is the first time to facing a totally different world with their deficient knowledge of life, which is the reason why many of them are in need of help in order to cope with life. Frustrations and joys need to be shared. The dinner appointment turns out to be a ritual of sharing life pleasantly. For Miss Q, to become a member of the community is part of the process of becoming a member of a big family, where security is to be found and care is to be obtained.

7.4.2 Emotional Support from the Community

Q: The exam was in the morning and in the afternoon I was already looking for a job. I think that without the community's help, I may have been able to stand the professor, but I wouldn't have gained anything, if I had followed this professor. Actually, the idea of changing the professor was a suggestion from a sister in the church. She encouraged me to change the professor.... I am a very timid person, actually, that means I would have never changed the professor on my own. Nowadays, I would be able to do this on my own. If I had asked the students in the music schools, they would have suggested that I not change, because they know he's a powerful man. But I did not have the opportunity to ask anyone because I only knew a few people from the music school. But I knew a few people from our community, so I just asked for their opinions and they strongly suggested to switch the professor, which I did.

Q: Then on that day before the exam, I was praying the whole time. Different people who belong to L's group were praying for me and crying, they were praying for me the whole night through. One week before the exam, I was not afraid of it any more, and I felt I could pass that exam.

Miss Q experienced a challenge in her study. In the beginning, she followed an intolerant professor, who had shouted at her in front of other students when she was late to school and made small mistakes playing the violin. She was often scolded by him without any reason; she did not communicate with him in a successful way. During

Miss Q's frustration period her friends in the community suggested that she change the professor. With the courage and support from the community, Miss Q applied for a change of professor. She wrote a letter to her professor to excuse herself for her unsuccessful communication with him and said that due to their different characters she decided to switch to another professor. This action made the professor angry. One of the consequences was that she surprisingly found herself on the list of the students who were supposed to have an extra exam. This occurrence might have something to do with the professor's anger. If she had failed it, she would have been dismissed by the school. Miss Q shared her worry with community members and prayed and prayed. Members of the community also prayed for her, and Miss Q knew that. These prayers provided her with enough confidence to face the exam and to overcome the difficult situation.

It should be noted that the community suggested changing the professor. Miss Q stated that she only knew "*few people in the music school*". But her friends are to be found inside the community; she does not have any confidential person outside this community, neither at school nor at work. Had she known that the professor was that powerful, she would never have made the change. Her decision was not only made on her own, but due to the suggestion and emotional support from the community. That means it turns out to be a collective decision in order to help Miss Q out of her predicament. First the community suggested that she change the professor, so she gained emotional support, and afterwards the community members prayed for her, which means she got spiritual support.

Miss Q is thankful for the emotional support. The way the members pray for each other corresponds to Miss Q's need for family care.

7.4.3 Practical Support from the Community

Q: I have to look for a job. Since having this idea, I've prayed for it. I just had the time to pray for a job once, then came the Probezeitprüfung⁷⁵. I devoted all of my attention

⁷⁵ It is an examination, which students take in the middle of their studies to prove that they are qualified for further studying. Failing the examination means disqualification of further studying and the student will consequently be

and energy to this Probezeitpruefung. Before the exam, marvelously, I met a Sister on the Lord's Day in the church. She was about to go back home. She'd been working in the Café near the school. She asked me, whether I wanted to do the job. If I wanted to, I would have to be quick, because the advertisement was hung in the window. So I went there directly.

As a foreign student in Germany, Miss Q has to solve her problem of financial support. She brought some of her family savings, which were obviously not enough for her whole study period. She had to find some other way to ensure her income. It is not easy for a foreign student to find a job without speaking German fluently. The “success story” style repeats itself again; it should have been difficult, but everything went surprisingly smoothly and successfully: Her exam, the search for a new professor as well as the application for a job. After the successful exam, she went to the café, had the interview and got the job. Miss Q regards these happenings as God's providence.

The information concerning the job was provided from a member in the community. She met this member a few times during Sunday worship, which is one of the most common community activities. Community members come to the church, talk and share the latest news regarding their lives. For the community members, worship on Sunday is not only a religious ritual, but also an information exchange meeting. For the Chinese in Germany, there are several forms of social communications: For the Chinese Christian, one of these forms of social communication exists in Sunday worship, in which social networking plays an important role. In church, they share stories and talk about the problems they are facing. Due to their similar living conditions, they face common matters in daily life: For example, study problems. The useful information they share circulates in an efficient way: For instance, information about jobs and cheap flight tickets. This is a possibility for community members to help each other. The community acts as an “information pool” for its members, which provides practical support.

dismissed.

7.4.4 Further Education and Religious Teaching

7.4.4.1 Community Activities in Germany

S: Did you attend their camping trips⁷⁶?

Q: I've participated in the camping trips. The current section is about why we should join the community. The other sections are about why the Christians should go to church, or why Christians should donate the tithe, and how we should spread the gospels, etc. The content is divided into different parts. Because of the limited duration of the camps, the content could not be explained in a very detailed way every time. So we have to do extra study ourselves later.

Miss Q did not acquire religious knowledge systematically until she joined the community. She might have heard something in her childhood about the Bible or Jesus from her grandmother, but she did not know how to behave like a Christian. The “know-how” concerning religion and ritual was gained in Germany; the learning process took place in this community.

One of the specialties of the Chinese Christian Community in Germany are the camping trips it offers, which are organized by the pastor and F.M.C.D.⁷⁷, whose missionary headquarters is located in Hanover⁷⁸. Miss Q is easily accessible for missionary workers due to the following reasons:

Firstly, Miss Q has Christian family members. This is why Christian teachings could easily raise her interest without difficulties.

Secondly, due to the favorable impression of Christianity, Miss Q did not doubt the teachings of the community, she undertook directly what was taught.

Actually, the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig started almost from zero. The transnational support can help a little concerning local religious teaching in Germany⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ See chapter 3.

⁷⁷ See chapter 3.

⁷⁸ See chapter 3.

⁷⁹ See chapter 3.

Miss Q emphasizes the time limitation of the camps: The teachers and pastors fly to Germany and give lectures for two or three days, but the crash course cannot satisfy the various demands from the different participants. Miss Q says, “*So we have to do extra study ourselves later.*” That shows that the local religious education is not sufficient for the community members.

The religious knowledge is taught by pastors from aboard. Those community members, who actively learn the Bible and read relevant books and articles, can soon be the leaders of the Bible reading group. This model of self-learning and self-reproducing is the basic model of religious education in the community. Active and diligent theological learning helps the member to become a community leader, but it does not guarantee a leader position. The leaders of the community should be capable of answering different theological questions. They do not have to answer the questions like an academic, but they should at least have some knowledge concerning the question.

It would be possible for Miss Q to study theology systematically, but she does not care about the “*subtle theology debates*”. What she wants is to take part in the activities of community, to learn about the theological knowledge of the community and to follow the given rules. She is not the type of person who pursues religion enthusiastically and actively. Miss Q is not and does not want to be the leader of the community; she is a follower. She does not commit herself that much in the community, so she probably lays her focus on the religion.

7.4.4.2 Sermons and Religious Education

S: How do you like the pastors who are from the USA or Canada and come to Germany to give lectures?

Q: I like pastor Yuan. I like his sermons. There are some other pastors like pastor Hong: when I came to the community, I could fall asleep during his sermons. Really. I'm very honest. Many times during the Bible study at his home, I slept. But if you read the Bible carefully and in detail, then you will understand the sweetness and profoundness of his preaching. It takes time.

But those pastors, pastor Yuan and pastor Zhan, do have a special way of preaching. When they speak, you will be attracted by the content. It does not matter whether you are Christian or not, because they have humor. Through humor, we learn a lot.

Miss Q was impressed by the sermons, which were given by the pastors coming from America and Canada. She was quite bored at the local pastor's home, but the camping trips and the pastors and teachers from other countries play important role in her religious education.

This dichotomy challenges the religious community founders and leaders in their capability of educating the new members. On one side, new members are welcomed in the community, and they can join the community with their expectations; on the other side, without adequate guides and attention, their expectations will not be fulfilled, and therefore they could be frustrated and disappointed.

Biblical teachings are one part of the religious education. Shared moral rules by Christians will also be taught. At camp, many themes will be discussed and taught: For Miss Q, the teachings, which are relevant to daily life, are the most impressive and useful teachings, because she can adopt them to her daily life. Her expectation cannot be met by the pastor because of his tight time schedule.

The camping trips are very helpful to improve the local religious teachings. Its supplementary function facilitates the educational work of the local pastor, but it does not satisfy all the local members' needs. When community members have theological questions and the next camping will take place in three months, the dissatisfying lessons from the local pastor are not sufficient; they have to search for the answers themselves. Some diligent members read relevant materials on the Internet or in books, trying to find the answers, which are sometimes different from the local pastor's teaching. Dissatisfied community members might therefore question the theological authority of the pastor.

Miss Q is not one of the diligent reading members, in that she does not question the teaching from the local pastor. Her interest in the camps indicates an insufficiency concerning local religious education, due to which the community loses its attraction. It

remains attractive to Miss Q as a family substitute, but as a religious learning place, she expects more. The insufficiency might lead to complaints about the local pastor regarding his teaching. Miss Q's role as a follower does not encourage her to question the role and capability of local pastor. It prevents her also from further theological learning. She said that the local pastor's teaching was profound, but as it was not easy to understand for the audience, it took time to capture it. Her preference for the other pastors indicates that she is not attracted to the local teaching.

Q: The camping is important. Each time they taught us different things. I do not know the others' opinions about it, but to me it is important. It makes me better integrated into this community and able to obtain particular teachings.

It was taught little by little what a community life should look like, how to further your spiritual studies, how to treat others around you as a Christian. It does not matter whether you are Christian or not, how you could influence others, the people who around you. These teachings are very profound.

Q: There are many more chances to get to know Christians in Germany. Because inside China, the government has some control of the religion, and religion cannot be openly practiced in the public sphere.... Only when we have good relations, then we can know and talk about it. Here, there is free speech, everything is free. At the beginning of the Semester, the pastor and the workers in the churches will release magazines at the students' registration office. So it is easier to get in touch with Christianity here.

Q: I could not believe so firmly, if I hadn't studied in Germany. There, religious life is much more focused. Inside China, there are relative few chances to get to know Christianity.

Q: If I was in China, my religiousness would have developed much more slowly. I might arrive at the present state in my thirties. I feel the teachings here are intensive ones.

On the one hand, the camping trips provide Miss Q with a wide vision of religious learning; on the other hand, the promising beginning of her theological interest and study cannot be continually supported by the local pastor. Teachings from camp are

helpful for her to “*integrate into this community*”. This means that there are already developed rules and norms in the community. As a follower, Miss Q should understand the existing rules and norms, and adjust herself to the community life, in order to better integrate into this community. Sermons from camp are like behavior guides for Miss Q to understand the life of the community and her own position. It is surprising that the local pastor is not able to be the spiritual guide for this kind of follower like Miss Q. It might be due to his uninteresting sermons.

When Miss Q joined the community, she got the chance to attend the camping trips and to further her spiritual study. Actually, the function of camp is not very related to the actual theological learning. For Miss Q, it is more about how to behave like a Christian and how to act in the community. It is about the understanding of rules and norms in this small Chinese Christian community, in other words, her spiritual study which she pursues through camping makes her better integrated into this community besides her gaining more knowledge of Christianity.

The teachers from abroad provide effective supplementary work for the mission of the local pastor, but they cannot solve the local basic problem, which is the lack of systematic religious education. A transnational religious community must face problems like this. For the type of follower represented by Miss Q, it is not a big problem. She still thinks that there are more teachings in Germany and these are better than the ones she can get in China.

Although Miss Q has Christian family members, she did not know much about Christianity. Most of her knowledge about the Christian religion was acquired in Germany. In comparison to the situation in China, where no mission work is allowed in public, the mission workers do have a relatively free space to carry out their activities in Germany.

In China, the approaches to the Christian religion are limited in the churches and families. Mission in public is still not allowed. The missionary approaches from churches to Chinese people are also limited due to political sensitivity. In China, both sides (church and a-religious people) are confronted with the same difficulty: They need

to actively search for their religious goals in a limited area, and their meeting happens in a politically regulated field, which is legal and safe. For those who do not want to take the time and make an effort to go to church, there is the possibility of giving up their spiritual search, or of turning to other politically less complicated spiritual practices.

In Germany, this difficulty is not a problem any more. Missionary work can be practiced everywhere across the country.

In its main form, the Chinese Christian community is an active community trying to approach people. Miss Q's early knowledge of Christianity might encourage her to approach the community.

In the broad "finding each other" sense, the freedom to mission in Germany is advantageous for followers like Miss Q and the pastor as well as missionary workers to conduct their favorite targets.

In a strict sense, the continuity of religious education is also challenged due to the community location. The freedom to mission in Germany also means the difficulty of sustaining the community. Even the type of follower like Miss Q demands teachings with quality.

She emphasizes the intensity of religious teachings of her community in Germany. The reasons of this intensity are the following: Firstly, the Chinese Christian community does provide a number of courses and teachings of high quality. Secondly, Miss Q did not get any religious teachings or education in China. For people who have already converted in China, the courses and camps in Germany might not be satisfying. Miss Q represents the prototype of a Chinese convert in Germany. Her religious knowledge and praxis are fully learned in Germany, so the few courses and teachings mean an intensive religious education for her.

Thirdly, as a foreign student in Germany, Miss Q's daily life is simpler than it was in China. When she was in China, besides her normal study, she spent her time with different friends and on different forms of entertainment, which did not relate to one another. In Germany, her life is briefly divided into two parts: The life in the music

school and the life in community. She is now focused on the community and even goes to the cinema with her friend from the community. She always feels herself related to the community. The intensity of the religious education is not only due to the teachings and camping excursions, but also because of her living condition in Germany and the content of her daily life in Germany, which is always related to the community or the community members. For those who have more circles of friends outside the community, it might not be that “intensive”.

7.4.4.3 Theological Understanding and Identity

S: What do you mean by “the authentic Christians”?

Q: They are not heretics like the Mormons. They are the authentic Christians like our community here.

S: Do you know which kind of denomination you belong to?

Q: Denomination? I have no idea. I am the kind of person, for which it is enough to take care of herself. I know that what I believe is right, that’s enough. I do not need to participate in the debates in theology. That belongs to theology. I just need to rely on God.

Miss Q’s role in the community is that of the follower, which means she directly takes over the religious teachings in the community. Her theological understanding of Christianity is mainly influenced by what she learned in the community. She puts emphasis on the definition “*authentic Christians*” and contrasts them with the Mormons. She uses the word “*heretics*” to describe the Mormons. This means that in her community a significant difference is made between the “*authentic Christians*” and the “*heretics*”. By building an opposite heretic image, the self-image is strengthened in this way. Miss Q forms her awareness as being an “*authentic Christian*”. But this opposite image is not very clear. Miss Q does not have any idea about denomination; she is not interested in the differences between denominations. In her mind the vague contrast is not a clearly defined contrast between “*Christianity*” and “*the other*”. She cannot tell who “*the other*” is, what the exact difference is. For Miss Q, the word “*authentic*” is not

related to theology; it is a word used to indicate her awareness of membership: The membership in this community guarantees her to be an authentic Christian.

It becomes obvious from the interview that Miss Q does not have knowledge about the history of denominations of Christianity. These might not be taught at the camping trips and summer camp, so she did not learn these teachings at camp or in the community, and she is not interested in acquiring them. Her confirmation of “*just need to rely on god*” may have two reasons. Firstly, it is her own decision to give up the complicated theological study. Secondly, to “just rely on god” might be a motto inside the evangelical community.

Miss Q accepts what is taught in the community and incorporates the teachings into her own world view. If she had some other possibilities of theological study, or if she had contact with other religious groups, she would have other opinions about “*authentic*” and “*denomination*”. Her theological understanding is in this sense also limited by her less active role as a follower.

From a pastor’s point of view, this type has two discrepant sides. If we make some experimental thoughts, we can find out that in the eye of a pastor, he would have the following judgments: On one hand, as a less active member in a religious community, this type of people, the followers, are relatively easier to lead. On the other side, they can also quickly be lost.

This “easy to lead” means that as long as the community strongly exists and has a sound function in leading the members, continuously developing, Miss Q will keep her membership and regularly attendance in the community. But if the community faces problems, for example, theological conflicts between members or financial problems, Miss Q will not let herself get involved in these problems. She would rather stay in the margin and keep her role as a follower. She does not have any idea about how the community could become better developed. She does not think it is her task to think about this. For her, taking care of herself, “*that’s enough.*” Miss Q’s religious practice is related to the community, but for the community Miss Q is not one of the core members, who are be able to make decisions about the development of the community.

“Quickly be lost” contains two levels:

Firstly, Miss Q does not care about the theology of the community. If there was another Chinese Christian Community, she would possibly join the other one, if the other also provided what she needed. It would be a competitive situation. Core members of the community rarely turn to other organizations, but followers like Miss Q could be attracted by other organizations. For the community, follower members are not “loyal” members. They are devoted to the community as long as the community functions well. Once they change their living location or environment, they will possibly lose the connection with their original community. In this sense, they are easily lost due to their high mobility and their less active follower role awareness that they have less attachment to a particular community.

Secondly, Miss Q’s religious knowledge and practice are learned in Germany. Actually, the pastor of the community is a Baptist. Due to the insufficient local educating resources, the camping trips and summer camps can help solve the education problem. But the transnational teachers from Canada and Hong Kong may bring different religious ideas and thoughts to the community members.

Miss Q will go back to China after her studies in Germany are finished. If she wants to continue her religious practice, she will need to have a membership in a local community there. The problem is that the ideas and thoughts, which Miss Q learned in Germany, may be different from the teachings in China. There might be political ideological influenced theological teachings, and maybe some other forms of religious practice. Due to China’s unique development in religious history, Miss Q will face another adaptation process once she has returned to China. Because Miss Q was not a core member of the community in Germany, she had few experiences in organizing activities in this transnational community, so she will naturally choose to be a follower as well. If there are differences between religious teachings and practices in Germany and in China, Miss Q will be confused, but she will probably take over the rules and norms of the new community and be one member of them. In this sense, the original community will lose her as a member. Miss Q will assimilate into the local community

without struggling with her special spiritual demands. If she had been a core member with community organizing experiences, she would likely have formed a home community. But Miss Q is not the kind of person who wants to reproduce the religious relationship, the organization, and the kind of membership, which characterizes the Chinese Christian German community. Her religious identity was founded and created in this community. But she is not very committed to the community.

7.4.5 Language as a Barrier and the Contact outside the Community

S: Have you ever been to German churches?

Q: Only once. I did not understand anything. Then I did not go there any more.

S: Where did you go?

Q: Take bus 1, it's near the central station. There are quite a few churches in Germany.

S: Did you go alone?

Q: I went there with a friend, who also does not speak German very well. But the atmosphere and singing were the same. The procedure was the same.

Another reason why Miss Q joined this Chinese community and not a German one, might be her insufficient German language skills. Miss Q once tried another community, a German church. She did this only once, and realized that she did not get anything there. At the beginning, language might have been a barrier for Miss Q to get involved into a German community, but even with her later improvement in language skills which enabled her to understand more, she did not go to German churches or another German community anymore, because she had already joined this Chinese community, where she has found what she needed. The fact that she was curious about German church is surely based on religious interest; her staying in the Chinese community is based on many factors.

After a period of time, the emotional reliance and practical support from the Chinese Christian community has built a firm relationship with Miss Q, which cannot be easily substituted. Miss Q's personal life and experience in Germany reinsured this solid

relationship. She joined the community soon after she came to Germany, and she did not have time or a chance to get to know other friends. That is why the bond with the community is so strong and solid.

For short-term migrants, like labor workers, academics, and international students, there is no time to build individual communities. If there are suitable organizations in foreign countries, which provide emotional reliance and practical support, they will join the organizations soon and settle into the community. Almost all of their practical and spiritual needs can be satisfied through the membership. Integration into the foreign society does not seem that important for them when they have found such an organization. Their self-created narrow world is their real living condition.

The Chinese Christian community provided Miss Q with the help and support at the beginning of her stay in Germany, which made her adaptation into society smoother. In other words, Miss Q does not need to accommodate to the German society totally, because the Chinese Christian community shoulders many functions as a social organization. Miss Q can be integrated into this community with much less effort than she would with a German one. She chose her living environment, in other words, the content of her daily life, in Germany by living her life inside the community. With the familiar language, with familiar social manners, with new learned religious norms, she could integrate more easily.

The existence of the Chinese Christian community provides short time migrants like Miss Q a relatively comfortable living environment, which makes it less necessary for her to get an insight into the host society. In the sense of integration into the host society, this organization prevents Miss Q from a wider adaptation to the host society.

7.4.6 The Role of the Pastor

Q: There is a water pool in the church, which can be opened. During the baptizing, I wore white clothes and stepped into the pool. And the pastor said: I baptize you in the name of the Holy Father and the Holy Son and the Holy Spirit. It was said twice. I stepped into the water, and then stepped out.

During the interview, Miss Q mentioned the pastor three times: Concerning his boring and difficult sermons, him being at home with his wife and in church and during the baptizing process. For Miss Q, the pastor undertakes a religious functional role in the community regarding concrete things: He preaches and baptizes. She does not mention a personal emotional relation between herself and him, and it does not seem like there was one. The pastor represents a functional organizer and leader in the community. The relationship between the pastor's wife and the community members is more personal. Miss Q associates the pastor's wife with delicious dinners, and she shares her daily life with her. The pastor's wife represents a mother, and behaves like an elder trustful friend. This connection stabilizes the relation between Miss Q and the pastor's family.

At the beginning of her study, she got telephone calls from the pastor's wife, and always got invitations to have dinner at the pastor's home. The pastor himself never called her. The pastor does not play the role of father or any family member. The personal and family invitations were always taken over by the pastor's wife, and meanwhile the pastor keeps his role as religious leader and organizer in the community. This cooperation of the pastor and his wife leads to active development of the community.

Due to the transnational networks, the pastor has different resources that help him to carry out his mission work in Germany. These resources can be briefly described as the following: Religious, organizational, educational, financial resources and personal relationships. Types like Miss Q do not require of all these resources.

The pastor's religious leading role is important for most of the community members, but his resources are neither attractive nor important for Miss Q. During his sermons, Miss Q would fall asleep. The relationship between the pastor and Miss Q is indirectly connected to community life. In Miss Q's religious practice, the connection with the pastor is the ceremonial service he offers, for example the baptizing ritual.

The educational resources consist of two main principle modes: On the one hand side, there are the camping excursions, which are financially supported by transnational organizations, and always held in different places. On the other hand side, there are the Sunday schools and Bible reading groups, which are organized at the local level and take place locally.

The pastor is the main organizer of the camp. His work consists more of administrative tasks than of religious ones. The pastor offers courses at Sunday school and has guided some Bible reading groups since the beginning of the community establishment. His role as a religious teacher is fulfilled but the members are not very satisfied. Miss Q is always in search of better theological quality, although she is satisfied with the variety and diversity of the religious educational offerings.

If we make some experimental thoughts, we could find out that the quantity of religious educational offers may be enough for type like Miss Q, but the quality still demands improvement. Although the type like Miss Q will not question the theological authority of the pastor, the community will lose its attraction in a sense of religious guide, if the quality does not improve in the long term.

The pastor flies to North America several times a year in order to raise funds for the development of the community. Financial resources are necessary for the existence and the sustaining of the community, for example, to organize excursions. By organizing these activities, the community events can be made possible and supported; and the community gains vitality and attraction. When Miss Q attends the camping events, the travel fees are reimbursed, which is due to the pastor's efforts to even help the poor students attend. Miss Q benefits from his efforts, both concerning religious practice and education. The financial support is important to the community, but not visible for Miss Q. She is not directly affected by the financial status of the community.

To attend camp is attractive for her after her joining the community, but it is not the reason why she joined.

The Pastor thinks Chinese people should be involved in a Chinese religious community. Those who visit foreign churches are not good Chinese Christians. In this sense, to live inside the community, to spend a large part of life in the community is what he expects and he tries to make it possible by creating an autarkic living environment.

Emotional support does not come directly from the pastor, but is provided from the community itself. Within the structure of the community, Miss Q is able to find what she longs for. For types like Miss Q the pastor is like an invisible and indirect supporter, who organizes the collective activities, raises money, and takes care of the community

development. He tries to create an environment, in which all the community members, including Miss Q, get what they are looking for. His efforts in constructing the community play an important role in Miss Q's decision of joining the community.

7.4.7 The Family Reaction and Future Influence

S: What did your family say?

Q: My mother is of course very happy. She is particularly happy. My auntie is happy, too. My grandma always taught her daughters about religious faith. But my grandma passed away, and after that they were busy with the children, so they did not lead a regular Christian life. But in their hearts, they have faith.

Q: I just know the community my grandma took me to when I was in fifth grade at primary school. It was a community with old people. They were all old. What I felt particularly marvelous about, was what happened to my mouth ulcer. It was a very big and terrible mouth ulcer. My grandma took me there and said, look at this old lady, let her pray for you. I remember so well that old lady prayed for me. After two days the mouth ulcer was gone. This is what I remember very well. I thought it was marvelous. How could it be possible?

Q: Of course, my dream was to become a teacher at the university. Now I have the same dream. But now I know that I need to study hard and play violin well. When I succeed, the road to the future will appear before me. There is no need to panic. I won't lack food; I won't lack clothes. I won't lack anything. I just need to rely on Him and believe in Him. Miss Q's grandmother and mother are Christians. Miss Q's family members expected her to convert. In the interview, Miss Q mentions her childhood experience with Christianity. When she was six years old, her grandmother brought her to the local church, and let an old lady pray for Miss Q to cure her mouth ulcer. After the prayer, her mouth ulcer healed quickly. Today, she regards this healing as "marvelous". Her new understanding of religion leads her to a new explanation of her childhood experience.

Her conversion in Germany was not planned by her or her family. In China the most important thing for a child is to gain knowledge during study. Parents assume the

responsibility of taking care of children regarding food and clothes, etc. on the material level. Schools bear the responsibility to educate children concerning social behavior and morality, in addition to science and literature. Some Christian families will let their children take part in their religious activities, others do not. Miss Q's family did not compel Miss Q to convert. Maybe Miss Q's excuse of "*being busy with her studies*" is true, because it was more important for her and her family that she focused on her study. Her main goal to come to Germany was to study there, so the conversion was an unexpected surprise to her as well as to her family.

The pastor hopes that the converted Chinese in Germany may spread Christianity when they return to China. This kind of missionary work is not part of Miss Q's future plans. This follower type will have his influence within his daily life and work. Miss Q does not actively proselytize the other Chinese in Germany, and she does not want to do so in China, either. After her coming back to her homeland, her role of being a follower will lead her to another community, and she will continue to be a follower in that community. The Pastor's hope concerning proselytization cannot be expected to be realized by the types of follower like Miss Q. Her future plans concerning the religion do not match the pastor's expectations. After the death of Miss Q's grandmother, her family's religious practice had stopped for a while. Miss Q's conversion and religious practice may revitalize the family's religious practice after her return. This is also what the pastor may expect.

7.5 Summary

7.5.1 Motive of Joining the Community

Miss Q's motives of joining the community have a three-level structure. Chronologically, Miss Q's approach towards religion can also be divided into three parts: 1) Childhood and family influences, school and university time 2) Life in Germany 3) Community life.

7.5.1.1 First level: Reconnection with Childhood Experience

Miss Q has a Christian family background; her pious grandmother took her along to the local church when she was a child. But in China Miss Q did not have a clear awareness of her connection with a religious group. Her time-consuming study was not helpful for her religious practice. Her coming to Germany provided Miss Q a chance to reconnect with her childhood religious experience. Her religious interest was aroused in Germany again; her religious identity was formed and created in this Chinese Christian Community.

Miss Q's aim to come to Germany was for the deepening of her music studies. She soon afterwards joined the community. In the interview, Miss Q regards conversion as a religious action, which means a clear deliberate decision. Miss Q regards her joining the community as a real conversion. Her awareness of membership in a religious group was obtained after her coming to Germany and joining this community.

The first level of her motive of joining the community was that Miss Q was in search of affirmation and acknowledgement of her childhood's vague concept of religion. She searched for a community, and found this community in Germany; it fulfills the expectation of her spiritual demands. This is one of the reasons why she joined the community. To convert is not an obligation for obtaining the entry into the community, and for Miss Q, the conversion is part of her own religious pursuit.

7.5.1.2 Second level: Benefits of Being a Member of the Community

The second level of her motive of joining the community is that the membership of the community is like the membership of a family. During her stay in Germany, Miss Q encounters a different situation, in which the social function of the community is useful for Miss Q. Not only the religious functions, but also the social practical functions are attractive for Miss Q. Her stay in Germany is like a catalyst regarding the forming of her religious awareness.

The early contact with the community is related to having dinner at the pastor's home.

What impresses Miss Q is the familiar atmosphere during dinner before the bible reading. The feeling of “*being in a family*” is the major attraction for Miss Q at the beginning of her approach to the community. For Miss Q, to have dinner at the pastor’s home does not mean only to have a decent dinner, but also to have a pleasant conversation with people who use the same language and share the same life environment. She feels she is treated like a family member. For Miss Q, to be a member of the community is a process to become part of a big family, where security and care are to be obtained.

With her regularly visiting the pastor’s home, the dynamic relations between Miss Q and the community began. Miss Q benefits from the community regarding several aspects:

Miss Q gets emotional support from the community. Her confidants are to be found inside the community. When she was in trouble with her studies and had problems with her professor, Miss Q always turned to the community members to ask for advice and help. Members of the community prayed for her, which provided Miss Q with enough confidence to face and overcome the difficulties.

Miss Q also gets practical support from the community. In the interview, each of Miss Q’s successful experiences is related to the community: passing the exam, getting a job, etc. Miss Q regards these as a providence of God. Miss Q’s main information resource is the community, whose social network helps its members to get acute help and useful information.

Miss Q gets further education in spirituality. To her, the Bible reading group is a family-like activity, which cannot give her enough guidance in theological understanding, but helps her to cope with life. She takes part in the camping trips and summer camps, which are provided and organized by the community. Her religious knowledge was gained in Germany. Participating in the camping trips make her better integrated into this community, apart from acquiring more knowledge about Christianity. She learns how to behave as a Christian. The camping trips are about the understanding of rules and norms in this small Chinese Christian community.

Miss Q benefits from the existence of the community. Being a member of this community implicates a better living environment, both practically and spiritually. The quality of her life in Germany was improved, because she became a member of this community. For Miss Q, the entry into the community fulfilled her expectation of being in a nice family.

Generally speaking, the emotional reliance and practical supports of the community built a firm relationship with the peer-group.

7.5.1.3 The Third Level: Community Involvement

The process of Miss Q's involvement in the community has been a slow and changing one, which is also related to her embeddedness in the religious practice of the community. Her involvement is crucial regarding her role in the community.

After Miss Q's regular attendance of Sunday worships and dinners at the pastor's home, she decided to be baptized and thus become formally one of the community members. She does not actively go to other Chinese to conduct the missionary work. She says that she does not even argue with others about the doctrines of and opinions about Christianity. She would rather be a non-active member, who does not want to take the responsibility of community development. She only takes part in the activities when she is asked to. She does not organize any activity inside the community. Her performance in the community corresponds to her self-ascription: She is just a follower of a community. The follower type shoulders fewer organizational tasks in the community. The follower type takes over the norms and rules of the community without reluctance, and stays in the community as long as he/she can. But this follower type does not play an active part in missionary work.

7.5.2 Miss Q's Type in the Community

7.5.2.1 Miss Q as a Follower Type

Before her entry in the community, Miss Q was one of the ideal types for missionary

work. But after her joining the community, Miss Q's type does not completely fulfill the pastor's expectation. Both are based on the character of Miss Q's type.

Miss Q has Christian family members, so she feels quite familiar with Christianity. Besides, when she came to Germany, she was in search of a community. The community that she found corresponded to what she expected. Therefore, the pastor and church did not need to make great efforts to convince and convert her.

After her joining the community, Miss Q takes part in its activities, gains religious knowledge, and follows the rules which are given. Miss Q is not and does not want to be a leader of the community; she is a follower type. Because of her self-ascription as a follower of the community, she is indifferent to the development of the community. She enjoys the intensity of religious teachings in Germany, although she is not satisfied with the local religious teaching. She always takes over what is given.

Miss Q's religious identity is related to the community. She forms her self-awareness as being an "authentic Christian" by taking part in the community.

Her embeddedness in the community is limited by her self-ascription as a follower. As long as the community remains stable and has a sound function, Miss Q will keep her membership and regularly attend the community. She will not let herself be involved in conflicts between members or financial problems.

Miss Q was once active at the beginning of her search for a community due to her family background; she was willing to enter a trustworthy Christian community. But after her becoming a member, she became less active. She neither cares about the development of the community nor the missionary work in Germany or in China. Her religious interest shows individual features and she is not ambitious in missionary works at all. Miss Q's type is the follower type with individual religiousness.

The Chinese Christian community assumes many functions, such as being a social organization. With little effort, Miss Q can be integrated into this community. She interlinks her daily life in Germany with her religious life in the community. The community members create a convenient small world as their most important social

space.

For immigrants like Miss Q, the existence of the Chinese Christian community provides a relatively comfortable living environment for a short time, which makes it less necessary to explore the host society. Regarding integration into the host society, this organization prevents Miss Q from a broader adaptation to it.

7.5.2.2 The Function of Miss Q's Type

As a follower of the community, Miss Q does not take part in the diaconal meetings⁸⁰, and does not know anything about the financial details of the community. She does not even know all of the members and is not known by all of them. Her contribution to and her function in the community are limited to her role as a follower.

Miss Q's only visible contribution is her musical performance during Sunday worship, which is related to her study. Actually, the follower type does not have any obligation to fulfill any administrative duties. Their contributions are welcomed but not expected.

Miss Q is not one of the core members of the community who are concerned about and are responsible for its development. She was invited to dinner at the pastor's home, and to different activities. Her livelihood was deeply influenced by the community; most of her social activities are related to community members. But her identity is still that of the "guest inside the community". She does not take part in the "host activities", for example, the participation in missionary work at the university. She regards herself as one member of the community, but not a representative.

She is neither a core member, nor a "backbone member" of the community. The type of follower she stands for does not have deep influence concerning the development of the community. The attention that Miss Q got at the beginning has declined after her joining the community. If the new members of the same type join the community, they will probably get the attention and resources. She is not disappointed, and she does not complain; instead she keeps her role as a follower and is not interested in changing the

⁸⁰ See chapter 3.

degree of her embeddedness.

Follower types like Miss Q influence the community neither concerning religious understanding or education nor regarding administrative and future community development. The relationship between Miss Q and the community is solidly due to the location of it: Germany.

My speculation concerning the follower type is that he or she is loyal to the community as long as the community offers its religious service. Once the followers change their living location, due to their high mobility and their less active follower role ascription, they will neither keep a strong connection with their original community nor reproduce the structures of the community.

It can be assumed that Miss Q will face another adaptation process when she returns to China. She might be intending to assimilate into a local community, because she is not the type who wants to reproduce the religious relationship and organization of her original community. She can be a follower of any community. Her religious identity was found and created in Germany, but later on it will not be modeled after the Chinese Christian community in Germany.

Due to the transnational networks, the pastor has different resources to carry out his mission work in Germany: Religious, organizational, educational, financial, and personal ones. Types like Miss Q do not want or need all these resources. The relation between the pastor and Miss Q is such that they are not personally connected, but indirectly through community life. His work consists more of administrative tasks than of being a religious practical guide, so for Miss Q, he is an invisible and indirect supporter.

The type of a follower like Miss Q is not expected to realize the pastor's wish to "bring the faith to China". The "China mission" is not expected to be realized by Miss Q.

8 Analysis of Miss F

8.1 Biographical Outline of Miss F

Miss F is a student and comes from a middle-scale southern Chinese coastal city, which has a population of 6.6 million. She came to Germany in 2001, before the community was established.

Like many families in China, Miss F comes from an atheist family. Her spiritual interest was Zen Buddhism. She consciously rejected taking part in the activities of the community for a long time. After her coincidental participation in the community, she began to be interested in the Bible and then converted to Christianity and joined the community.

This analysis will attempt to determine why Miss F finally joined the community and what type of community member she is.

8.2 Analysis of the Beginning Sequences

8.2.1 The Beginning Stimulus

S: How did you join this community?

F: It was a coincidence.

The interview begins with a direct question from the interviewer. Miss F answers with a clear statement: “It was a coincidence”. She did not begin with telling by whom she was introduced into the community, but she began with giving a claim. Her narrative tone is confident. “Coincidence” can be understood as unfortunate happenings, but can also be understood as positive providence. The real meaning of this coincidence will be revealed in the following interview.

The message of the word “coincidence” could be that Miss F did not try to look for this community. Her joining into the community was not a planned decision.

8.2.2 The Narrative Opens

F: In February 2006 I went to Berlin to renew my passport, which was about to expire, and on the train I met a brother from the community.

After the concluding statement, that it has been a “coincidence”, Miss F begins to tell the story of how she was introduced to the community. This encounter with a member of the community was not planned either, and can therefore also be understood as a “coincidence”. Although Miss F’s joining the community might be a coincidence, her conversion might not be one.

Eventually Miss F regarded this meeting in the train as a coincidence, which means she regarded the community as a unit outside her world. She had a distance to them when she met the community member on the train.

She remembers the date of February 2006. It might be a very important date to her. As a foreign student she must have to remember every important date. But maybe she is the kind of person, who likes to make everything so precise that she mentions the exact date of this encounter. Another possibility is that she prepared herself for the interview situation, so she has already looked up the exact date.

The central element of her narrative is “I”, so she might be active in the story telling.

The passport is the reason for her meeting with the community. The passport, a daily life element, caused this unexpected encounter. For Miss F, this is the reason why she regards this encounter as a coincidence, which she still regards as a coincidence in her reconstruction of the story. She did not say “it might be a providence of God”.

The words “brother” and “community” for the first time emerge in this description. Miss F calls the person “brother”, a family addressing. This means that, at the moment of this interview, she had already regarded the community member as a family member, and she regarded herself one of this community. “Brother” may also be a community addressing. At this point her identification and affiliation is related to the community. “Brother” is the official naming in the community to address a male member.

F: Because we are both Chinese, we began to talk.

The emphasis of the same Chinese backgrounds means that the community might be a cultural community.

His Chinese nationality has a strong liability for Miss F. The “brother” has the same cultural background and uses the same language. A Chinese cultural background is useful and sometimes even necessary for communication in such a small space: In the train. These are the necessary elements for Miss F that make it possible to begin their first communication. The unique cultural element may play a role in the recognition of reliable people. This recognition takes place in a larger but foreign space: Germany. For The pastor this might be one of the reasons why he does missionary work in Germany.

F: He said, if I had time, I could visit the church. Later he added me in the MSN⁸¹. We had chatted on MSN several times, and he invited me to visit the church.

Miss F focuses on the key question. She does not describe the concrete content of their conversation, but directly mentions the reason for her going to the church: She got an invitation from this community member.

It is most likely that the “brother” began with some other topics and during the conversation mentioned the community. His intention included missionary purpose. He wanted to introduce evangelism to her, to make her a member of the community. He starts building a bridge between Miss F and the Church, besides the personal contact to him.

In this way Miss F has two levels of relationship with the community: one is with the abstract community or church, the other is the personal contact with the brother. The latter relationship can improve and enhance the former relationship.

If the first level does not work the first time, the contact at a personal level could still last for a longer period. In this way Miss F can be constantly in contact with a community member, and therefore she always somehow has a relationship with the community.

The difference between these two levels is useful for the missionary work, so that

⁸¹ MSN is Windows living messenger software, which supports people talk and chat in internet. It requires email address from others as identity recognition online.

people could always be related to the community, even if they were not members. The brother used this strategy with awareness. He used MSN as a method of contact. Through MSN, the online communication software, relaxed virtual chatting takes place. The chatting partner has the free choice of accepting and rejecting a conversation. This makes the contact purpose friendly, and for Miss F hard to reject. An aggressive invitation may frighten people away. MSN as a contact method is ideal for a long term “keep-in-touch” personal relationship. The new technology has its advantage in shortening the distance between strangers, because information can be delivered in a more focused and friendly way to potential future members.

Miss F’s attitude towards his invitation is not clear in this description. She tells the story in a “news broadcasting” style, without her personal judgment or comment on his invitation. Maybe she only remembers the important elements of the encounter, but her neutral style of description indicates a character of keeping distance to things. If Miss F breaks her description discipline, what she says could be very important for this analysis.

F: At that period of time I did not have time, and did not go. But the last time I happened to be nearby the church, so I went there.

It is a coincidence again: Miss F happened to be near the church. Lack of time is used as an excuse for not visiting the church. At that point Miss F regarded visiting the church as something, which was not worth the extra expense of time. Visiting church was generally not on her priority list. For Miss F the church was not worth a particular visit. The behavior of visiting was not her intention, but a “by the way” behavior. Only while she happened to be nearby the church, did she accept the invitation finally without obligation.

Her reluctance to visit the church was obvious, as she hesitated to accept the invitation, and to visit the church.

Her understanding of a church has two meanings. One is a group of people that includes the brother on the train. The other is the building, in front of which she happened to stand one Sunday afternoon. Even though she feels that she did not have any attachment

to this building, the personal contact with the brother made her enter the building, and confront the community.

F: That day H⁸² led the singing.

Miss F tells the experience of the day when she visited the church for the first time. She uses the names of members. This means, her understanding of the community and the whole story is already influenced by Miss F's aspect and knowledge at present. Her subjective feelings and her interpretation should be distinguished in the following texts. Miss F mentions the singing, which impressed her during the visit. The concrete prayer or sermon was not impressive enough to be mentioned.

F: I felt it was quite OK.

Miss F had very possibly a negative expectation of church visiting, which would be "not OK", and prevented her from actively accepting the invitation to visit the church. This real visit brings a new feeling to her regarding her impression towards the community. Her negative attitude has been changed since this visit.

This is her commentary on her own experience. In her narrative this is the first place she shows her own emotional reaction or feeling to it.

F: And it was very strange: On that day nobody talked to me about Christianity, Jesus was the savior, we relied on him to be saved etc.

One of the former expectations of Miss F was that community members would have a conversation with her about religion. She was even prepared for such a conversation. So she felt strange, that the situation in the church was not in accordance with her bias. In this way the contradiction left her with an interested impression of the community. She would not have been pushed into a theological discussion, and the invitation was confirmed to be without obligation. Miss F could feel free. This relaxed situation became a relief of Miss F's doubt on the community activities, on which her interest

⁸² H is a member of the community, who has been in the community for a long time.

increases.

This can be taken as an indication of Miss F's understanding of Christianity before she joined the community. It is also Miss F's understandings of the community's religious culture. It can also be her understanding of religion after her joining the community. These theological thoughts are the most important in this community: "Jesus was the savior, we relied on him to be saved".

F: Nobody said these to me. I did not know whether this brother had done something and said I was hard-hearted. I did not know.

This is Miss F's explanation of the contrast between what she thought she was supposed to experience and what she actually experienced in the church. Her conjecture is that the brother had told others that her heart was tough, but it cannot be proven. We cannot know whether the brother had ever said anything about Miss F, but it can be regarded as Miss F's self-projection. The strange experience that no one talked about Jesus with her in the church is a confirmation of her self-judgment: Stubborn. She regards herself as someone who does not easily change her mind.

The use of the word "hard-hearted"⁸³ indicates an impact of the Bible vocabulary in her articulation. She is reconstructing her experience by using theological concepts. This can be interpreted as her acceptance of Christianity and the Bible. To go from resistance to acceptance might therefore be Miss F's conversion model.

F: Yang asked me whether I studied Buddhism, whether I would be interested in this, and chatted with me.

There was someone from the community, Yang, who talked to Miss F. The topic of the talk was still about religion: Buddhism. Yang is not the brother whom Miss F met on the train, but he knew about her spiritual inclination to Buddhism. This means that the brother from the train shared information about Miss F with community members, whom Yang is one of. Miss F was the target of the missionary task. When Miss F came

⁸³ Miss F uses "hardhearted" (刚硬) to describe her obstinateness. The Chinese word is not often used in daily life. She quotes it from the Bible.

into the church, the people she confronted were not complete strangers to her. At least they knew of her, before she knew them. It was a one-sided transparent situation. Miss F's conjecture might be right, that the brother had said something about her to the other members before she visited the church.

Due to the brother's information sharing, Yang had a good preparation for the conversation with Miss F. The focus of the talk was not on what the community wanted to tell Miss F, but on what Miss F thought. Miss F's thoughts were respected and were not disturbed by any aggressive missionary language.

It may have been a very comfortable and well designed step-by-step missionary plan. From the relaxed personal MSN contact to the invitation to visit church, and from a pleasant get-to-know conversation on the train to a religious talk about Buddhism in the church, Miss F was gradually attracted to this community. Miss F developed a personal communicative relationship with a community member and then got involved in the community activities. From another perspective, the community members developed relationships with Miss F from a personal level to an institutional level. Miss F now had a relationship with the community. A relationship on a personal level refers to individual personal contacts, which are irrelevant to any institutions or organizations. A relationship on institutional level refers to the willingness of an agent to participate in the activities of an institution or organization. Individual contact is not necessary in order to achieve the relationship on an institutional level.

F: I felt it was all right, that there was nothing I should resist. Then they told me on Wednesday night there was a Bible reading activity at the pastor's home. I said that's all right, I would go. I did not have class and had nothing to do, so I went to the pastor's home for Bible reading.

Miss F had a better impression of the community through the visit. She thought that there would have been something she resists. But instead a deeper involvement came. Miss F got another invitation: Bible reading at the pastor's home. Due to her good impression of the community, she was inclined to accept. Lack of time is no longer an excuse. Suddenly Miss F has time for the community activities, which means she has

set a new priority, so that things regarding the community are considered by her to be worthy of anticipation.

For both sides the invitation to the Bible reading is a step further. It is a step further for Miss F to get involved into the community life. It is also a step further for the active missionary community members to attract Miss F's interest. A series of different supplies (Sunday worship, Bible reading group, etc.) is necessary for maintaining the attraction of the community. There is always something new to supply for the new members.

The pastor is mentioned here as a location provider. It is a neutral description. His home means a learning place for Miss F.

F: I do not think the Sunday worship attracted me. Because of things like the sermon, when I did not believe, it was very far from me.

Miss F makes a conclusion about her visit to the church. She had been there to prove her bias of the community and to confirm her expectation. What she got was a disapproval. This positive disapproval washed away her doubt about the community, even though she did not think Sunday worship and sermons were attractive to her. She considered the sermons as "too far" from her, which indicates her inclination towards things that are close to her. The sermon was too abstract, and Miss F would like things concrete. If the sermon sounded boring, she might like something vivid. What the closer things to her are will be known from the following narratives.

Her conclusion is made from a neutral position. Miss F is able to describe herself from a distant perspective and analyze herself reflectively. Her own interpretation of her deeds plays an important role in the reconstruction of her pattern.

F: We read Bible during the Bible reading, what the Bible tells. I felt it was so interesting. I've read some Bible stories, but they were different from the Bible reading. Bible stories were like fairy tales or novels, not the same as the Bible. That night I felt very, very interested.

During church visits Miss F observed the community and acted cautiously and reserved.

Her attitude changed after the Bible reading activity. She uses the word “we”, therefore she regards herself as part of this activity. She often uses the expression “I feel”. Her angle of narrative has changed from neutral observation to subjective expression of feelings.

Miss F emphasizes very strongly and emotionally that the Bible reading activity is “so” interesting. In contrast to the unattractive sermon and Sunday worship, the Bible reading arouses her interest and strikes Miss F’s heart. Her former experience of the Bible reading was about some Bible stories and she thought it would be similar here, just like fairy tales or novels. What she experienced that day was another surprise, which was different in comparison with her former expectation. Because of the unexpected interesting Bible reading, the disapproval turned out to be a positive surprise to her.

Miss F has had a new concept of the Bible since then. She distinguishes between the Bible stories she read before and the Bible reading activity in the small group. She did not mention what was exactly so interesting, but there must have been something that attracted her. It could have been the form of group reading, it could be the discussion of the text, and it could also have been the text of the Bible itself. One thing is for sure: Since then, Miss F has been interested in the Bible. Through the relationship between her and the community, she began a direct contact with the Bible. Miss F started to evolve her relationship with the biblical texts. Finally she is involved with the religious teaching of the community. A theological dimension is built in her relationship with the community.

F: From that day on, I visited every Bible reading activity.

Miss F expresses her strong interest in the Bible reading activity. Lack of time is no longer an excuse. Her priorities are re-organized. She repeats and emphasizes “that day”, which indicates her attitude turning-point. “*That day*” is the day she began to read Bible text, “*that day*” is the day she joined a small group who gathered to read the Bible, “*that day*” is the day she developed a relationship with the Bible text.

F: That day the pastor gave me a Bible, the small Bible with a black cover. I read it after returning home. They told me to read the 4 Gospels first, and among them the Gospel according to John at first. Because it was short, I did not like it very much. I read the Gospel according to Matthew, and it was very detailed.

The pastor appears again in the narrative without a description of his personality. This time his role is the Bible provider. Miss F's memory of this night is so clear that she even remembers that the Bible was small and had a black cover. Her terse narrative style makes an exception for the Bible. She describes the look of the Bible in detail, because for her it is a precious object.

Who are "they" in the context? "They" may be participants in the Bible reading group, and "they" may also be experienced members of the community who are qualified to give advice to the others. There is a guideline of Bible reading for the newcomers like Miss F: To begin with the Gospels and among them with the short one. The reason why "they" recommends the Gospel according to John is because it is relatively short. Are short stories more attractive to the newcomers? Or do they want the newcomers to grasp the biography of Jesus as soon as possible? It is not a theological reason, but a reason of efficiency and productivity. The reading guideline of the Bible for the newcomers is about content quantity, not about theological quality. This might be a strategy for developing the newcomers in the community.

This reading guideline fails against Miss F's taste. Like the sermons in the church, abstract and short stories would not touch her. She does not like things that are "too far" away, but she likes closer things. The detailed Gospel of Matthew matches her needs.

Miss F does not follow the advice the community members gave her. She would rather find her own method of spiritual education. She intends to make the decision herself, so that she does not totally depend on the community's religious education, although she attends every Bible reading activity. She does not regard the community as a theological authority. She listens to the advice from the elders in the community, but she would like to reflect on things herself and draw her own conclusions. The way of the relatively independent theological pursuit of Miss F affects her role in the community.

F: After several times, I read bible at home and read how Matthew wrote about not worrying about tomorrow. He said, take a look at the lilies in the wild land, how did they grow up. Because my English name is Lily, I felt this was said to me when I read this. I cried suddenly, I did not know why. I was so moved and cried with much grief. That night, I decided to believe.

Miss F tells the story of her confession in detail. She encountered her English name Lily in the Gospel of Matthew. She felt these words were directly said to her by the Gospel: “Lily”, as her name is Miss F’s secret, unknown by others. A sudden encounter with her secret name in the Bible text touched her heart. At that moment the secret door of Miss F’s heart was opened. Because she emphasized her “hard heart” at the story beginning, this emotional breakthrough was especially dramatic and intense. So she cried and cried hard.

Why these words touched Miss F so much is worth discussion. Miss F may have been under some kind of emotional burden or in a difficult situation, “not to worry about tomorrow” could have been very constructive advice for her. She is not the type who follows other’s advice without thinking it over. She likes to examine the ideas and advice of others to make her own judgment. The encounter of her secret name in the Bible led to her giving up her usual defense: doubting, examining, and testing. For Miss F these words were like an absolute request. Maybe she has been looking for an absolute request and waiting for this moment for a long time. Maybe she was looking for a chance to break her own hard heart. In tears and relief Miss F developed a deep emotional attachment to the Bible text, which convinced her that that was the moment. She decided to convert, which included a dimension of private experience.

F: For me it was not that somebody preached me, or I heard something and was so moved that I began to believe. I was totally touched by the Bible, and I decided to believe.

Miss F makes an analysis of her own conversion. She distinguishes herself from those whose conversions are due to strong sermons or being touched by stories. For Miss F her conversion was a personal decision, which had nothing to do with others, neither the

community members nor the pastor. She emphasizes her unique approach to her conversion, which made her different from the others. Her direct bond to the Bible developed a private dimension of her religious practice. This self-distinguishing between Miss F and the other types of converts indicates her relatively independent theological inclination. This might possibly lead to a later theological conflict between her and other community members.

F: I think it was the work of the Holy Spirit, in my heart. If it was some testimony that had moved me, or I had read some theological things, those persuasive things, I wouldn't regard it as the work of Holy Spirit. I was touched simply by the words, which made a very big change in my heart. I think it was marvelous. I had resisted it so much; I had not attended any of the Christian activities, and I had even read the Buddhist sutras.

Miss F's interpretation of her conversion is already influenced by her religious understanding at present. She regards the change in her heart as "the work of the Holy Spirit". She might know about the Holy Spirit much later than when she first read the Gospel of Matthew. This related explanation indicates her theological inclination: the emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

One of her arguments is that she thinks she is directly related to the Bible. She was not persuaded to do so. If she was moved by some sermon or testimony, she would regard her conversion as an emotional decision. But she felt that an invisible power opened her heart. She was willing to submit to this transcendent power in which she believes. Another argument is that her former rejection of all the activities and her former spiritual orientation were moved away by this power. She was suspicious about visiting the church and she was unwilling to take part in any community activities. She was interested in Buddhism and she tried many means to prevent herself from being involved in the community. At last she overcame all the doubts and hesitations, and decided to convert. This does not coincide with Miss F's logical rational behavior; she needs to use some irresistible elements to explain her breakthrough and change. The Holy Spirit is the answer she found. "The words" of the Bible are very persuasive and

reliable.

The word “*marvelous*” indicates that she is convinced of the Holy Spirit: She found what she was looking for. The word contains a positive evaluation of her change.

F: Then at the next Bible reading activity I decided to confess, to make it known, that I wanted to believe. After that, I attended the Sunday worship regularly and wanted to be baptized. In June I was baptized. This is the process.

Miss F’s new spiritual pursuit began with her confession in the Bible reading activity. To let the others know that she had confessed means she wanted to be in the community. Even though the sermons in Sunday worships are not interesting to her, Miss F still attends them regularly. She has been trying hard to do the duties as a believer of God. These duties were taught and learned inside the community. She is trying to be a member of the community in order to learn the new religious practice.

Miss F’s religious practice needs guidance, and the community is an available choice. The institutional assessment (for example the pastor, Bible reading group), are an available way for Miss F, which led her to her new spirituality. She accepts what the community provides. She adapts herself actively to the new religious environment. To have the idea to be baptized is a result of the religious learning in the community. To be connected with God is Miss F’s wish. She pursues the whole process actively. On the contrary to how she met the brother in the train and how she visited the church for the first time, this conversion is not a coincidence. It is Miss F’s decision.

8.3 The Hypothesis of Latent Meaning Generating Rules and Structure

At this point it is possible to formulate Miss F’s latent rules generating structure.

Miss F did not visit the church until she got a personal invitation by chance: She met a community member on the train. After her visiting the church, her opinions on the community changed a little, but her attitude towards Christianity did not. She regards herself as a “hard-hearted” and persistent person.

Miss F may have negative impressions of Christianity due to her efforts to keep a distance from the community for a long time. She might have had her own spiritual pursuit, but Christianity was not her choice.

The turning point of her attitude was the Bible reading. Her English name Lily was mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew. Miss F began her personal religious experience in a very emotional and dramatic way. Her burden was relieved and her heart was opened. Her own explanation indicates her later theological inclination. She emphasizes the Holy Spirit, the irresistible transcendent power, which is capable of making her hard heart change. Her theological understanding is related to her change, and also related to the reconstruction of her new action rules.

She began to give priority to her new religious practice. Her conversion led her to a new spiritual pursuit. Because Miss F was interested in Buddhism, she might have had another change in her spirituality. “Change” will be a keyword in understanding the religious practices of Miss F. Miss F’s joining the community was her private decision.

In the following analysis the main task is to prove whether the “change” pattern is right. What kind of change has Miss F achieved? What kind of role did the community play during the process?

From the process of Miss F’s involvement in the community, a hypothesis can be drawn: The community has a step by step missionary plan to recruit new members like Miss F. There is a dynamic relationship between Miss F and the community. The strategy of the community missionary activities is not aggressive, but persistent. The personal contact is used as a supporting method of establishing relationships between the community and new members. A constant assessment of religious supplies, such as Bible reading groups, increases the attraction of the community.

8.4 Indications from the Interview

8.4.1 A New World View and a Shelter for Emotions

S: How did you come to Germany?

F: It was quite early. I studied German language in the university. I did not like that university; I did not like the environment. You know I'm a very nit-picky person. My senior high school was a very conservative school. Teachers and the people around were unsophisticated and honest people, and the environment of school is also very conservative. Then I suddenly came to Beijing, where there was every kind of person. I felt, how could it be, how could this be? I couldn't accept it. Later I felt that it was useless to learn language. When I was in the school, I hadn't known. It was so boring to learn the language alone. So I wanted to come to Germany and change my major course.

S: You said that you read Buddhism sutra before.

F: My family members do not have any beliefs. My father is a communist, but he has many interests. He likes to read things about Zen, he likes thoughtful books. He likes many great intellectuals, such as Su Dong Po, etc. He studies these things, and I am influenced by him and interested in this. Later I read Buddhist sutra. But Zen teachings cannot satisfy me. They talk about the emptiness and emptiness. What on earth is it? Why? Then I read some explanations about Buddhist sutra. But I found out, it was not right, the Buddhism teachings were not right. It is said that people should give up all their desires; people could be freed from the pains in world by putting aside the oppression in their hearts. I don't think it's right, because according to the teachings, the stones are more advanced than people; the stones do not have any desires and demands. Why should people work hard on it life after life, in order to get away from the circle of human being. It is an effortless work. Even when people arrive in heaven, so what? You put everything aside. If you put everything aside, why do you chase this so hard? It is emptiness, too. Sakyamuni had never said that he was a god, what he told, I think, is what the world was. He did not tell the origin of the world. The world has a start and has an end. If there is no start and no end, it should have been an explanation theory. But he did not have one. So I do not think it is right.

By an unexpected encounter with her secret name "Lily" during reading the Bible, Miss F had an emotional relief. She found a shelter for her emotions. She is interested in the ultimate questions because she wants an answer of what she should do in her life.

Miss F had a conservative environment in her hometown. She describes her teachers and classmates as “unsophisticated and honest”. Miss F’s world view was formed during her school time, which was simple and idyllic. Her experience in Beijing was a shock for her. As the capital of China, Beijing is like any other big metropolis in the world, modern and full of complexities. Compared to the life in Beijing, Miss F’s life phase in her hometown was quite simple, like in an innocent age. She did not like the complexities of the big city, nor the varieties of different life principles. She could not accept the intrusion of an exploding world panorama, and could not live with it. She prefers the simple life in her hometown and unsophisticated honest people.

So she escaped from Beijing, and went to Germany, which turned out to have a relatively simple and quiet environment. Another advantage of going to Germany is that she could change her study major, because she was not satisfied with learning language only. It was also an economic concern, because it might be useless for her to learn languages. Miss F is the kind of person who initiates changes. She is an active seeker, looks for a place to be relaxed and safe.

Miss F had no Christian influence from her family. Zen Buddhism is regarded as a philosophical thought in China, and a harmless culture in the view of politicians. Her communist father has a broader interest in culture. Her interest in Zen Buddhism originated in her family. Her father plays an important role in Miss F’s personal spiritual decisions. Miss F tries to find out the answer of these ultimate concerns: The origin of the world, the end of life, where the human being goes, and what should the human being achieve during life.

Buddhism sutra could not satisfy her. *“The world has a start and has an end. If there is no start and no end, it should have been an explanation theory. But he did not have one.”* For Miss F Buddhism means an endless circle of life, in which people struggle to free themselves from pain and desire. The emptiness of life is not the answer she wants. She rejects a passive attitude towards life.

Actually in China the pupils have compulsory lessons on world view development, which is influenced by political ideology. The teachers give lessons on how to behave like a good child or that helping others is a virtue. These lessons are about practical

morals, which regulate the children in school. There are very few lessons on ultimate questions. The serious themes about death, life, origin of the world, the end of life, would not be discussed in class. When these children grow up and face practical moral questions, they feel a lack of support for their thoughts. Miss F is one of them. When she later begins to seek answers to these questions, she finds herself in the middle of emptiness. The traditional resources of Confucius and Buddhism are neither enough for her to answer the ultimate questions, nor enough for her to handle her daily life problems.

She is the one who takes action. As she was not satisfied with the explanation of Buddhism, she is in search of a new system. Her joining the community was an active pursuit of her own spiritual pursuit of these ultimate questions, so that she can know what she should choose in her life.

Her experience of encountering her name in the Bible was dramatic and emotional. She considers Christianity as a shelter of her emotions, and she can find emotional relief in this conversion. Buddhism provided her neither an ultimate answer nor emotional relief, and it is reasonable that she turned to a new spiritual pursuit, which is able to provide both.

8.4.2 From Resistance to Belief

S: Did you ever read the Bible before you came to Germany?

F: I had never read it. But in my childhood as I remembered, there were Catholics in the Fujian province. There was a church near my grandma's house. I had never heard about a name like Jehovah, I did not know the difference between Catholics and Protestants.

My family did not know about it. During primary school and junior high school, I thought that Christianity was quite Western. Westernization was kind of chic, modern, but I still had no idea about it, because there were no Christians around. Later I got to know philosophy, read Buddhist sutra, then began to resist Christianity. It was also due to the dark time in the Middle Ages. I thought, how could this religion mix the deeds of people with their beliefs.

F: I was here even earlier than the Chinese Christian community. At the beginning they promoted themselves and pasted posters, and I did not go. I thought, how could Christianity judge other religions, how could they claim that all the other religions and gods are fakes. I hadn't read the Bible at that time.

And I thought, those activities were all gathering and eating. I myself could cook, why should I go and eat your food. Using this method, this mean, to attract and gull people to go there, and own people's favors by offering food. I did not like this kind of gathering, I wouldn't go.

The former hypotheses that Miss F had a negative bias of Christianity is proved in the interview. Christianity was a modern Western concept for Miss F. Miss F might have heard some stories of the Bible, but she had never read the Bible text, even though there was a church near her grandmother's house. She did not regard this church as something relevant to her world. She never had personal contact with any community or the Bible or religious people. The limited contact to Christianity is the common situation of the new generation in China.

The dark history of Christianity in the Middle Ages left Miss F a negative impression. Her resistance to Christianity came from her knowledge of this part of history. She regarded Christianity as an aggressive and arbitrary religion, which was full of arrogance and prejudice and was not qualified to judge other religions. She regarded the activities of the community as activities on purpose: *"To attract and gull people to go there, and own people's favors by offering food."* She did not let herself get involved with the organization, which in her imagination was questionable. Her abstract negative concept prevented Miss F from establishing contact with the community and Christianity.

A personal contact with the community member built a bridge between Miss F and the community. This gave her the chance of experiencing something different from her former knowledge of Christianity. She had a second chance to get to know the religion.

8.4.3 Bible as Foundation of Family Values

S: Does the belief bring any change to your life?

F: The change is very huge...To me the most meaningful change is the relationship with my family. My parents were divorced. My father married again when I was in junior high school. The auntie brought a sister to the family...

I couldn't call the auntie "Mom".... Actually my auntie is very nice, but I had been resisting her. After my conversion I rethought profoundly, why had I resisted her. Actually she had never hurt me; on the contrary she took good care of my father. She tried her best to take care of the family. During my exams, my going abroad, she's always supporting me. She gets along very well with all the members of the family, my grandma, my aunties, the brothers and sisters of my father. What kind of reason did I have to resist her? Actually I resisted her just because I wanted to resist. I felt very sorry, very sorry. I wrote a letter. ... I wrote: Father, Auntie, thank you so much, etc. I wrote very long and very emotionally. My father was very moved by reading it, and he sent the letter to his brothers and sisters. All of them were very, very happy.

After writing that letter I returned home, and the feelings were very different. It was really a family. Why did I not get to know the Lord a little bit earlier, then I could have reached this step earlier. The feelings of family members were totally different. You regard her absolutely as one of the family. You can feel the love and care she gives you, and you will give her love and care in return...I feel it is the most meaningful change to my life.

Miss F's family background comes up during the narrative. After her parent's divorce she could not accept the new auntie as the substitute for her mother. In Chinese society the relationship between the children and step-mother is sensitive. Miss F kept a constant psychological distance to her step-mother because she refused to accept her step-mother as a family member. In Miss F's sensitive adolescence the new auntie did not play a constructive role in her view of family. Miss F's concept of the role of females in the family might also be disturbed. Miss F regarded her step-mother as an imaginary enemy, with whom she had to share her father. This psychological habitus

lasted for quite a long time. It turned out to be a burden, which Miss F wished to get rid of. The habitus of resistance was so strong that this dismantling of resistance could not be achieved within Miss F's former family value system. She was waiting for a change, for an opening of her heart.

The reconciliation with her step-mother is a big step of improving their relationship. Miss F rethought her relationship to her family, and finds out that her refusal to give acceptance to her step-mother was totally unreasonable. Miss F overcame her habitus of resistance. The writing of the thank you letter was like a ritual of reconciliation: She finally gave her step-mother her acceptance. Miss F did not especially mention her step mother's reaction, but her father's. His feelings are more important to Miss F. Her father's reaction is also interesting, because he showed Miss F's letter to his sisters and brothers and shared his happiness with the big family. Miss F attaches very much importance to her family, just like her father does. The happiness of the whole family is most important to the family members. This family value has a deep influence on Miss F.

After the reconciliation letter came the "change". Her former "defense" pattern changed to a dynamic communicative relation pattern. Miss F opened her heart to her step-mother and felt the dynamic relationship between them. Miss F considered that all the changes are owed to her conversion, which changed her world view, and the way she deals with the people. Actually the return of the traditional family value is the essence of this reconciliation. She returned happily to her family.

Miss F longed for family love, longed for this dynamic love relationship for such a long time. But she did not achieve her emotional breakthrough until her conversion, so she attributes her breakthrough to the conversion. The Bible and the new religious thoughts provide Miss F with a new aspect towards life; she has a new criterion of her behavior and thoughts. Her reconciliation with the family can be regarded as her religious practice, with which she achieved her most longing expectations. One of her important religious practices is her commitment to the family values.

F: I learned also how to treat people. I always niggle, and have cleanliness and

perfectionist inclinations. Maybe the same towards my ex-boyfriend. ...Maybe it was related to the break-up with my ex-boyfriend. I tried not to blame him, I wanted a new life, I did not want to resent him. It was hard. I read Buddhist Sutra. Good, everything was emptiness. But it was self repression. After the conversion it was totally different, I did not force myself to repress the emotions or force myself to forgive him. You know, that he is actually pitiful; he does not know what he's done. He does not owe me, no one owes me anything, we all owe to God. It is like the story of the Bible: one man was exempted from 1000 liang debt, but when he went out, he encountered another one, who owed him 10 liang debt. These things did not actually hurt me, on the contrary bought out the actual grown-up in me. Maybe each step and chance makes life. Life cannot be repeated again and compared to the others.

Miss F describes her self image as a perfectionist, which might be related to her break-up with her ex-boyfriend. Miss F is a person who takes relationships very seriously and cautiously. The break-up is definitely a big strike to her.

The Buddhism Sutra did not help her to forgive him; she still resented him. She regards the Buddhist teaching as self-repression. After her conversion to Christianity she learned to take another perspective on relationships. By introducing the role of God into the story, whom Miss F and her boyfriend both owe the most, Miss F regards the “debt” between her and her boyfriend as nothing to speak of. By introducing the biggest creditor, God, Miss F establishes a new system of relationships, which makes it possible for her to move on.

Miss F's conversion plays an important role in her reconciliation of close relationships. She could neither achieve the reunion with the family nor could she achieve the forgiveness to her ex-boyfriend through her former value system. The communication bridge between her and the important persons in her life was strengthened by her conversion, which helps her establish new values, with which she feels satisfied and no longer self depressed.

The change Miss F achieves is a better communication in her close relationships. She ascribes the change to her conversion.

S: You said that you are now strong against premarital cohabitation, why?

F: Because it is the teaching of the Bible.

S: Did it not matter before?

F: Before, yes. I thought this was one's own freedom. But it is better not to do so. It will be harmful for the girls, and this is also thoughtlessness. Now it is the teaching from the Bible. I think the guidance of God is right. His guidance is based on love, and tells people not to have casual sex. If that person is the person that God arranges for you, he will bless you to have this relation after marriage; it will be a very sweet and sanctified relationship.

Miss F is now against premarital cohabitation, which she had agreed to before. She regards God's guidance as higher than her personal freedom. Chinese society did not have a body freedom movement like the West had in 1960's. The mainstream still regards premarital cohabitation as indecent or even unacceptable. Big modern cities may have a relatively tolerant space for the young couples to practice premarital cohabitation, but in Miss F's hometown, the mainstream is quite conservative. Beijing, where she later studied, is modern. Beijing made her uncomfortable due to the complicated relationships between people and different ways of life. The combination of different education backgrounds reflects that Miss F's values are a combination of different elements, which are sometimes even contradictory. The conflict inside her own value system may confuse her. She had accepted premarital cohabitation as an indication that she had tried to break conservative values. Her behavior was in this point contradictory to traditional values.

Miss F had affection for personal freedom and rational choice. She tried to make everything right according to her own choice. She chose to escape from Beijing and came to Germany, but she chose not to join the community for a long time, and she chose to read the Bible according to her own pace. After the conversion she left her most important choices up to God. Miss F believes that the arrangements of God would be "*sweet and sanctified*". She gave up her pursuit of personal freedom, and subordinates it under the arrangements of God. She has returned to the conservative values through her conversion. Now there are no more contradictories in her value

system. The religious teaching on family values is a strong support of Miss F's conservative family values. Her behavior is no longer contradictory to the traditional values.

8.4.4 The Role of the Christians and the Role of Females in the Family

S: What does your family say about your conversion?

F: At the beginning my father worried about me because of a woman he knows in his firm. I haven't got contact with her; I do not know what kind of status she has. My father says since she has started believing in Jesus, she doesn't go to work or take care of her family. She goes around to pray for the ill, to pray for healing. My father regards this as not attending to one's proper duties and business. Because she does not care about her family anymore. She is a wife, a woman; if she does not look after the family, it is a belief that disturbs normal life. He's afraid that I would give up my studies and live abnormally, do things like this everyday. I said it was not like that at all. After my conversion, I studied hard, and had a practice. Especially since the improvement of my family relations, he's not against it any more. What they worried most about is superstition.

Miss F's father worried about her conversion, because he knew another Christian female, who has absurd behavior from his point of view.

He thought that this belief disturbs the fulfillment of family duties and makes a woman no longer able to fulfill the duty as a wife and a mother. Being such a Christian could only destroy the stability of family. Later he found out, that being a Christian was helpful for the stability and harmony of family, so he turned to be on his daughter's side. Here again reconfirms the importance of family values. Miss F's conversion has no conflict with the ideal Chinese female role in the family. Her father played an important role in her conversion through confirming her choice. Miss F and her father actually share the same principles: The family values are the most important for the family members. If being a Christian helps her to fulfill her family duty, it is welcomed.

8.4.5 The Further Education in the Community Life

8.4.5.1 Sermons and Religious Education

S: What are your spiritual studies?

F: It is not that regular. Now since the exam I say to myself, I should not dawdle any more. I read every morning before 7. I pray before the meals. I pray when I meet something emergent. I sing the songs when I think of them. On the bus and train, I bring a Bible with me; I read it when I have time. I write down my thoughts.

I listen to the online sermons, sometimes read novels written by Christians. Some books they said would be helpful for the progress of spiritual life, such as “The Purpose Driven Life”, I do not have interest in reading. If an article is useful to me, I will read it. But I do not read one book after another. I feel I cannot grasp the emphases. I read the Bible more, and read some additional material.

Miss F does not have a strict plan of religious studying. She has some forms of religious practice like praying before meals. She is not interested in the books, which are recommended by the community. She takes her own pace and chooses the articles she likes. Her main interest remains on the Bible. She has her own way of developing the relationship between her and the Bible.

8.4.5.2 The Function of Sunday School

S: Do you visit Sunday school?

F: It is held by the community. At the beginning the class was for baptizing. It will be taught, what is the fundamental truth, what is Christianity, the definition of being reborn and being saved, why people are baptized. After that there is a disciple training class that is to teach how to have success in daily life. Baptizing is not the whole thing; Christians should make progress in life. This will be taught by some brothers in the Church, by Dong, Ren, and Rong. We use the books from Prof. Guo. Every week we have a topic, some questions, some reference. We should prepare for it, do the homework, and go over it again.

Sunday school is an interesting organization of this community, because it did not exist until the pastor came. What Miss F experiences in the Sunday school is the basic A to Z knowledge for the newcomers of the community. A considerable amount of newcomers in the community make it necessary to open a Sunday school. Opening a Sunday school is only possible when there are enough teachers. Teachers are the most insufficient resource for this newly built transnational religious community.

The Leipzig community does not have regular religious teachers. The lessons are taught by elder community members who have been in the community for a relatively long time. This is a practical method to run the Sunday school, to let the elders guide the newcomers. On one side it is an important method to organize the limited resources inside the community. The oversea religious teachers are only available for camping trips, which are held once or twice a year. The supply of religious teaching is far from enough for such a community. Miss F does not feel satisfied in the Sunday school and does not always follow the reading guides from the teachers.

The existence of a self-organized Sunday school may be evidence of a step by step mission plan. When Miss F visited the Church for the first time, there was no one trying to discuss theological topics with her, as she expected. Only when Miss F was ready to accept the religious thoughts was she invited to the Sunday school. It is a deeper step than the Bible reading group, because the Sunday school is only available to those who decide to convert. To visit Sunday school is a deeper involvement in the community; it means being equipped with a basic systematical theological religious knowledge, it means meeting community members regularly and it also means a confirmation of being guided by the elders of the community. Therefore Miss F has a further embeddedness.

From its staff to the Sunday school programs, the Leipzig community is simple and crude, but its function cannot be underestimated. It accomplishes the very first local and daily religious education for the new converted members. It provides the feeling of belonging to a small spiritual community, which allows intensive communication between members. And most of all, Sunday school makes it possible to reproduce religious teachers and leaders inside the community. When the elder members are able

to give lessons in Sunday school, their teaching activities develop their credit and even their authority. The new leaders of the community could exercise their theological studying in Sunday school.

8.4.5.3 Theological Understanding and Religious Identity

S: Do you know which denomination you are a part of?

F: It is said, Baptist. Because the pastor comes from a Baptist organization. There are others, Methodist, Presbyterian. They also invite people from Presbyterian churches to come to preach. I think it is quite tolerant; there is no conflict among denominations.

Miss F does not have a clear opinion about the denominations of Christianity. She does not care about the denomination of the community, either. Her religious identity is not related to the denominations.

It can be understood that in the religious teachings of the community the differences of denominations were not mentioned. It can also be understood that Miss F herself is not interested in the further theological studies or institutional orientation. Her main interest of joining the community is to be related to Jesus and to the guidance of God. Whether she belongs to a given denomination is not her concern.

One of the transnational characteristics of this community is to have a religious teaching from different denominations, because of the lack of quality of the local religious teachings. Miss F had heard lectures from pastors from Presbyterian churches. She has the impression that among denominations there should be no conflicts. This would be an interesting starting point. Miss F did not form an exclusive identity of a given religious denomination by joining this community. She remains open to other denominations, of which she actually has few opinions.

It is an indication of the community's theological teaching, which can be helpful for the members when they are back in China. The members can have an easier assimilation to the local churches without many theological conflicts.

8.4.6 Circle Outside the Community

S: Do you have friends outside the community?

F: Actually I have always had a very small circle of friends. Before I joined the community, they were common friends. After I joined the community, two best friends were kept, others are not that important. Now I have these two best friends and the brothers and sisters in the community. Because at the beginning I was with my boyfriend, I felt it was all right. He had two friends, I had two or three friends, these friends together were enough, the quantity of information etc. After that, I had two friends and the classmates in the university, this was enough. German friends were language partners, we had some group work, but they cannot be counted as friends.

Miss F has been in Germany since 2001. She handled almost all the difficulties on her own. Her friend circle is not big but sufficient for her communication needs. She did not have the need to search for friends inside the community or to get useful and practical information from the community members. Her life was in a balanced status before she joined the community. Her break-up with her ex-boyfriend might have been a break of her balanced life status. Miss F's attitude towards friends is classified in detail. Who can be counted as a friend and who are working partners, the line is clear. After joining the community her friend circle also changed. Miss F kept only two best friends who are not replaceable. Other unimportant people were substituted by the "brothers and sister in the community". The relationships to the brothers and sister in the community are not an essential part of Miss F's life, but as a matter of fact, the community forms a large part of Miss F's living environment in her social life in Germany. Joining the community did change some qualities of her social life.

Miss F spent more time inside the community, But it did not prevent her from integrating into German society, because the German friends were from the beginning merely language partners for her. If she had more time, she would not use it to make German friends.

It is also typical for the transnational short-term immigration of students and labor workers who are not willing to establish a long-term life environment in the host

country. (Vertovec) They would like to stay in their familiar ethnic or cultural circle. This Chinese religious community offers such a cultural circle, which meets the needs of Miss F, who does not have any high expectation of integration into the host country. It might be also one of the reasons why Miss F stays in the community.

8.4.7 The Role of the Pastor

S: Did anything change in you plan of life?

F: Yes. I'm now very strongly against premarital cohabitation. And now I've changed my ultimate goal. The judge of my life changes, the judge is God, his will in me, his plan for me, his task planned for me. For example, when I go back to FZ University and become a teacher, because being a teacher is really a very good opportunity to communicate with the students. It will be very convenient for me to tell them my belief and my testimony. The students are gathering there, it will also be convenient to develop community activities. Concerning the family members, I am thinking of how to explain the Gospels to my grandma and father.

Only once Miss F mentions the Pastor specifically. He gave her a Bible when Miss F visited the Bible reading group for the first time. In the following narratives the pastor as a person disappears from Miss F's religious practice.

But as a matter of fact the influence of the pastor has left some traces on Miss F's religious practice.

As mentioned in Miss Q's case, the pastor has different resources to carry out his missionary work in Germany: religious, organizational, educational, financial, and emotional resources.

Miss F had been in Germany for a long time, so homesickness did not bother her anymore. She expected neither the family feelings in the community nor the friendship. The emotional resources like eating together are not attractive to Miss F.

The organizational resources have worked for her. There are Sunday worships in church, the Bible reading group activity at the pastor's home, and later the Sunday school. This means, when Miss F joined the community, the pastor has already established a

community structure with differentiated functional departments. If there were no Sunday worships in Church, Miss F would not have had an interest in visiting the Bible reading group due to her negative bias of Christianity. The distribution of community works has an advantage to accurately satisfy different demands of people.

Sunday worship is an open activity, and requires just a little amount of Miss F's time. It exposes the whole religious group for the visitor. The Bible reading group is an intensive activity, which requires more investment of time and reading preparation. Those who are interested in the Bible would be ready to accept the rules. Sunday schools demand more commitment than any other activities. When Miss F is ready for a deeper involvement into the community, there are always some offers available. The increase of Miss F's interests in the Bible is definitely related to this cascade structure of the community's offers.

The educational resources work in the same way. The pastor himself does not guide Miss F's religious practice, but he mentions in his interviews that the elder members of the community can be consulted when people have problems. The setting of Sunday school fulfills his wishes. Miss F's religious practice could be guided by the elders. The pastor's efforts also benefit Miss F's religious practice and education.

To this point the pastor is an invisible supplier for Miss F. He does not support Miss F directly with his resources, but the religious environment he creates, and the structure of distribution of community he developed, form an attractive spiritual recourse for Miss F, which keeps her in the community.

The interesting point is that Miss F's religious understanding and practice are not limited to the teachings of the community. This is caused by the insufficiency of educational recourses and Miss F's self-teaching.

Miss F was not very active in the community, but she is willing to do missionary work when she goes back to China. This is what the pastor wishes.

Miss F does not want to stay in Germany for long. She has already found a job in China as a teacher at a university. She is ready to share her religious experience with her future students. Miss F becomes the target of the pastor's missionary work. Even though they did not have direct personal communication; the pastor has achieved his goal through

the community setting.

Miss F might be a positive example, which indicates that other members of the community could fulfill the unspoken missionary goal of the pastor in the future.

8.5 Summary

Miss F's motives for joining the community should be understood through her family background; although she lived in Germany, her decision to join the community cannot be considered separately from her previous life in China.

8.5.1 Motive of Joining the Community

8.5.1.1 Joining the Community as Distinguishing Mark of Spiritual Conversion

Miss F has been thinking about some ultimate questions for a long time. She also searched for an emotional shelter for a long time. She read Buddhism Sutra, tried to find the answer to the origin of the universe and the ultimate satisfaction of human life. Neither Buddhism nor her school teachings gave her satisfying answers. She was in search of an absolute answer. She was seeking a place to have emotional relief.

“Coincidentally” Miss F found the answer through the contact with the community. By the Bible reading she felt her heart was opened and she found a shelter for her emotions. During reading the Bible, Miss F found the answer. Her explanation is that the work of the Holy Spirit moved her. After she decided to convert to Christianity, she achieved changes in her life. Miss F had reconciliation with her family; she found a satisfying explanation according to the Bible and is able to overcome the hurt that her ex-boyfriend left with her. By introducing the role of God, Miss F establishes better relationships with people who are important to her. These changes are positive in Miss F's life, which convince her to live with the conversion. She has an emotional relief with the new value system and new conversion.

To be in the community is a distinguishing mark of being converted to Christianity, and

she gives up Buddhist teachings and begins to take up her newly adapted spiritual conversion.

For Miss F the membership in the community means a new orientation in her life and new perspective on values. Miss F is attracted by the Bible, which provides Christian values and morals. She was not interested in any activities of the community; she even rejected the invitations for a long time. Miss F suddenly found the Bible touched her heart. She wanted to learn the new teachings of life and values. So she joined the community, learned to read the Bible, to take part in Sunday worship, to get baptized, to accept a whole teaching of being a Christian. These are her efforts to approach the new values and morals.

Without Miss F's background information her conversion would be falsely understood as a sudden change. By taking her former efforts to find the ultimate answer into consideration, the explanation would be more plausible: Miss F has found the spiritual conversion that she had been looking for. The faith of a transcendental power satisfied Miss F's pursuit of the ultimate concerns and emotional shelter. Otherwise she could not explain the change of her attitude. At the moment of her crying while reading the Bible, she had an unknown experience. After her religious education in the community she calls it the Holy Spirit.

Actually Miss F had been a spiritual seeker for a long time; she tried to find her ultimate values and answers of life. She arrived at her destination by joining the community. In this sense her conversion has a very individual but natural approach to her spiritual searches. What changes in this approach is the result of the spiritual search: She converted. What does not change is Miss F's requirement of a higher power and rules in her life.

The community is where this approach took place.

8.5.1.2 Reconstruction of Family Values with the Bible

Miss F's conversion is the result of a competition of different life guides. Born in an atheistic family, Miss F does not have any Christian family members. Her affection

towards the philosophy of Buddhism is due to her father's hobby. She received a normal Chinese school education like any other child. She had a negative impression of Christianity until she visited the church in Germany. In Miss F's case, Christianity has won the competition of guiding life. The opponents were her school ideological teachings, philosophy of Buddhism and an individual and free life style. The community provided the thoughts and practices of Christianity, so that Miss F joined them and stayed in the community.

It is worth discussion why Miss F at last chose the Bible as her life guidance. The family values played an important role in this choice.

After the divorce and remarriage of Miss F's father, she had difficulty accepting her step-mother. She was confused about the role of females in the family. The break-up with her ex-boyfriend triggered her enormous doubts about the behavior of females in relationships and the right family structure. She needed some convincing answers to her doubts. Following the guidance of the Bible, Miss F achieved reconciliation with her step-mother and she achieved the strength to forgive her ex-boyfriend. The answers to the practical moral questions in the Bible are effective. She feels relieved and tolerated when she practices the teachings of the Bible.

She reconstructed her understanding of family relationships according to the guidance of the Bible, and then changed her attitude toward people, which resulted in a positive reaction of her family.

Miss F's father has traditional family values. His opinion on Christianity is related to the proper role of females in the family; his opinion has nothing to do with theological opinions or biblical thoughts, but rather, his focus is on the practical level. When he found out that being a Christian is helpful for the stability and harmony of a family, he was not against Miss F's conversion any longer. The function of Miss F's conversion had a positive influence on the family. Thoughts from the Bible helped Miss F return to her family by reconstructing her family values. Now Miss F and her father share the same principles: The family values and harmony are most important for the family members. The consolidation of family relationships confirms the guidance and values of the Bible, which correspond to the traditional Chinese family values.

The Bible also covers Miss F's inclinations towards a simple life. Biblical thoughts provide her with practical moral values, with which she agrees. It is a new orientation of attitude towards life for Miss F, but actually it is also related to her former values.

It is about a competition of practical life guidance. Miss F finds out that Christian guidance is more effective than the other practical moral system in solving family relation problems.

Why Christian thoughts are more corresponding to the traditional Chinese family values is another question. In Miss F's case, it is the result, which she experienced and is now her perception. The conversion and joining the community is her effort to achieve this result.

8.5.1.3 Constancy and Activeness of the Community

At the beginning of the whole story it was not that Miss F found the community, it was the other way around, the community found Miss F. It is hard to classify the motive of Miss F's joining the community. As she said, it was a coincidence. The community's constancy of trying to attract Miss F is one important reason for her joining the community.

Miss F had prejudices against Christianity and the community. The dismantling of these prejudices needed time and patience, which the community had for Miss F. There were constant and relaxed invitations to visit the church, sent from the community member whom she coincidentally met. After her first church visit she had a better impression of the community, and was invited to a Bible reading group. The community members knew her before she knew them. They were prepared to introduce Christianity to her, and ready to guide her into the community. She did not feel compelled to do anything; she took one offer after another with free will.

The community was waiting patiently for Miss F's conversion. This might be the strategy of the community missionary work: Finding people, then offering them different religious programs, and then waiting for their conversion.

The first and second steps are not difficult for the community. But the conversion of

people cannot be achieved by compelling them. A logical causal relationship between the community's offers and conversion of people does not exist. But most of the community missionary work is based on the hypothetical causality. In Miss F's case, the causality is proved to be effective. But in other cases, the causality can be proved wrong.

The point is that, Miss F's case indicates the logic and practice of the community's missionary work.

After Miss F's decision to convert, her relationship with the community changed. The change expressed itself with an identity change. In the church Miss F is a participant instead of a spectator, in the Bible reading group she is becoming a regular participant instead of a passive listener. Later, she will even be in charge of the key to the meeting room, where the Bible reading activity takes place. If we make an experimental thought, given more time, whether Miss F would play an important role in the community, the answer would be no, because Miss F does not have much interest in theological studies, which reflects in her attitude toward the Sunday school. She describes herself as a learner in the group. She does not have the chance to give lessons, and she is not able to teach the others. She does not have the awareness to become a productive part of the community. She remains in the status of "being given" and "being taught". She joined the community in order to learn the shared knowledge in the community. Her service in the community keeps her having a shared community life, which gives her the feeling of being a part of a Christian community. It is not very important for her whether she is in this community or that community. For Miss F to be in a Christian community means to be guided by God.

Staying in this community guarantees her being a Christian, because being in the community means to have a constant supply of religious educational resources and to have further education in spirituality.

Although she takes over some administrative works as key-keeper, it has nothing to do with theological studies, which is crucial for gaining credit and authority in the community. Miss F remains as a capable follower with the potential of missionary work

in the view of the pastor.

The constant and guided process, which is provided by the community, is also the reason why Miss F joined the community. Learning and practicing religious teachings in the community is not Miss F's first concern. To practice the biblical teaching in daily life and in close relationships are more important to her.

There is a separation of the fields of religious learning and religious practicing. Miss F's religious practice has little to do with the development of the community. She practices in her personal life. A disadvantage is that Miss F's type has less involvement in the community. The advantage of this separation is that Miss F has a larger potential of assimilation into other communities. When Miss F is back in China, she will be able to join a local community without any difficulty. She is ready to be a member of a Christian community, wherever it is.

8.5.2 The Type of Miss F in Comparison to Miss Q

Miss F is a follower type in the community, but she is different from Miss Q. By comparing them we can tell the similarities of their functions in the community, by which their types can be portrayed. And it is also important to analyze the differences between them, so that their possible trajectories in the transnational religious field can be indicated.

8.5.2.1 Miss F as Follower Type

Miss F's embeddedness in the community is more about personal involvement. She was invited by a community member to visit the Church. She was touched by reading the Bible. She is attracted by the practical moral values, which the Bible advocates. With this new knowledge she solved the long-existing problems of close relationships. As mentioned above, Miss F's main field of religious practice is separated from the community. This means, she has a slight structural embeddedness in the community. She regards herself as one of the community members, but not as a representative of the community, the same as Miss Q. She does not take an active part in the production of

offers from the community.

Miss F did not have the chance to become a key member perhaps due to three reasons.

One is the limitation of time. Miss F has not been in the community for a long time and she is planning to go back to China. This would be an obvious character of this transnational community. A large part of the community members are in high mobility. They do not have a long term plan to stay in Germany. Their stay in the community would be not long, either. Under the pressure of time limitation, a deep involvement into the community is difficult. The transnational religious group has the characteristic of members in high mobility.

On one side, it would be difficult for the pastor to keep the development of the community, because members are always leaving. On the other side, it is exactly why the pastor does the missionary work in Germany, because the community members will bring the Gospels back to China. Miss F is the optimal missionary target for the pastor.

The second reason is her limited theological knowledge. Her identity is still a “learner inside the community”. She is one who comes into the community and takes something that the community provides. She visits Sunday school but is not really interested in the content. Without enough theological knowledge, she cannot gain authority in the community, so she remains at the status of a learner. The learners are followers.

The third reason is that what Miss F searched for. She searched for ultimate answers and an emotional shelter, not an organization. She did not search for a community; she has been searching for an explanation system of life, a relief of emotional burden. She joined the community to become a Christian and practice religion. The pastor is the invisible supplier for her. She does not care for the development of the community. She comes and learns about the family values and their way of life. To join the community was the way to these ultimate answers and to be protected by an emotional shelter, not the goal. She is actually an active spiritual seeker and searcher, and an active thinker in private space and practice. To be a follower in the community is her decision with full awareness.

8.5.2.2 The Function of Type of Miss F

Miss F as a follower has the same function as Miss Q. As a matter of fact, her contribution can be regarded as a small increase in the amount of members. It is a small change in the quantity of community members. She has no influence of the central quality of the community. She does not take active actions to help the development of the community; she learns what the community teaches. Miss F does not bring any change into the community, neither on the structural level nor on the theological level.

The type of Miss F does not influence the stability of the community for the short-term. A follower type has a relatively weak community identity because of the lesser involvement in the community, but it also means in a short-term situation, the basic members of the community are stable in community activities. Followers guarantee the needs of the community's educational settings, and keep the mechanism in the regular working status. Without followers, the community would be empty. The offers are provided for the followers.

In another instance, the existence of followers also decides the form of the community. It is a dynamic relationship between follower type and the construction of community. Basically the needs of followers are the most important criteria of developing the community. The offers of the pastor have an adaptation process, in order to satisfy the demands of community members; this especially requires the followers, who comprise the largest part of the community.

Miss F has the potential of being an active member. Given more time, or given another environment, Miss F would behave other ways. Like she says, she will share her experiences and testimony with her future students at the universities. At least, she will try to share the Gospels with her family members. The pastor's "China Mission" can be realized.

8.5.2.3 In Comparison to Miss Q

The possible characteristics of follower type in the communities can be obtained in the comparison between Miss F and Miss Q. Through the comparison of these two types in

the “follower” category, their different reactions on the pastor’s strategy show the possible trajectories of the follower type in this transnational religious field.

First of all, they have different family backgrounds. Miss Q as a Christian family member smoothes her way into the community, since she searched for a community when she came to Germany. The influence of Miss F’s atheistic family background is her reluctance of getting in contact with the community at the beginning. Miss F’s doubts about the community and Christianity are typical for those who do not have a Christian family background. The community paid more efforts toward Miss F on the winning member process. It is Miss Q finding the community, and it is the community finding Miss F.

Members who have Christian family backgrounds like Miss Q are actively in search of a community and are willing to join it. Members who do not have Christian family backgrounds like Miss F can be passive and reluctant in the search for a community. It takes effort to have Miss F as member of the community.

Secondly, their future tasks will be different according to their different family backgrounds. Miss Q does not need to explain her conversion in Germany to her family members, because they are familiar with Christianity. But Miss F has to make an effort to obtain the understanding of her family, and gradually makes them share her belief. Miss F wants to bring the change to her family members. It is within a small circle of people she is concerned for. The pastor’s wish of the “China Mission” is not expected to be taken over by this type of follower. But Miss F may achieve the missionary task on the family scale after her returning to China. In this point, the follower type without Christian family background will have more influence in the whole transnational missionary mechanism.

Thirdly, they had different motives for joining the community. Miss Q is environment sensitive. The existence of the Chinese Christian community provides short-term migrants like Miss Q a relatively comfortable living environment. As a substitute for family, Miss Q gets emotional and practical support from the community. She regards the community not only as a religious space, but also a living social space where she shares her life with others. The community life is her livelihood in Germany. The

community makes it less necessary for Miss Q to explore the host society. The short-term migration situation makes it important for Miss Q to belong to a community in which she is not alone and from which she gets support. In Miss F's case the community does not occupy her whole livelihood. Miss F emphasizes her independent decision of joining the community. She is a passive follower in the community, but is an active spiritual seeker. Miss F does not need the emotional or practical supports from the community; she is not environment sensitive, but she is attracted to the biblical teaching of the community. Miss F gains religious awareness and identity in the community, but not her whole life style.

In this transnational religious community, the environment sensitive members like Miss Q, who is more dependent on the community life, and have a close personal relationship with the community members. They regard the community as their social society. The members like Miss F will be less dependent on the community life in establishing their own lives in Germany. Miss Q's life in Germany is her life in the community. For the environment sensitive members, the community on one side helps them to build their social environment in a foreign country; on the other side, the community may prevent them from having a deep integration into the host society

At last but not least the biggest similarity of Miss F and Miss Q is their religious identity that lacks association with a denomination. This indicates their potential of "ready to assimilate". It is easier to join other local communities in China as a follower of another community. It can be an intentional preparation from the pastor's religious education program. But they will be less active in missionary work.

9 Analysis of Mr. W

9.1 Biographical Outline of Mr. W

Mr. W came to Germany after he finished his studies in China. He became a Christian in China before he came to Germany. He was one of the founders of the community. He is one of the core members who have stayed in the community for the longest time. Before the pastor came, Mr. W was leading the group. After the pastor came, Mr. W became less active than before. Ms. W came to Germany one year later. They are both students and live in a student dormitory near the train station.

This interview took place in Mr. W's home. Mr. W and Ms. W both participated in the interview. Their newly born baby was in the room, too. Mr. W and Ms. W sometimes answered the questions separately; sometimes they added information to each other's narrative. Mr. W spoke much more than Ms. W did. So the analysis is based on Mr. W's narrative. Ms. W's narrative is regarded as relevant information for the analysis. Mr. W is the one to be analyzed.

9.2 Analysis of Beginning Sequences

9.2.1 The Beginning Stimulus

W: Let's chat casually.

“*Let's*” means a suggestion. Before the interviewer asks a question, Mr. W takes the lead of the conversation and tries to create a comfortable atmosphere. He uses the word “*chat*”, which is often used to describe a conversation without a specific theme. Although Mr. W is aware of the fact that it is an interview for the interviewer's research, Mr. W still wants to make some effort, in order to take a role as a conversation partner instead of a research object. This sentence is Mr. W's expressing of his wish, that he regards the interview as a “*chat*”. He might not want to have a highly serious academic discussion. A “*chat*” is an informal form of discussion, which permits insufficient

reasoning in an argument. Mr. W might want to show his humbleness in the interview, so he defines this conversation as an informal “*chat*”. To emphasize his meaning, he says “*casually*” to define the chat. Mr. W does not want to have a serious discussion, although he knows that the interview is about his conversion and his religious practice. What might be a serious conversation to him? Maybe for him, a discussion during the Bible reading group is serious; a conversation with ritual is serious. An interview is not serious in comparison to the other ritualized discussions. So Mr. W’s emphasis on the casualness is to declare his attitude on the interview: He will not take the interview as seriously as the other really “serious” discussions. Anyway, Mr. W is relaxed and ready for the interview.

Mr. W tries to create a conversation atmosphere that includes everyone in the room. So he makes an invitation to everyone present to join the conversation. He tries to break the barrier between interviewer and the interviewee, so he makes them at an equal position in the conversation.

S: How did you join the community?

The interviewer directly raises the research question. It can be regarded as an indirect acceptance of Mr. W’s invitation to “*chat*”, or it can also be regarded as an indirect rejection of the invitation. The interviewer does not want to involve personal emotion in the interview, so the interviewer does not respond to Mr. W’s invitation directly. The interviewer has a clear goal for the interview. So the interviewer is goal-oriented in the conversation despite the question being an open question. The interviewer tries to take the lead of the conversation back, but leaves enough space for Mr. W to begin his narrative.

9.2.2 The Narrative Opens

W: The community started from us. Before that there was no community.

Mr. W answered the question directly. There was no community before he came. The community came to its existence because of their efforts. The founding of the

community was not by him alone, but by the two of them. With the word “*us*” Mr. W regards himself and his wife as the initiators of the community. If the word “*us*” does not only mean Mr. W and his wife, it may include some one else in the community. The word “*us*” includes Mr. W and his wife by all means.

Mr. W regards him and his wife as a unit that originates the community. He regards himself as a founder of the community. His family is the origin of the community. So the community could be based on Mr. W’s family. Mr. W and his wife may have provided their home as a place for community activities. Mr. W and his wife could have been the center of the community because they were initiators of it. So the community had a huge potential to become a home church. Mr. W was probably the authority of the community because he must have done some organizational work for the community. The word “*us*” is an indication of the community center. So he and his wife were probably the power center of the community. In the second sentence Mr. W confirms his importance as the initiator of the community.

Mr. W and Ms. W’s home-based form was the original form of the community. If later the community turns to be an institution, which is not a family-centered home church, there could be a transformation process of the community.

Maybe the pastor’s arrival is a turning point of the transformation. There could be a transformation during the development of the community. What kind of relationship would Mr. W and the pastor have? As analyzed in former chapters, the pastor is the leader and the power center of the community. Would there be a conflict between Mr. W and the pastor? There could be two possibilities. One is that Mr. W’s family and the pastor are both administrative and power centers of the community. The second possibility is the pastor becomes the center of the community and Mr. W’s family is de-centered. In the interview it will be clear which possibility has been realized.

Mr. W represents a mode of a Chinese religious community in Germany; it is a mode of a small home church. Mr. W’s family was the center of the community. The pastor represents another mode of a Chinese religious community in Germany; it is a mode of a formal institution with administrative structure, which is not family centered. Later the community is not a home church. So the trajectory of the community might be from Mr.

W's family-centered home church to an institution led by the pastor. It is a trajectory from a local family-based home church to a transnational religious community. So the transformation of Mr. W is also the transformation of the community. The center of power could be shifted from "us" to the pastor.

The relation between Mr. W and the pastor is worth investigation. The formation and transformation of the community are closely related to Mr. W's trajectory in the community.

W: There were several people who converted. So we gathered together.

Mr. W describes the status of the original form of the community. Several people include Mr. W and Ms. W gathered together. Mr. W's description of the "several people" is interesting, because he emphasizes their conversion. It is probable that these people were converted in Germany, not in China. If there were only Mr. W and Ms. W in the group, they did not need to gather together because they lived together. There were other people who were outside Mr. W's family but they had a reason to gather together. The reason was their conversion. According to Mr. W's narrative, the conversion of these people probably took place in Germany. After their conversion they decided to gather regularly.

The question is why did these people suddenly convert to Christianity? If they have converted in a German community, they could have joined and assimilated into the German community. Therefore, there would be no need to organize a gathering of their own. But Mr. W and these people gathered together. It means the conversion of these people was probably not community related, so they needed to form their own community.

How could these people have converted in Germany but without a relation to a community? It might be related to the transnational missionary groups' work. The transnational missionary groups come to Germany and proselytize people, but without further organizational support. These people were converted but were not bound to any religious organization, so they built a new one for themselves.

The original form of the community is gathering. Without any instruction, without any

programs, they began to gather. They could have improvised many contents in the gathering. Mr. W and Ms. W must have contributed their experiences of the gatherings, because they have already converted in China. The gathering was probably a casual form with the potential of being a home church.

W: Christians call the gathering community. Actually, it means several people gather together.

The narrative reflects Mr. W's conception of a community. Mr. W's understanding of the gathering, the original form of a community is "*several people gather together*". He regards the meaning and the form of a community as a regular meeting among Christians.

When Mr. W says "*Christians call the gathering community*", he thinks that he is representing a general opinion: It is common that the gathering is a community. Mr. W is trying to explain to the interviewer some Christian knowledge, so he changes his perspective to a third person perspective and uses a describing tone, as if his understanding of a community is a general opinion of Christians. At this point, he behaves like a theological authority in the conversion. Maybe he is an authority in the community and always teaches others about theological questions. So when he explains religious definitions, he explains in an objective tone as if it was common sense.

Mr. W did not have any experience of managing and developing a community. Mr. W's understanding of a community has neither requirements for the community structure nor wishes on theological progress. His understanding might be influenced by his experience in China. The narrative indicates that Mr. W has a loose definition of a community, which corresponds to a home church mode community. It is very probable that Mr. W did not have a concrete future plan of how to develop the community to a bigger size or to recruit more people to join. Mr. W's understanding of the community focuses on the local activities. He has no future plan for the community. He did what he could. For him, gathering is almost enough for forming a community. Formality or structure of the community is not necessary in the gathering. The number of participants is not that important, either.

His behavior and his strategies in the community might correspond to his understanding of a community.

W: We already believed in God when we were in China, and they believe in God here.

Mr. W's "we" means himself and his wife. It might correspond to above-mentioned "us". They have a significant difference in comparison to the other people who came to the gathering. Mr. W and Ms. W were already Christians in China. This sentence proves the hypothesis above that the others converted in Germany. So their gathering was made up of Mr. W's family and some newly converted Christians. Mr. W and Ms. W became the center of the group because they had more experience of being a Christian. They might know more about Christianity. Theological knowledge might be a guarantee of the authority in the community.

The relationship between Mr. W's family and the others was friendship, but meanwhile Mr. W's family was probably leading the group. The community had a huge potential to become a home church-like community as long as Mr. W's family was leading the community.

W: We gathered together, and read the Bible.

The content of their gathering was reading the Bible. In Mr. W's narrative he does not mention how they read the Bible. With the given condition, it is not hard to assume that Mr. W and Ms. W led the Bible reading. The form of the Bible reading could be informal. Mr. W could apply his experience from his community in China to the Leipzig group.

As before mentioned, Mr. W's behavior and his strategies correspond to his understanding of a community. The community was a community for a small group of people who wanted to share their religious practice together. They found a place to read the Bible and that was enough for them. It was possible that Mr. W and the others did not think about doing missionary work outside the community. Mr. W led the community but did not develop it. Maybe to develop the community is beyond Mr. W's ability and efforts. Maybe Mr. W did not want to develop it because he was satisfied

with the gathering and did not have any ambition of expanding the community to a sustainable institution. His vision focuses on the present status of the community.

W: It was in 2002.

Mr. W remembered the year the community started. It is an important year for Mr. W. 2002 is for Mr. W the starting point of the community. Although the community may have changed a lot after 2002, for Mr. W, the original informal form of the gathering of several people is the beginning of the community. For those who later join the community may not even know when the community started. Mr. W is the witness and founder of the community, so he remembers the year of founding the community.

W: It was probably in summer, that we started the community.

He says “*probably in summer*”. It means that he is uncertain of the exact beginning of the gathering. If there was a special ritual of beginning the gathering, Mr. W would have remembered it more clearly. Now in his memory the beginning of the gathering was probably in summer. It is possible that the gathering was so informal and casual that Mr. W did not know when the official beginning was.

Mr. W says “*we*” again relating to “*start the community*”. In this context, the “*we*” means Mr. W’s family and the others who came to gather together. It could be the exact people who Mr. W mentioned above as “*us*”. He emphasizes the relationship between them and the community: They initiated the community.

9.3 The Hypothesis of Latent Meaning Generating Rules and Structure

According to Mr. W’s narrative, he is one of the initiators of the community. Mr. W and Ms. W were among the founders of the community⁸⁴. Mr. W’s family was probably a

⁸⁴ The word “community” has different meaning according to the context in this analysis. In the narrative of Mr. W, he switches the usage between “gathering” (聚会, people gather together for a certain purpose) and “community” (团契, people gather together for religious purpose, an often used word in Chinese Christian community). According to his understanding of a community, the “gathering” means a religious gathering, which could be understood as the

power center of the community because of their former experience as Christians in China. The other members in the community were probably newly converted and did not belong to any local community, so they tried to establish their own community to practice religion.

Mr. W might be a leader of the community as well as a theological teacher. His understanding of a community decided the orientation of the community. According to Mr. W's understanding, community meant gathering together and reading the Bible. A strong structure of an organization was not Mr. W's goal of establishing a community; he did not have any ambition in missionary work, either. Under Mr. W's lead the community has a great potential of being a home church-like organization, which is based on Mr. W's family as a center. Mr. W could have a very deep embeddedness in the community due to his leading position as a theological authority.

The relationship between Mr. W and the pastor could be an important clue to understand the formation of the community. Mr. W represents the original form of the community, which might have no plan for a systematic development, and is concentrated on the needs of a few community members. His strategies of organizing the community might relate to his experience in China. He might imitate the form and style of the community in which he was converted in China. So the formality and structure of a community were not his concern in the gathering.

Mr. W's community is a local group which has potential to be a home church. If the community turns into a transnational community with an administrative structure, Mr. W's position and function in the community must have experienced a transformation, too. The transformation of Mr. W's position is related to the transformation of the community. The center of power could be shifted from Mr. W's family to the pastor.

Mr. W's trajectory indicates the formation and transformation of the community.

original form of a "community". After the pastor came, the "community" means the organization of Chinese Christian community in Leipzig, which has a more formal form and more than gathering alone. In Mr. W's narrative, the word "community" has an ambiguous meaning, since he uses the same word but refers to different things. Sometimes he uses the word "community" to refer religious gathering, sometimes it refers to the organization. The ambiguous usage of the word is a part of his latent rules generating structure. In the analysis of the researcher, the word "gathering" refers to religious gathering and the word "community" refers to the organization, which includes its original form to its later formal form.

9.4 Indications from the Interview

9.4.1 Imitating and Forming a Community

W: It was natural for Christians to gather together. At first there was an American Christian with us. It was difficult to communicate with him. We had just come to Germany, and did not speak German well. He was American, whose German language was not good, either. But he was patient. Chinese people are willing to be with Chinese. We Chinese lived in the same building, so it was natural to gather together. There was no other place to go.

Mr. W describes the first stage of the gathering: Some Chinese Christians lived in the same building and began to gather. The gatherings were self-initiated and self-organized. Location, language and culture played important roles in forming the gathering. They lived in the same building, so they knew each other. It is common in the migration situation that people who live near each other and with the same cultural background gather together. With the advantage of location, a small Chinese circle was established in the building. The reason why they gathered together could be the religious reason that they are Christians, or could also be related to their cultural background because they are Chinese in the same building. The more shared similarities they have, the more motivations they have for the gathering.

Chinese people were almost exclusive in the gathering because Chinese language was the only instrument of communication. It was not an active decision to be exclusive for Chinese people; it was rather a passive decision because none of the members could speak German well enough or English. It was a small group of Chinese who are socially limited by their language skills. Although there was a patient American Christian who wanted to help and join the group, he did not play any significant role in forming the community due to his poor communication with the other members. Chinese language has a two-sided function with the starting of the community. On one side, the language motivates members to gather together and share their lives in their mother tongue; on the other side, the language becomes a barrier of the community, and the membership

and integration of the small group demands Chinese language skills. Those who do not speak perfect Chinese could have problems integrating into the community. At the beginning of forming the community, Mr. W and other members were motivated to gather together, and they enjoyed the positive consequence brought by language. The American Christian experienced the other side of the language problem; it could happen to other members who later join the community.

“There was no other place to go” is another reason for Mr. W to start the gathering. If groups of young people want to gather and have fun, they could go to the cinema or visit museums or to do sports training, etc. There are many other choices to spend their leisure time. For Mr. W and his friends, there was no other place in the city to go. The situation can only make sense in consideration of his migration status. Mr. W was totally new in the city and had no idea of what was offered in the city. He knew nobody who could lead him to adapt to the new city and new situation. He did not know a local German church. It was a totally isolated situation in migration status. Mr. W and his friends were in the building and wanted to establish a place for themselves to spend their leisure time and to have nice communication. German society and the city of Leipzig and the university might have offered some cultural activities for migrants, but the information did not reach Mr. W and his friends. What they wanted was to be in a small group.

W: Before the pastor came, we were not as official as in the church. We gathered around and read the Bible. The community meant family. Because we were at the same age, it was like a small family. A family community has its advantages. It is small and everybody cares about everybody. The community members knew each other very well.

W: The family church we joined in China was not large-scale, so the family church I developed in Germany was not large-scale, either. It is relaxed, without special forms. We are concerned with spirituality, and the relationship between people and God. So since I came to Germany, I learned and imitated my experiences and ways in the family church in China.

Before the pastor came, the gathering was *“not as official as in the church”*. It means

that the gathering might have been in a casual form like talking. It could have been without a concrete religious program and without any religious rituals. “*Family*” was strongly emphasized in the narrative. For Mr. W, “*the community means family*”, and the small gathering group became a substitute for home in Germany. For Mr. W, forming a community is a process of establishing a home. The relationship between members is more than friends. They cared about each other and lived together in the same building. They spent most of the time with each other. The small group was more than a religious organization, it was a small society they created and lived in. The structure of the group was loose and informal, because what was important to them was the personal attachment. The personal relationship and emotional attachment were very important to members.

Mr. W regards the personal attachment as an advantage of the small family community. It is related to his understanding of a religious community. Mr. W’s understanding of how a community should be was learned from his community in China. He was converted in China and had visited the local community there. His experience in China was his starting point of organizing the group in Germany. So Mr. W’s local community in China coincidentally became the prototype for the Leipzig community. Mr. W admits his imitation of the Chinese local community when he tried to form the small group in Germany. Therefore, the Leipzig community had the potential to be a home church, which was led by Mr. W and Ms. W. The community could have been a similar small home church like Mr. W’s local community in China. However, the Leipzig community turned later to a transnational religious community which belongs to the transnational missionary network. Something must have happened, and it might relate to the pastor’s work.

9.4.2 Role Awareness as a Community Leader

W: There were some others who were co-workers. I led them to know God. What the community becomes is another thing.

At the beginning we were a group of people who read the Bible seriously. We regarded it

not as a form of entertainment, like eating together. That was not my concern. My concern is how humans can really know God and experience God. This is my concern.

W: Those who haven't converted yet have no idea of the religion. So we provide them with some basic knowledge about who God is, what God does, from different aspects, e.g. aspects of science and of spirituality. It is better for the beginners. For beginners it is difficult to explain the truth of the Bible and the words of the Bible. They do not understand. Our introduction is about the Gospel.

The narrative proves the hypothesis of Mr. W's leading role in the community at the beginning of the formation of the community. Mr. W has strong role awareness as a community leader, so he takes the responsibility of teaching the others how to practice religion. His teaching focuses on personal religious experience⁸⁵, because his concern is "how humans can really know God and experience God". He does not have any thoughts on establishing a structure of the community and a development of the community because it is not his concern. His emphasis on personal religious experience might relate to his experience in the community in China.

Mr. W regards the gathering as a serious activity which is more than entertainment. So the Chinese in the same building gather together because they want to practice religion. Because Mr. W has converted in China, the others regarded him as an experienced Christian. Therefore, he was regarded as the one who was able to teach and lead the others, especially the beginners. Mr. W accepted the expectation and took the task.

In Mr. W's narrative he develops a program for the beginners: "*We provide them with some basic knowledge about who God is, what God does*". He regards himself as an experienced Christian who is expected to lead the others. Mr. W becomes the theological authority of the community and is responsible for the religious teaching of the other community members. During the process Mr. W becomes the center of the community.

Mr. W's center status in the community is based on his former religious experience in

⁸⁵ In this analysis, "religious experience" has different meaning according to the context. Here the phrase means personal inner religious experience. In other phrase like "religious experience in a community", the "religious experience" means experience of attending community activities.

China and his awareness as a leader of the community. Because there were no other people who had experience in a religious community and Mr. W was the only one who had some knowledge about Christianity, he was chosen and trusted by the others to lead the community. It indicates the lack of local religious representatives among the Chinese Christians. If there was a more experienced Chinese Christian in the city, Mr. W could have not been able to achieve the status as theological authority and as the leader of the community. Mr. W achieves the center status because the center was a vacuum.

Because of Mr. W's deep involvement and his center status in the formation of the community, he has a deep embeddedness in the community.

If we make an experimental thought, that later if the pastor wants to lead the community, he might have to deal with the situation that Mr. W is the center of the community. It could be a competitive relationship between Mr. W and the pastor.

S: What did you read for your spiritual teaching?

W: The Bible.

S: And?

W: It depends on what kind of books I get. In China there were few books. Now it is different when people are abroad. Now there is Internet. In China the Internet is not very helpful. But here, there are so many sermons online: How to operate a community, different sermons. It is very helpful because of the Internet. We download different hymns and different sermons.

W: I do not have any theological background. I did not study theology at the university. I rely on the daily communication with God. In China most people do not have a theological study, so they study from God. This is our God, he can do everything. If there is no teacher to teach us, he teaches us himself. God speaks to us through the Bible. The most important is the Bible. With the Bible, you do not need any other book. Only the Bible is flawless. Other books or sermons of pastors, no one dares to say that he is absolutely right. For us, the Bible is our root. The Bible is enough for our theological knowledge.

According to Mr. W's narrative, he has a strong tendency toward evangelical theology. He emphasizes the importance of the Bible and the Bible alone, which is his justification of his position as theological authority in the community and a justification of being without other theological references. Despite the fact that he had not had any theological study, Mr. W feels confident as the leader of the community who is responsible for the spiritual teaching of others. As a result, Mr. W's understanding of the religion shapes the community's members' understanding. The evangelical tendency of Mr. W's theology influences the others.

According to Mr. W's narrative, he is not the one and only resource of religious teaching in the community before the pastor comes. He and other members listen to the sermons on the Internet. Online resources are searched by the community members in order to improve the insufficiency of local religious teaching. Mr. W learns not only theological teaching online, but also the organization of the community. He has such a strong awareness as a community leader, so he also learns "*how to operate a community*".

Internet is applied as a teaching instrument in the community, which makes the diversity in theological understanding possible, because everyone can search for what he wants. Mr. W regards the Internet as a helpful method to learn religious knowledge, but for him, the only flawless origin is the Bible. His attitude corresponds to his evangelical theology. So the diversity in theology is possible in the community, as Mr. W was the theological authority in the community. Mr. W does not segregate other Christian religious denominations.

9.4.3 The Role of the Pastor

To understand Mr. W's trajectory in the community, the pastor must be taken into consideration. After the pastor joined the community, Mr. W's role and function in the community have changed.

9.4.3.1 Transformation

W: Now the community is bigger, and has had some changes. The pastor has more experience. He did this for a long time. It is more normalized. Before he came, we held the gathering very casually. We had pious hearts. The gathering was like what we are doing now, talking to each other. The room was half as big as this one. It was relatively relaxed and the form casual. After the pastor came, it became more and more normalized and became routine. Many people accepted the community for this reason. In the past it was too casual, so some people did not like it. When it turned to be formal, they felt it was serious and therefore became willing to join the community.

After the pastor comes and joined the community, some changes take place. Mr. W compares the phase of the community after the pastor came and the phase before the pastor came.

As Mr. W concludes, the community becomes bigger than before. Due to the pastor's hard and active missionary work in Leipzig, more and more people come to visit the community. Mr. W did not have the intention to expand the group when they started the gathering, so he did not make any efforts to develop the structure of the community. The size of the community was not important to Mr. W's religious practice. The pastor has a different concern. For the pastor, the development of the community ought to be systematically organized.

The gatherings are more normalized than before. According to Mr. W's narrative, the gathering is no longer like a casual talk; it becomes a serious routinized religious activity, which is probably led by the pastor as an authority. The form of the community becomes more official, so it becomes attractive for many people who disliked the casual form before. As a result, the community becomes bigger. Normalization of the community offers people a more convenient access to the community activity. The target group of the pastor's activity is different from Mr. W's. Mr. W considers the religious practice of the Christians around who know each other. The pastor considers the Chinese Christians and the potential Christians in the city. It is not important whether the pastor knows them personally.

Mr. W establishes his relationship with each member in the small group, while the pastor establishes the relationship between members and the community. Without personal attachment it makes it easier for people to have access to the community. Everybody can visit the community and participate in the activity. They do not need to be introduced by other community members in advance. Some people are willing to join an official organization without obligation, rather than a small group, which requires personal attachment. During Mr. W's phase, the community is a small group which serves a few members internally. During the pastor's phase, the community is becoming an open area of activities to the public, to all the Chinese people living in Leipzig. The community experiences a transformation from Mr. W's phase to the pastor's phase.

W: We had to work in an ice cream shop. So we did not have time for the community when we worked. Sometimes we had to work everyday including Sunday. If I took a day off, she had to work. If she went to the community, I had to work. Therefore, we were not becoming that familiar with everyone in the community.

To get to know everyone in the community requires the whole day. If the number is under 10, it is easy to remember who studies what. If the number is over 50, it is impossible. There are too many things and too many people. So there are small groups now.

We have a child now. Before the baby was born, we already had less participation in the community, because it was inconvenient and I had to work. Now that I am not in the small groups, I know even less about the other members. If you want to know one's belief, you have to be in his life, to communicate with him, to care about him.

The reasons of the transformation are explained in Mr. W's narrative.

In comparison to Mr. W, the pastor has some advantages in many aspects regarding to community work.

The pastor can work full time as a missionary worker, while Mr. W is a student who studies in the daytime and works at night. There is little time left for Mr. W to take care of the community. Mr. W's ability and time enables him to lead a small group of under 10 people, because he wants to know people personally and develop a personal

relationship. Due to the expansion of the community, Mr. W is no longer capable of getting to know everyone and of establishing a personal relationship with everyone.

Mr. W's understanding of a community emphasizes personal attachment, which is impossible to realize after the expansion of the community. The community has become a community, which Mr. W did not expect.

It indicates the limitation of the home-based original form of the community. The original form depends on Mr. W's time and energy to a great extent. If he did not have time there could be no activity. When the community is a family centered home church, the development relies on the family's deep involvement, which is difficult for Mr. W and Ms. W to constantly provide due to their busy time schedules. Unless Mr. W devotes his time and his career to the community, he could not be able to do the same work as the pastor does.

After the pastor came, Mr. W's model of the community as a small group was challenged by the pastor's model of a community, which serves a larger number of participants. Mr. W's model of the community has the potential of being a home church with casual form, which is a relatively small group of a few Chinese Christians, who know each other well. The pastor's model of the community emphasizes the quantity of the community members and the formality of the community. His normalization of community routines brings to the community some institutional character, which makes the community seem to be more official and reliable. The normalization is possible because the pastor has much more experience in organizing and developing the community, and he has more time.

The pastor's model is more mature than Mr. W's model, so the pastor has the chance to replace Mr. W's center position and to lead the community to a transformation from a home church to a relatively more institutionalized structure.

9.4.3.2 The Pastor as a Provider

W: Later the pastor came, and then the number of people increased.

The pastor came through the Chinese Library. He had been in Germany for many years,

maybe eight years in Berlin. Then he went to Canada and came back to Germany again, he came to Leipzig. At that time, there were more than 10 people in the community. We were students, who hadn't much free time. The pastor could work full time. So could his wife. They did care about the brothers and sisters in the community.

W: Later we borrowed a church. It was thus more official. The pastor made it more official, too. He did a lot of work. He invited people to have dinner, created some chances to communicate. Those who came from China had never heard about anything about belief. So they were really attracted by the community, by the love of God. And therefore, they stayed. Some were introduced by their friends, and later also stayed.

As aforementioned the pastor has a lot of experience in developing a community. He has worked with transnational Chinese migrants for decades. The pastor was in Germany for eight years and later worked in Canada. The pastor found Mr. W's religious group through the Chinese Library⁸⁶, which implies that the pastor had been an agent of the transnational religious network. He is a transnational pastor who works for and works with Chinese migration. Therefore, he is familiar with organizational issues of a community in a migrant situation. He invites people to have dinner and creates chances to communicate with them. He actively approaches Chinese in the city and create opportunities to introduce Christianity to them. These are mature missionary strategies based on the pastor's transnational missionary work over the course of decades. Mr. W could neither come up with the missionary strategies nor could he realize them because of lack of time and experience.

The pastor has successfully replaced the center position of Mr. W in the community, not only because the pastor works full time, but also because he has the right to connect and allocate the transnational resources, which are very attractive to the community members and are a strong support of developing the community. The pastor has the advantage of transnational social capital, which Mr. W might also need.

*S: Tell me something about the camping.*⁸⁷

⁸⁶ See chapter 3.

⁸⁷ See chapter 3.

W: There are fewer people in a regular gathering. During a camping there are more people. It is a stronger atmosphere. The whole three days is about thinking about God, so it benefits many people. You can hear the providence of others, which motivates and helps you.

Mr. W accepted the camping activity as a religious teaching, which was provided and organized by the pastor. For Mr. W, the pastor is a provider, too. Despite the fact that Mr. W regards himself as a theological authority in the community, he admits that he still needs to learn more. Camping is an activity that requires financial support and sufficient teaching staff. It is impossible for Mr. W's small group to hold such an activity, which requires coordination of transnational resources. But for the pastor, who has been working in the transnational religious field for a long time, to organize a camping trip might be one of his routine works.

The pastor is a provider for the local Chinese Christians and potential Christians. He provides not only food at home for young students, a chance to introduce Christianity to them, but also the important transnational religious resources that strongly support the religious teaching for the community members and enhance the development of the community.

Before the pastor came, the community was a small group that enjoyed a casual communication among a few people under Mr. W's leadership. After the pastor came, he brought his experience of developing a transnational community to Leipzig and applied his experience on the small group. As a result, the pastor's effort turns the small group into an official community that is directly connected with the transnational missionary network. The community is no longer an isolated small group in a German city, but a part of the transnational missionary chain. The aim of the pastor's transnational missionary detour, to build a transnational missionary station, is realized by the transformation.

The pastor was a competitor to Mr. W, because he replaces Mr. W's center position. But in the meanwhile the pastor is a provider and a teacher, too. The pastor's efforts and the support of transnational resources make it possible for the small group to turn into a small institution, which is a part of the transnational missionary work.

9.4.3.3 The Trajectory of Mr. W

W: We went to the community less often once the gathering started in the pastor's home.

We had to work everyday.

W: But we have many limitations, for example our newborn baby. Now we want to reduce our service in the community, because we are the ones who are leaving first. If we leave next year, we hope that people do not leave the community because we are gone; I hope the community develops better even without me. I do not want to be so important that the community cannot develop without me. I hope that more people join and make efforts. After we leave, the community can run further. So we are reducing our involvement in the community.

The trajectory of Mr. W in the community changes from deep involvement to less involvement, because Mr. W decides to draw back his influence in the community.

The replacement of Mr. W's center position in the community is mainly caused by two reasons. The first reason, as mentioned before, is that the pastor takes an active move to become the power center of the community. As a result, the pastor is a leader and a provider to the community members. The second reason is Mr. W's choice to reduce his influence in the community.

The pastor and Mr. W might have tension during the replacement, but Mr. W chooses to respect the authority of the pastor. On one hand, Mr. W realizes his limitation as a leader of the community. He cannot provide as much time as the pastor can provide to the community since Mr. W is a student and has become a father. On the other hand, Mr. W is fully aware of the pastor's function and influence in the community, so Mr. W decides to draw back his involvement in the community. He makes this decision for the best benefit of the community. Now Mr. W takes the future development of the community into consideration; he hopes that the community can continue to exist even without him. Although at the beginning of the community initiation, Mr. W had not come up with the thought of establishing a religious institution that could last longer than his stay in Germany, he changes his understanding of the community after the community turns to a normalized religious organization under the leadership of the pastor. Mr. W knows that

if the existence of a community depends on a certain person, it could be a hindrance of development of the community. Therefore, Mr. W gradually draws back his influence in the community.

There could be another possibility that the pastor might require Mr. W to draw back his influence. According to some information gathered from other interviewees⁸⁸, Mr. W tried to teach some community members to speak in tongues. The pastor was not pleased to see Pentecostal religious practice in the community so he had a talk with Mr. W. After that, Mr. W attended fewer and fewer community activities. Mr. W's religious practice was learned in China, which might have a Pentecostal tendency. Because the pastor is a Baptist, he does not appreciate speaking in tongues. The theological diversity might lead to a conflict between Mr. W and the pastor.

Mr. W's influence in the community is a competitive one in regard to the pastor's influence, so the replacement of Mr. W's center position is accompanied by the decrease of his influence. His trajectory is from center to margin. It is a result of the pastor's wish and Mr. W's choice.

Theological diversity within the community is possible and is tolerated, but the pastor does not wish to advocate the Pentecostalism. However Mr. W is less influential on the religious practice of the community members, so the pastor still has the authority of guiding them. Diversity on theology is not welcomed in the community. If we make an experimental thought, we can suppose that those who have different theological understanding from the pastor might not be able to stay in the center of the community. Just as in Mr. W's case, who was a competitive leader type compared to the pastor, and those who have different theological understanding from the pastor, could be driven to the periphery of the community.

W: I am the one who witnesses all of their conversions, the group leaders. If we are in a Bible reading group, those group leaders who are new in the community dare not to say his opinion, or hope that I will give an answer. If I am in the group, it could harm his

⁸⁸ The interviews with other members, which are mentioned in chapter 4.

authority among the brothers and sisters. They would think their group leader is not competent enough. I do not want to see this situation. I hope they can initiate things themselves. If we go there, they remain still and wait for my speech.

Mr. W's narrative proves his influence in the community. Because he is the one who witnesses all the other's conversions, Mr. W was regarded as a leader of the community. If Mr. W appears in a Bible reading group, people expect that he can take the lead and explain the Bible. Mr. W's theological authority remains influential despite the pastor's disagreement with Pentecostal practice.

The fact that Mr. W is always regarded and respected as a theological authority implies the fragility of the center position of the pastor. Maybe the pastor does not give perfect sermons, so the community members compare Mr. W and the pastor and choose to listen to Mr. W's teaching. If we make an experimental thought, if Mr. W is a man with strong will to carry out his understanding of theology in the community, it could cause a splitting up of the community. Mr. W possesses the ability to compete with the pastor as well as the influence on the community and respect of the community members. But Mr. W did not choose to compete with the pastor or to challenge the pastor's authority; on the contrast, he chose to reduce his influence in the community and even helped that generation in reproducing the next generation of the community.

Mr. W's decision is related to his understanding of a community and he has no ambition of developing a big community. Mr. W has the ability to compete with the pastor but he did not have the wish to compete. Therefore, the community might have avoided splitting up. Mr. W agrees with the pastor's plan of developing the community and reproducing leaders of the community. Mr. W helps the other reproduced leaders to learn how to lead a Bible reading group by being absent in the activities. He is aware of his theological authority and tries to reduce its influence on the community members, in order to make a smooth transition possible.

The trajectory of the community experiences three phases. The first is Mr. W's phase: The original form of a small local group, which is self-organized and self-supported. The second phase is the transition phase: Mr. W reduces his influence in the community, the pastor replaces Mr. W as the power center of the community, and the next generation

of leaders is reproduced. These are the premises of turning the community into the third phase, the pastor's phase: The community becomes normalized and is connected with a transnational missionary network, which supports the community's development.

The community's trajectory is moving with accelerating speed while the trajectory of Mr. W is moving from center to periphery.

9.4.4 Religious Understanding and Teaching

W: We went to a German church. But now it is difficult to differentiate whether it is Pentecostal or not. Pentecostal recovers a part of truth. This is religion. Martin Luther was suppressed by the Catholics. When they are stabilized, they become against the Pentecostals. The former ones are always against the later ones. A lot of people were against the Pentecostal movement at the beginning. After 100 years, people are accepting it gradually.

W: It is not possible to separate them absolutely. For example, we sing some happy songs during the gathering, which are influenced by the Pentecostals. People raise their hands during singing, which is also influenced by the Pentecostal movement. The Pentecostal movement rediscovers some truth in the Bible. For example, the happy songs, which integrate popular elements. The songs written in Taiwan and Hong Kong are very emotional and popular. It is not like Luther's serious tradition, when everybody has a Bible in his hand. Now the influence of denominations is becoming smaller and smaller. There is no need for conflict. Everyone can insist on what he thinks is right. Denominations are more tolerant to each other.

It is difficult to track down Mr. W's religious understanding. He was in China and learned a little about Christianity in a small Christian community, so he did not have a systematic religious teaching. He comes to Germany and suddenly becomes a leader of a Christian group because he converted a little bit earlier than the others. Despite the fact that he is without any systematic theological training, Mr. W is responsible for the other's religious teaching. So Mr. W might form his theological understanding all by himself because he neither has a chance to study nor has a teacher to ask. As previously

mentioned, he does not regard it as a problem because he thinks that the Bible alone is enough to guide him to find the truth.

As the community was in Mr. W's phase, the community's theology was Mr. W's theology, which combined the influence of Chinese local evangelical community and Mr. W's self-study. Mr. W appreciates some Pentecostal religious practices like speak in tongues, which he might have learned in Germany. Before the pastor came, the community could have practiced some Pentecostal activities, because its leader appreciated it. During the transition phase, in which the pastor replaces Mr. W as the center of the community, the Pentecostal practice becomes less known by the community members. But raising hands during singing hymns is normalized in the community and community members do not know it was originated by Pentecostal practice. The new community members could even regard raising hands during singing hymns as a standard procedure in Sunday worship without recognizing its relation to Pentecostalism.

The point is that the religious teaching in the community is so arbitrary that the community members' religious understanding is formed by different sources which might be not compatible with each other. Mr. W and the pastor are both theological leaders in the community. Although Mr. W reduces his activity in the community, the diversity of religious education and religious understanding keeps within the community.

The diversity in the community's religious teaching is neither the purpose of the pastor's missionary work, nor Mr. W's aim. The diversity is a consequence of developing a transnational religious community, which different migrants join. The pastor has to confront different theological opinions and different religious practices. The pastor can educate the new community members and reproduce new leaders who will share the same theological opinions with him. But Mr. W is not one of them. Mr. W is a competitive leader type who forms his own opinions on religion. So the diversity is inevitable as long as Mr. W insists on continuing his own way of religious practice. The consequence of his different insistence reflects on his trajectory in the community: From center to periphery.

S: What is your opinion on Jehovah's witnesses, and the Mormons?

W: They are heresies, not denominations. These are things that are wrong in our opinion. Right or wrong has a very basic criterion. For example, we regard only the Bible as absolutely right. But the Mormons say that their Mormon Bible is right and higher than the Bible. We cannot accept this. The Mormon Bible has changed with the time, and their leader has predicted the date of the end of the world, and the date has changed more than five times. Mormons have their advantages and dominance, but they are wrong. There are two wrong beliefs that are officially denied by the Ecumenical councils. One is the Mormons; the other is Jehovah's witnesses, which denies that Jesus is the savior. They contradict the basic criteria of Christian belief, so they are heresies.

Despite Mr. W's different opinion on Pentecostalism, he shares the same opinion with the pastor on Mormons and Jehovah's witnesses. Mr. W regards Mormons and Jehovah's witnesses as heresies that he cannot accept, because they contradict Mr. W's basic criteria of Christian belief. Mr. W suddenly mentioned the Ecumenical councils, and regards it as a theological authority. It indicates the origin and criteria of his theology. Mr. W might have read some books or read some articles online and learned about the categories of denominations and heresies. He applies this knowledge to his understanding of Christianity and spreads the understanding to the other community members. These opinions do not contradict the pastor's evangelical theology, which emphasizes on the Bible and the Bible alone. So Mr. W and the pastor are able to agree on most issues of theology despite some small different understanding on denominations. A splitting up is not necessary although the pastor treats the slight diversity as a challenge of his position of theological authority in the community. The pastor's strategy of handling the diversity is to enhance his own leading position and reduce Mr. W's influence in the community. The dominant religious teaching must be coherent with the pastor's theology. The pastor has the resource and power to make it possible.

9.4.5 The Consequences of Mr. W's Trajectory

S: So most friends of yours are Christians?

W: In the past there were many other kinds. In college there were different classmates. Once you have a family, life becomes smaller. The pressure in Germany is different; we have to study and to work. Among Christians there is a shared feature: They believe in God. So it is easier to attract each other. Friendship is based on mutual interests. Christians have more things in common. You can study and hang out with your classmates. With Christian friends, besides studying and playing, you can pray and believe together, and it never ends. People change gradually; they become more frank and more sincere. People gather together to share love. Friends share love, too. They know you better, they support you more. You feel that Christian friends care more about you than those non-Christian friends. So you want to gather together. It is just that easy.

Since Mr. W initiated the small gathering, he began to have a stable circle of friends who are Chinese Christians. On one side, the small group of people provides Mr. W with a social space, where they gather together and practice religion. On the other side, the small group prevents Mr. W from exploring German society. He does not feel the necessity to make German friends. Mr. W prefers to make friends with Chinese Christians rather than with Chinese non-Christians. According to Mr. W's narrative, the Chinese Christians have resonance in life: *"With Christian friends, besides studying and playing, you can pray and believe together."* Mr. W's expectation of friendship in the community corresponds to his understanding of a community. He thinks that the community members ought to know each other well and care about each other. Personal relationships play an important role in his understanding of a community. It also implies a tendency of exclusion: The community is a small society in which only Chinese Christians can enjoy friendship with Chinese Christians. Chinese non-Christians might not find the resonance with others.

Therefore, the Chinese Christian community becomes a useful social space for Chinese Christians in Leipzig. Chinese migrants who are not Christians might be excluded by the community. If we make an experimental thought, if there is a Chinese migrant

society in Leipzig, the Chinese Christian community is a parallel social space to the non-Christian Chinese's social space. On one side, the Chinese Christian community tries to attract people from non-Christian Chinese social space, in order to develop the community and realize the expansion. On the other side, if there are people who do not want to join the community, they cannot get any resources from it. If they are not Christians, the community members would not make close friends with them because according to Mr. W's narrative, "*You feel that Christian friends care more about you than those non-Christian friends.*" If non-Christian Chinese want to make close friends, they might also choose non-Christian Chinese. The identity as a Christian makes it easier to find a friend in the community, but makes it harder outside the community. The community becomes a competitive and parallel social space for Chinese in Germany.

Because of the existence of the community, there are at least two social spaces for local Chinese people. The social space for Chinese Christians is the community, where a religious identity is important for getting access into the social space. The rest of non-Christian Chinese might not have formed a community or an association. Their activities are based on personal interests, and might not be systematically organized like the community activities are. Because the community has the intention of doing missionary and expanding the community, it could cause a crossover between social spaces. The relationship between the two social spaces is parallel and competitive, although they both belong to the category of transnational Chinese migrants in Germany.

Mr. W's migration status makes him busy with study and work at the same time. Mr. W might be an example of Peggy Levitt's research question: How migrants resume their religious life when they live in another society.⁸⁹ According to Levitt's theory, the migrants' religious practice is influenced by the change of daily life, in order to adapt to the host society. Mr. W's trajectory can be a supplementary explanation to Levitt's theory. Mr. W did want to resume his religious practice when he came to Germany, but his religious practice becomes the dominant elementary in his life, and his migrant life

⁸⁹ See chapter 2.

is influenced by his religious pursuit. Levitt might underestimate the influence of religion on daily life. In some cases, for example in Mr. W's case, his trajectory indicates his religious practice has priority in shaping his migrant life in Germany.

S: Did you attend the community activities when you were back to China this year?

W: Only once. It was different. It is easy to adapt.

S: Do you have contact with the community in China?

W: The community in China is like family to us. So we keep contact online and through MSN.

Since Mr. W went to Germany, he keeps in contact with the community in China, in which he converted to Christianity. Mr. W's identity as a Christian is related to two communities. One is the community he initiated in Leipzig, and the other is the one in China. As he tried to establish the community in Leipzig, the one in China was a prototype that Mr. W tried to reproduce in Germany.

For Mr. W, to initiate a community in Leipzig was a personal decision, and was not a systematically organized action to establish a sub-organization of the China community in Germany. But through Mr. W's involvement, the community in Leipzig is influenced by the community in China both on original form and on religious teaching. Though the pastor does not expect it, Mr. W represents another dimension of transnational missionary work: The consequence is that the community in China transnationally influences the community in Leipzig, despite the fact that it was not its intention. "Transnationalism" in the community means not only that the pastor brings transnational resources to the local Chinese community in Germany, but also that Mr. W brings transnational religious influence from China to the community. And meanwhile, Mr. W might influence the community in China on religious teaching, too. The communication between communities turns to be inter-effected on a transnational level. The pastor's influence is spread to mainland China through Mr. W's connection with the community in China. His wish of "China mission" might thus be enhanced.

The consequence of Mr. W's religious experience in Germany does not disturb his relation with the community in China. As he was in China, he visited the church and felt

it was very easy to adapt. His religious reintegration in his home town was smooth. It implies that there is a large compatibility between the community in Leipzig and the community in China. Maybe the pastor has intentionally made the compatibility possible because the pastor does not want to prevent Mr. W from spreading the Gospel in Chinese religious communities.

9.5 Summary

9.5.1 Motive of Joining the Community

9.5.1.1 Initiating a Community to Resume Religious Practice

Mr. W joins the community because he was one of the founders. As he came to Leipzig there was no Chinese Christian community that he could join. Mr. W wanted to resume his religious practice, which he learned in a community in his home town in China, so he decided to form one. There were some other newly converted Chinese Christians who lived with Mr. W in the same building. They started to gather together and share religious experiences in a relaxed atmosphere.

Mr. W's motive for initiating the community was based on his wish to practice religion in Germany. His experience in China helps him to form the small group and as a result, he became an important founder of the community.

The formation of the community was not systematically organized, but rather spontaneously improvised. The prototype of the Leipzig community is the community which Mr. W attended in China. It provides a mode of formation of a transnational religious community: Imitating and forming a community that exists in another land.

Mr. W's choice to initiate a Chinese Christian community is also related to his migrant status. He and other founders could not speak good German or English, which made it difficult for them to join a German Christian community and to enjoy the activities there. They are limited by their language skills in social life. Mr. W and his friends wanted to establish a place for themselves to spend their leisure time and to have nice communication. Chinese language motivates the members to gather together and share

their lives in their mother tongue, but meanwhile the language becomes a barrier of the community, and the membership and integration of the small group demands Chinese language skills. It might be a characteristic of transnational religious communities, in which the language turns to be one of the criteria of membership.

By initiating a community, Mr. W establishes a social space for himself and for other Chinese Christians. If there was a Chinese Christian community already in existence in the city, Mr. W might have joined it. Due to the vacuum of a Christian social space for Chinese in Leipzig, Mr. W's effort fills the vacancy. This motive indicates the status of Chinese Christians in Germany. They are lacking of institutional support and limited by language skills. Mr. W establishes a new community to better the status of their religious practice.

9.5.1.2 Deep Embeddedness as a Community Leader

Mr. W has a deep embeddedness in the community on two levels. The first level is on the personal relationship. The second level is his role awareness as a leader in the community.

Mr. W's emphasis on personal attachment corresponds to his understanding of a community. At the beginning of the small group, people in the community knew each other well and cared about each other. It was like a small family. Mr. W emphasizes personal emotional communication as well as religious experience. The personal emotional embeddedness is Mr. W's motivation of establishing the community, because he has a religious life as well as a social life within the community.

Mr. W's role awareness as a community leader deepens his embeddedness in the community. Mr. W imitates the community in China as a solution for establishing one in Germany. Due to his slight experience in the Christian community in China, he becomes the leader of the community in Germany.

Mr. W is regarded as the one who was able to teach and lead the others. Mr. W accepts the expectation and takes the task. Mr. W becomes the theological authority of the community and is responsible for the religious teaching of the other community

members. He is responsible for the formation of the community. Because he becomes the center of the community, the community has a large potential of becoming a home church.

According to Mr. W's opinion, the personal relationships and emotional attachments are important to members, but the structure of the community is not his concern. So the gatherings of the community members are loose and informal. Mr. W leads the community, but does not have a plan of developing it. As a result, the community in Mr. W's phase remains a small Christian group and has little influence on other Chinese in Leipzig.

9.5.2 The Type of Mr. W

9.5.2.1 Mr. W as a Competitive Leader Type

Mr. W's relationship with the pastor must be taken into consideration in order to understand Mr. W's type.

In the relation to the pastor, Mr. W is a competitive leader type. Mr. W possesses the ability to compete with the pastor. Mr. W has the influence on the community and respect of the community members.

After the pastor comes and joins the community, the relationship between Mr. W and the pastor changes according to their different roles in the community. The pastor becomes a new power center of the community while Mr. W becomes less influential in the community. Mr. W's influence in the community is a competitive one with the pastor's influence, so the replacement of Mr. W's center position is accompanied by the decrease of his influence. Mr. W's trajectory is from center to margin of the community. It is a result of the pastor's wish and Mr. W's choice.

A strong structure of an organization was not Mr. W's goal of establishing a community. He did not have any ambition in missionary work, either. The pastor has a long-term concern of development of the community. He wants to organize and develop the community systematically. With his transnational resources, the community activities

are expanded and normalized.

Mr. W represents the original form of the community, which might have no plan for a systematic development and concentrated on the needs of a few community members.

Mr. W's understanding of a community emphasizes personal attachment, which requires a large amount of time and energy. It indicates the limitation of the home-based original form of the community. The original form depends on Mr. W's time and energy to a great extent.

After the pastor came, Mr. W's model of the community as a small group was challenged by the pastor's model of a community, which serves a larger number of participants.

Normalization of the community offers local Chinese an easier access to the community activity. The target group of the pastor's activity is different from Mr. W's. Mr. W considers the Christians in the community who know each other. The pastor considers the Chinese Christians in the community and the potential Christians in the city. During the pastor's phase, the community is becoming an open area of activities to the public, to all the Chinese people live in Leipzig. The pastor has the chance to replace Mr. W, because the pastor becomes the theological and administrative authority and influences a larger amount of people than Mr. W does.

The pastor's model of the community emphasizes the quantity of the community members and the formality of the community. His normalization of community routines brings some institutional character to the community, which makes the community seem to be more official and reliable. The normalization is possible because the pastor has much more experience in organizing and developing the community. The pastor can connect and allocate the transnational resources, which are very attractive to the community members and are strong support of developing the community.

Although Mr. W as a competitive leader type processes the ability to compete with the pastor for the leading power of the community, he did not challenge the pastor's authority in public; instead, Mr. W chose to reduce his influence in the community and even helped the pastor reproduce the next generation of the community.

Although at the beginning of initiating the community Mr. W did not come up with the

thought of establishing a religious institution that could last longer than his stay in Germany, he changes his understanding of the community after the community turns to a normalized religious organization under the leadership of the pastor.

The transformation of Mr. W's position is related to the transformation of the community. The center of power could be shifted from Mr. W's family to the pastor.

After the pastor came, he brought his experience of developing a transnational community to Leipzig and applied his experience to the small group. As a result, the pastor's effort turns the small group into an official community that is directly connected with the transnational missionary network. The community is no longer an isolated small group in a German city, but a part of the transnational missionary chain. The aim of the pastor's transnational missionary detour, to build a transnational missionary station, is realized by the transformation.

9.5.2.2 The Function of Mr. W's type

Mr. W as a competitive leader type plays an important role in the community on three levels: Formation of the community, transformation of it and generation of diversity.

As an initiator of the community, Mr. W is responsible for the formation of the community. His experience in the community in China helps him imitate and establish the community in Germany. Mr. W designed the community's original form, which was based on his family as a center of the community and has large potential to become a home church.

Mr. W's function in the community is to lead the religious teaching and to provide a social space for the community members. Mr. W does not segregate other Christian religious denominations, but Mr. W prefers to make friends with Chinese Christians rather with Chinese non-Christians. Mr. W's expectation of friendship in the community corresponds to his understanding of a community. Personal attachment is required in the community, which leads to a tendency of exclusion: The community is a small society in which only Chinese Christians can enjoy friendship with Chinese Christians. Chinese non-Christians might not find the resonance with others in this social space. The

Chinese Christian community forms a parallel social space to the non-Christian Chinese's social space. During Mr. W's phase there was no competition between the two social spaces. But after the pastor came to Leipzig, the consequence is a competition of two social spaces: On one side, the Chinese Christian community tries to attract people from the non-Christian Chinese social space, in order to develop the community and realize the expansion. On the other side, if there are people who do not want to join the community, they cannot get any resources from it.

The community becomes a competitive and parallel social space for Chinese in Germany. The relationship between the two social spaces is parallel and competitive. The social space for Chinese Christians is the community, and a religious identity is important for getting access into the social space. The transnational religious community provides migrants with different supports and resources under the condition of being a Christian. Sometimes, the criterion rules out non-Christian Chinese migrants and may cause more separation in the Chinese migrant society in Leipzig.

Mr. W's function on the level of transformation is explained in the relationship with the pastor. Under Mr. W's lead, the community has a large potential of being a home church, which is based on Mr. W's family as a center. Because Mr. W has little concern for the development of the community, the pastor replaces him as the center of the community. The trajectory of the community experiences three phases. The first is Mr. W's phase: The original form of a small local group, which is self-organized and self-supported. The second phase is the transition phase: Mr. W reduces his influence in the community, the pastor replaces Mr. W as the power center of the community, and the next generation of leaders is reproduced. These are the premises of turning the community into the third phase, the pastor's phase: The community becomes normalized and is connected with a transnational missionary network, which supports the community's development. The community's trajectory is moving with accelerating speed, while the trajectory of Mr. W is moving from center to periphery. Mr. W contributes his cooperation in the transformation.

Mr. W did want to resume his religious practice when he came to Germany, but his religious practice becomes the dominant element in his life, and his migrant life is

influenced by his religious pursuit. As mentioned before, Levitt⁹⁰ might underestimate the influence of religion on daily life. In some cases, for example in Mr. W's case, his trajectory indicates his religious life dominates his migrant life. Mr. W's trajectory can be a supplementary explanation to Levitt's theory.

Mr. W as a competitive leader type plays an important role on the level of generating diversity in the community.

He develops another dimension of transnational missionary work. He keeps in touch with the community in China. Through Mr. W's involvement, the community in Leipzig is influenced by the community in China both on original form and on religious teaching. Therefore, he represents another dimension of transnational missionary work, which the pastor does not expect: The community in China transnationally influences the community in Leipzig, despite the fact that it was not its intention. "Transnationalism" in the community means not only the pastor brings transnational resources to local Chinese community in Germany, but also Mr. W brings transnational religious influence from China to the community. The diversity of transnationalism is generated by Mr. W.

On the other hand, the pastor's influence is spread to mainland China through Mr. W's connection with the community in China. His wish of "China mission" might thus be enhanced.

Mr. W also generates the diversity of religious teaching of the community, which the pastor does not expect. Mr. W's theology was influenced by the Chinese local evangelical community, Mr. W's self-study and later the transnational religious teaching during the camping. Mr. W advocates Pentecostal religious practices like speaking in tongues, which the pastor does not permit in the community. Some community members practice it despite the objection of the pastor. The diversity in the community religious teaching is neither the purpose of the pastor's missionary work, nor Mr. W's aim. The diversity is a consequence of developing a transnational religious community, which different migrants join. The pastor has to confront different theological opinions and

⁹⁰ See chapter 2.

different religious practices.

The pastor might represent the official theology direction of the community, but within the community there is diversity which is not to be ignored. The pastor's strategy of handling the diversity is to enhance his own leading position and reduce Mr. W's influence in the community. The dominant religious teaching must be consistent with the pastor's theology.

Those who have a different theological understanding from the pastor might not be able to stay in the center of the community. Like Mr. W, who was a competitive leader compared to the pastor, could be driven to the periphery of the community. In the center of the community, a homogenized tendency of theology takes place. Only reproduced leader types stay in the center.

9.5.2.3 Development of Mr. W's Trajectory

According to some information from other interviews, one year after the interview, Mr. W and Ms. W go to the Chinese biblical seminary in Europe in Barcelona⁹¹ and begin to learn theology systematically. The pastor supports them in their pursuit of religious study. Mr. W and Ms. W will become professional missionary workers after their study in Spain. Mr. W accepts the pastor's education and becomes a successor to him. Mr. W turns from a competitive leader type to a reproduced leader type. So Mr. W's trajectory may move back to the center of the community after his studies.

It indicates another dimension of the transnational mission: The institutional dimension. Without the apparatus of a complete transnational religious education supply chain, Mr. W and Ms. W would not have the chance to become professional missionary workers. The transnational religious education institution plays an important role in "China mission" by supplying the potential religious leaders with necessary and accessible theological teachings, which the potential leaders cannot have an easy access when they were in mainland China. Mr. W and Ms. W's trajectories are influenced not only by the pastor, but also by the possibilities that the transnational religious supply chain provides.

⁹¹ See Chapter 3.

Without the institutions that cooperate with the pastor, the transformation of Mr. W from competitive leader type to reproductive leader type is not possible.

According to objective Hermeneutics, information that is not contained in the interview, is not supposed to be used as one part of latent meaning generating rules and structures. Since the analysis is based on the whole observation on the community, the information from other interviews could be allowed to be used here.

10 Analysis of Miss E

10.1 Biographical Outline of Miss E

Miss E comes from Taiwan. Geographically, Taiwan is an island group located near the east coast of mainland China. Today it has a population of 23 million people. During the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) the Chinese Nationalist Party lost its power in mainland China and moved to Taiwan. The ideological conflicts between the Chinese Community Party and the Chinese Nationalist Party led to geopolitical tension between mainland China and Taiwan. The impact of the political tension extends to the daily life of people. Although the United Nations agrees with China that Taiwan is a part of China, the government of Taiwan claims itself to be an independent country. The question of national identity is very sensitive in Taiwan and is often used in voting campaigns. It remains a controversial topic in China as well as in Taiwan. Miss E studies music in Leipzig and has been in Germany more than six years. Her mother is a Buddhist, while Miss E herself joined a Presbyterian community in Taiwan during her high school time. She was invited to visit the community at the beginning and did not join it until her second visit.

This analysis will try to find out why Miss E joined the community, and the character of her type.

10.2 Analysis of the Beginning Sequences

10.2.1 The Beginning Stimulus

S: How did you join this community?

E: At the beginning, there was a person, her name is Y.

The Interview begins with a specific question. Miss E's answer begins with a person. This person has something to do with Miss E's joining the community. Y may be a member from the community. Between Miss E and the community, Y contributed as an

intermediator.

The relationship between Miss E and Y is not a close friendship; otherwise Miss E would have said “my friend Y”. Instead, she said, “*there was a person, her name is Y*”; this is a description used in describing an unfamiliar acquaintance. It indicates that Miss E and Y did not contact each other recently, because in the description Y’s role remains in the past tense. Y’s contribution of linking Miss E and the community might remain in the past as well. At the beginning the connection between Miss E and the community was established through personal contact.

10.2.2 The Narrative Opens

E: *She’s Taiwanese too.*

According to this sentence, Y’s identity as Taiwanese is one of the reasons why Miss E mentions her in the answer. Miss E is Taiwanese. They might have known each other. Because the pastor is Taiwanese, here the word “too” could be understood as Y being Taiwanese, the same as the pastor. It indicates the pastor has the intention to recruit not only people from mainland China but also people from Taiwan to join the community. It could also be understood as Y being Taiwanese, the same as Miss E herself. It indicates that Taiwanese identity connects Miss E and Y. The same national identity makes it possible to motivate people. Political identity plays an important role in Miss E’s story.

E: *And then the pastor found her by some way. Then she told me this.*

The pastor appears in the narrative for the first time. He actively found Y “*by some way*”. Y is the link between the pastor and Miss E. Miss E did not know the pastor until Y told her about him. Miss E did not actively search for the community, she did not even know about it. The pastor came and reached her. The important link among Miss E, Y and the pastor is that of the same identity as Taiwanese. It is possible that there is a small Taiwanese circle in the city, that the Taiwanese identity provides the convenience to find other Taiwanese in the small circle. Miss E belongs to the Taiwanese small circle.

It means Miss E already has a membership to a local group or community, in which she can speak her mother tongue and make friends. If the Chinese Christian community provides the same possibilities, there would have been a competition between two communities. But Miss E is a member of both communities, so there must be something different between the two. She joined the Taiwanese group first. National identity made her acceptance of the group possible. Later she became a member of the Chinese Christian community, which consists of a large group of Chinese from mainland China. The differences between these two communities might be political, might be religious, or might also be language difference, for example the Mandarin and Taiwanese dialects.

E: And she gave the pastor my telephone number. The pastor invited me, and I went there.

It is not known why Y gave the pastor Miss E's telephone number, because the pastor had not yet gotten to know Miss E. He would not just have asked Y for telephone numbers of all her friends; rather, Miss E was selected and recommended by Y. The pastor may have asked Y for the telephone numbers of her religious friends, and specifically asked for her Taiwanese Christian friends. The pastor has a strong initiative of finding the potential community members. Taiwanese Christians are on his searching list. This means Miss E was found by the pastor. It indicates also that there was not a Taiwanese Christian community in the city, otherwise Miss E could have attended and joined it. The community that the pastor developed is something that did not exist before he came.

E: And then I've been here for six years. That happened in the third year. Maybe in the second year, I've forgotten.

Miss E suddenly inserts some information of a vague timetable at the time of the invitation. She emphasizes her long stay in Germany for "six years". Six years is a relatively long period of time, in which a lot of things may take place and disappear. People come and go. Unimportant things would not be remembered after such a long time. This means the invitation must have left some impression on Miss E, so she could

still remember until now, although she cannot exactly remember if it happened in the third year or in the second year.

She could not remember the exact date of the invitation, but according to her description, her six year stay can be divided into two parts: Before the invitation, and after the invitation. So the exact date is not important; what matters is that the quality of her stay in Germany has something to do with the invitation.

E: Then I went there, did not like it at all, and never went there again.

Miss E went “*there*”, where the community had activities. Apparently Miss E did not like it.

It is vague in the sentence about what Miss E dislikes. She may dislike the church building. She may dislike the community members. Maybe someone offended Miss E and she felt hurt. Maybe she did not like the theological thoughts of the community, which conflicted with her own religious doctrines. This should be proved in the interview later. It is sure, that something in the community alienated Miss E so much, that she decided not to visit “*there*” again.

The word “*there*” has at least two possible interpretations. “*There*” can be some fixed religious place, for example the church. It can also be some flexible place for the community members to hold activities.

The things that happen “*there*” make Miss E feel a strong aversion. She did not join the community after her first visit. She approves neither her relation between her and the community, nor her agreement with the community activities. There is something in the community that contradicts and disturbs Miss E’s values and opinions, and arouses her negative emotions. If she later joins the community, she must overcome these contradictions and disturbances. She might have more attachment to her Taiwanese community.

E: And then long after that, I went to the community for the second time.

After Miss E’s negative experience the first time, it was a long time until she visited the community again. The second time is surprising and it may be a turning point. Why

Miss E went to the community again should be researched in the following interview. The second visit should have made a huge difference from the first. Miss E had another experience during the second visit. If Miss E joined the community after the second visit, this would mean her experience in the second visit provided what she needs.

The community offers Miss E more than one kind of experience. There are experiences she dislikes, and there are other experiences that attract her. A diversity of experiences indicates that the community has variant activities and aspects, which have different impacts on Miss E. In Miss E's case, what she experienced in the second visit is suitable and attractive for her needs.

E: They made a barbeque.

The occasion of the second visit was a barbeque. A barbeque cannot be held inside the church. It must take place in an open-air area, like a park or somebody's garden. In such a place the religious ritual structure of architecture does not exist. It is another atmosphere in comparison to religious places. It is not a closed space with a fixed agenda; it is a space for open-air casual conversations. Nobody is compelled or obliged to do anything. A barbeque is a form of relaxed entertainment and barbequing is a secular activity, which people usually do in daily life. The community members and other participants, such as newcomers like Miss E, have relaxed conversations with each other. With food in hand, topics of conversation might not be religious; it might be about daily life in the city. The characters of participants have similarities: They all speak the Chinese language and they all live in Leipzig. Although Miss E disliked the community on her first visit very much, she still came to the barbeque. She accepted the barbeque, because the barbeque was a different activity, and she was sure she would not come in contact with things she disliked. So it is very likely that Miss E's first visit to the community included some religious practice, which was could not possibly be practiced at a barbeque. The barbeque is not "*there*", where she did not want to visit again.

The contrast between the first visit and the second visit constructs Miss E's attitude towards the community. The things "*there*" and the barbeque here correspond to Miss

E's poles of attitudes. There is a struggle inside Miss E's attitude towards the community.

E: And then I got to know the people again at the barbeque.

The word “*again*” means Miss E had known “the people” before the barbeque. Obviously, it must have been the experience during the first visit. “*Again*” can be understood as a chronological repetition, it means that Miss E got to know the people's names on this barbeque occasion again. “*Again*” can also be understood as an emotional discovery. According to Miss E's negative impression on the community during the first visit, the second visit leaves her with a different impression. “*Again*” means new and different. It can be the relaxed atmosphere of the barbeque; it can be some interesting people who were around.

The barbeque makes it possible for Miss E to discover something new about the community and develop a new impression.

E: The atmosphere was totally different compared to the atmosphere in the church, and then I liked that.

It is proved by Miss E that the barbeque atmosphere is different from church and her first visit was probably in a church. Her emphasis on “*totally different*”, means that compared to the atmosphere in church, the barbeque made a totally new impression on her. Miss E has been a Christian for a long time when she was in Taiwan. She must have visited churches in Taiwan. If she did not like the atmosphere in the church, how should her religious practice in Taiwan be explained? Did she not like the church atmosphere in Taiwan, either? She was definitely in a Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, so it is less likely that she dislikes all church atmospheres. It is possible that Miss E refers to the community in Germany as “*the church*” when she says, “*The atmosphere was totally different to the atmosphere in the church*”. She did not like “*the church atmosphere*” she visited the first time.

If Miss E had church visiting experience in Taiwan already, she should have been used to church atmosphere. Why did she dislike “*the church atmosphere*” so much? “*The*

church” has something different from her formal church experience in Taiwan. It is likely something that happened inside the church building made her uncomfortable, and it probably related to her religious practice and knowledge. It is possible that what happened in “*the church*” during her first visit contradicted her formal religious experiences of church in Taiwan, which caused her aversion against the community. She regarded the community as a whole unit bound to “*the church atmosphere*”, and rejected it.

Now that she met the people during the barbeque, she got to know other aspects of the community and had other conversations with the community members, and she began to like it. The atmosphere of a barbeque is relaxed and happy, in contrast to “*the church atmosphere*”. What kind of church atmosphere she meant may be found in the following interview sequences.

E: And then I went there again with a totally different attitude.

After the pleasant experience during the barbeque Miss E makes a decision. She goes “*there*” again. “*There*” is where the community activities take place, probably in the church. “*Again*” means it is a revisit. Miss E gives herself and the community a second chance to build up a new relationship. What disturbed her at the first time does not bother her this time. She is ready to accept the community because she changed her attitude, which is “*totally different*” than before. Maybe she has already accepted the community members during the barbeque so she makes the decision to revisit “*there*” again. She wants to meet the people in the barbeque again. She goes there with the expectation that she might enjoy the pleasure she got during the barbeque again. Her revisiting the community is an active action due to the attraction, which was formed in the barbeque atmosphere. The attraction causes Miss E’s affection towards the community. The reason for Miss E’s revisit is not a religious one, but an emotional one. She feels warm and comfortable in the group. It is possible now that she is ready to be a member of a group that is able to hold such a pleasant barbeque.

The difference between the first visit and the second visit is important for understanding Miss E’s decision. Miss E had not mentioned any expectation of her first visit. The

activity of the community was religious and totally strange for her. She went “*there*” because she was invited by the pastor. She experienced something she disliked. There was something in the community that contradicted Miss E’s religious knowledge and disturbed her emotions. If she had never gone to the barbeque, she would never have gone to the community again.

During her second visit to the open-air barbeque, the activity of the community was not religious, and Miss E felt comfortable and enjoyed herself. A daily life activity attracted Miss E to go to the church again with a different attitude, in other words, with a different expectation. Her expectation indicates her decision to get to know the community better because she had already accepted some community members during the barbeque event. The changing of her attitude and expectations indicates the possibility of her becoming a member of the community. The possibility did not exist until she attended the barbeque.

As a Christian from Taiwan, Miss E’s identity as a Taiwanese and a Christian provided the advantage for the pastor to find her and invite her to visit the community, but there was something that happened in the church she could not accept. It was probably her experience as a Christian Taiwanese that prevented her from accepting the community the first time. The first visit might have caused an identity conflict between her original identity and a membership in the community. Her former strategy was keeping herself away from the community. After the barbeque Miss E changed her attitude and visited the community, indicating that she is ready to handle the identity conflict. She might have a new strategy.

E: It was good. So I stayed.

Miss E accepts the community after her second visit and decides to stay in the community. It is not clear how she handles the things that disturbed her at the first time. The result of the second visit is good. According to Miss E’s logic, the causality of her decision to stay in the community is based on her experience of the second visit. Her participation in the barbeque does not count as an official visit of the community. During her barbeque visit she did not decide yet whether she would join the community

or not. Participation in the secular relaxed barbeque activity does not automatically mean that Miss E had to become a member of the community. She regards herself as a guest or visitor who does not share the duty or right with the community members. She stays outside of the community. But when she says she “*stays*”, it means her confirmation of her community membership. She is no longer a visitor, but one of the community. She accepts the community and becomes a member of it.

E: I stayed in the community after the second visit with them.

Miss E emphasizes the relation between the second visit and her staying in the community. The barbeque experience was a decisive transition of her change of attitude. The community has shown Miss E some aspects that she likes. Participation in the barbeque can assure her identity as a friend of the community, but not as a member of it. She is aware of what it means to be a member of a religious community. For Miss E, participation in the religious practices of the community is a distinguishing mark of being in one of them. Participation in religious practices is an important part of her community membership. It means sharing the duties and rights, the norms and values of the community.

Her statement can be regarded as opposition of her first visit. Her rejection of the community during the first visit forms a strong contrast regarding her acceptance of the community after the second visit. The reasons of her different reactions could be relevant to religious practices, which might cause conflicts among Miss E’s different identities. Miss E might have developed a different way to deal with the conflicts since the second visit.

10.3 The Hypothesis of Latent Meaning Generating Rules and Structure

At this point it is possible to formulate Miss E’s latent rules generating structure. Miss E’s national identity is important in understanding her relationship to the community.

Her Taiwanese identity links her with the pastor. Personal contact plays a role of

intermediator. She accepted the invitation and visited the community, most likely in the church, and she had participated in a religious activity. It was a very uncomfortable experience for her, so she kept herself away from the community. A shared common identity with the pastor could not help her to accept the community. There is something in the community that disturbed Miss E so much that she could not accept it. It might be related to the religious practice in the church.

A dramatic change of her attitude happens after her second visit to the community during a barbeque. She liked the barbeque atmosphere as well as the people at the barbeque. She developed an emotional contact with the community members during the barbeque, which led her to revisit the community. She decided to stay and become a member of the community.

For Miss E, the diversity of the community's various activities forms its attraction and distraction. Two different visits gave Miss E two different, even contradictory, impressions of the community. Miss E had a simple strategy to "keep away from the community" before, but after she decided to stay in the community, she must have developed a new and complicated strategy to handle the tension between attraction of the community and the uncomfortable sides of it.

How Miss E responds to different aspects of the community will be the valuable part of the analysis. The reasons behind her responses are probably related to her identities.

The difference between the two visits is that one of them was religious and the other not. According to her different responses to the two activities, Miss E is obviously attracted by the relaxed daily life communication, which is not directly religiously relevant, while she has a strong reservation towards the directly religiously relevant activity during the first visit. Her motive of joining the community is not directly related to religion. Her new membership of the community might have been a tension with her identity as a Taiwanese and an experienced Christian in Taiwan.

There are different aspects of community life. The contrast of Miss E's attitude to the community is transformed to a special action strategy, which is helpful for Miss E to search and select the parts that she likes and to avoid encountering the aspects which she dislikes.

10.4 Indications from the Interview

10.4.1 From Rejection to Tolerance

S: Why did you not like the community the first time?

E: I feel the community and the small group gathering are better than in the church. Because I've been converted a long time in Taiwan, about ten years. I have a fixed community in Taiwan, we are part of the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church is relatively traditional. They do not cry, or shout, or wave their hands, they do not do that at all. So when I just came here, the people had the mainland China language style, and at first it sounded very serious; then they cried and shouted, I felt I couldn't adjust at all. Although I had tried to search for a church, this church had nothing to do with me at all. The language was not comfortable for me. And apart from the language issue, I did not think that I had any reason to come to this Chinese Church. So I did not go again.

Miss E's identity as a Taiwanese makes it possible for her to sense the language style as "mainland China language style". Mainland China and Taiwan both use Mandarin as the official language, but due to different ideologies and different societal developments, there are some small and fine differences between the usage of Mandarin in mainland China and in Taiwan. It can be different intonations of the sentences, or often used vocabulary. The differences are very subtle, and maybe only natives can tell. Language is usually the first recognition and instrument of communication among community members. Miss E also uses the same language, but she does not feel she belongs to the community at first.

The pastor tries to invite Chinese from the mainland, from Taiwan, and from all over the world to join the community. The Chinese language can be a good instrument for communication to take place at the beginning. Miss E's reaction indicates the side of its disadvantage. The historically formed differences of language may also be barriers of integration into the community. Miss E comes from another political context and society in comparison to most of the community members. The "mainland China language

style” is often mocked in Taiwan due to its ideology, while the Taiwan language style is also often mocked in mainland China. It is not difficult to understand Miss E’s negative impression when she heard the “*mainland China language style*”.

Miss E is an experienced Christian in comparison to most other community members. She has formed her religious identity in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, which has a long tradition. Miss E’s knowledge of Christianity and rituals in church were learned in Taiwan and routinized over ten years. Crying, shouting and waving hands do not belong to her former religious practices. The evangelical ways of religious practice shocked Miss E. It is a big conflict between her religious understanding and the community’s religious practice. Her comment is “*this church had nothing to do with me at all.*” She firmly draws a clear line between her and the community. Up until then she recognized her religious identity only as a member of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. She has never seen evangelical religious practices before. So the emotional and even dramatic expressions of the community members seemed “*crazy*” to her, which means that they were unacceptable.

E: What I did not like the first time was their appeals. They said they were lonely and miserable. When I was there they happened to share the providences. There happened to be someone there who said he was poor, and that he had only four Euros in his pocket, and who could help him, and he cried, and knelt down. I wasn’t poor, I wasn’t lonely, I felt very happy in Germany, and this kind of appeal was totally not mine. This does not suit me at all.... That time was a summer camping. They needed someone to sing. I did not visit them often, but they still tried to find me. I went. It was in a youth hostel in Leipzig, and lasted for a few days. I went once to sing, but I did not know what they had done before singing. I just saw they were sharing their experience when I went, so I went crazy. So I felt more revolted... But I should not judge from appearances.

S: Are these problems still problems to you?

E: Now they are relatively not any more. Or I am more tolerant. Because I know brothers and sisters deeper. I got to know them in person, and then I could be tolerant. The cry and shouting are their ways of worship.

In the interview, Miss E describes details of her experience of the first visit. On that occasion community members expressed their needs and worries. Finance shortages and loneliness are the most typical problems of new migrants in another country. Miss E has neither of these problems. Again, besides differences of language style and religious practices, Miss E discovers a third difference between her and the other members. They do not share the same life situation. She has another social context. Miss E has been in Germany for a long time, and she is capable of handling everything in daily life. She does not search for material or emotional support from the community. The crying poor person sends Miss E the message that people who are in the community are those who need help. She regards herself as not one of them. The material or emotional support that the community can provide is not attractive for her. In the first visit Miss E did not find anything in common with the community, and the community did not provide anything that could attract her, either. Her rejection of the community is plausible.

After the second visit, Miss E considers that she “*should not judge from appearances*”. She accepts the community members and becomes one of them. The differences of language, religious practice and social life situation do not bother her any more. Her explanation is that she tolerates what disturbed her in the first visit. After Miss E gets to know community members in person, she begins to understand their thoughts. The personal contact with them makes Miss E become interested in the community. With reservation, she regards the difference of religious practice as “*their ways of worship*”. She does not count herself as “*them*” regarding the religious practice. Her practice of religion is in her own divergent way.

Miss E strategically separates the community into two parts in her understanding: The daily activities of the community members, and the religious practice of community members. It is the same difference as her first and second visit to the community. To be one of the community members Miss E should participate in both. She is willing to join the daily activities with community members, because she knows them personally and enjoys the activities. She likes the personal communication with the community members. In contrast, religious practice is a collective activity, which is not a personal communication, but an expression in public. Miss E does not like this part. It is difficult

to be a member of a religious community without taking part in its religious activities, so she takes part in “the religious practice of community members”, but selectively not in “*their ways*”. She “*tolerates*” the different religious expressions of the others. This means she has reservations against the religious education and religious practices in the community. Her reservation is a unique distinguishing mark of her double identities; she still regards herself first and foremost as a member of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

10.4.2 Identity Conflicts and Adaptation Strategy

S: If there are some conservative teachings against homosexuals, will there be tension?

E: No. I will withdraw or be silent. Because I know their doctrines are all right. And maybe my thoughts are not persuasive or reasonable. Since I have many friends who are homosexual, I can understand them on their standing points.

S: Do you know which denomination you are a part of?

E: I still belong to the Presbyterian Church. The mother church is still in Taiwan.

S: The Leipzig church is not a Presbyterian church, is this not a problem for you?

E: I do not have another choice, because there isn't a Presbyterian church here. And I have joined this community very deeply; it is my second mother church.

E: Actually I do not know what the true evangelicals are like. I only know that the Presbyterian Church is another very conservative one. Maybe the community members are normal Baptists, or the normal churches also do that. But in my history growing up, there were no things like that.

Miss E's position of “*tolerating*” also means she has to suppress feelings and thoughts when she feels uncomfortable in the community. One of the tolerating methods is to withdraw from discussion, for example, the discussion on homosexuality. During one discussion in the Bible reading group, Miss E was the only one who was for the right of homosexual Christians, because in Taiwan there are homosexual Christian communities. The rest of the group was strongly against tolerating homosexuality. Miss E did not argue further but withdrew from the discussion, which was ended with a fake agreement

on this issue.

Miss E's identity as a community member sometimes has tension with her identity as a Christian from Taiwan. Due to an earlier opening policy, Taiwan has a relatively tolerant social environment, in which homosexuality is less discriminated. In public discourse, homosexuality is related to the right of freedom. Some politicians and pop stars support the love parade of gays and lesbians in Taiwan in order to support a multicultural environment, which influenced Miss E. Homosexuality has been discriminated in mainland China for a long time and until now there are constant prejudices against homosexuality in public discourse. The different cultural context of Miss E caused her different understanding on the homosexuality issue. The transnational dimension of the constitution of her identities may imply tension and conflict. She expressed her opinions in the discussion, but did not insist on arguing. It does not mean that she agrees with the others, but she opts to avoid the conflicts.

She keeps her opinions and does not involve herself in the controversial discussion. This is her strategy of adaptation in the community. After she became a member of the community, Miss E actively joined the community activities. In order to adapt to the community culture, her identity as a Christian from Taiwan becomes a hidden identity. It is overlapped by the later identity as a community member, but the differences and tensions between them always exist. Her "religious habitus", which was formed in Taiwan, has a potential of causing conflict. As long as she can "*tolerate*" the others, the conflict will not occur. Under most circumstances Miss E chooses to stop arguing and is silent with reservation.

The adaptation strategy can be described as "selective integration", because Miss E still regards the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan as her mother Church, whose membership she does not want to give up. Her religious identity is directly linked to it, and she feels she belongs to it. The Leipzig community is her second mother Church because she had "*no other choice*". If there were another Presbyterian church in Leipzig, she would have probably joined it. All other communities are substitute communities, because in Miss E's heart, she is always a member of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Other memberships in other communities are always temporary and secondary. This forms

another distinguishing mark of the transnational dimension of her identities. A priority of identities is decisive for her strategy in the adaptation in the community. She has and feels a full membership in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, while she does not intend to fulfill the full membership in the Leipzig community.

She does not care about the theological orientation of the community, nor is she interested in the denomination. She wanted to join a Christian group, whether it is evangelical or not. If the religious practice is beyond her liking, she opts out it in her own way. Miss E accepts the community members rather than the religious practices in the community. Actually, Miss E tries to practice a partial membership in the community: She selectively accepts what she likes, and selectively integrates in the community, without confronting conflicts with her hidden religious identity.

10.4.3 Community Life and Friendship as Attraction

E: In Presbyterian Church they aren't that enthusiastic. It is your own thing. They do not, or less often, talk about beliefs, or ask others to read the Bible, such as "You should come". On the contrary, here with the extra encouragement people grow a lot more. For example, people read the Bible together, and do more spoken prayers. We are all students, have the same timetable, so we have dinner together, and pray together before the dinner. I feel the growth is larger this way. More time is spent on praying and reading the Bible.

E: ...Living together with brothers and sisters, they're like friends. It's like having many friends. To take care of a person, to pray together, to experience many things together. Yes, like this. And these people call much attention to the spiritual aspects.

I did not join after the first time, because I had the idea of, "so what, I already have many friends, I speak German well, I do not need to make friends in the community". Now I feel these friends are other friends with spiritual profoundness, that we grow together, and help each other with everything. L 84-100

Miss E's affection for the community begins with the barbeque. This comfortable sharing of daily life with community members is an attraction to her.

Although the crying and shouting in the community shocked Miss E at the beginning, she finds out that there are two sides of the “*enthusiastic*” style. One side is crying and shouting, which for Miss E are unaccustomed emotionally expressed religious practices, and the other side is the active engagement in the community activities and the readiness to share life with the other community members, which attracts her to join the community.

According to Miss E’s experience, the Taiwan Presbyterian Church, which she belongs to, is a routinized and regularized institution. In comparison to the community in Leipzig, the community members in Taiwan have less personal interaction with each other, and perform few religious practices outside the church. The Church has fewer demands on community members regarding religious practice and learning. They treat community members not as “*enthusiastically*” as the Leipzig community does. Miss E has less attachment to the community members in Taiwan, but she has more recognition of its institution.

In Taiwan Miss E experienced a clear separation between the religious sphere and daily life. In the church she performed religious practices, while outside the church her behavior had less to do with religion.

The situation changed in her new community. After joining the Leipzig community, Miss E has spent more time on participation in the community activities. Most of the community members are students who have the same timetable and visit the same university cafeteria. Miss E has dinner with them, and they pray together before the dinner, which makes a dinner a ritualized activity among community members. A part of her life becomes interwoven with community activities. She shares daily life with the community members, and thereby the daily life becomes a little more religious. One of the consequences of her joining the community is the religionization of her daily life, which Miss E regards as positive spiritual growth. The separation between the religious sphere and daily life becomes blurry and even disappears. Community life extends to her migrant life in Germany.

S: What kind of change do you have?

E: It is hard to distinguish. Is it the change due to the belief, or due to this community? For example, my friend circle has turned to being more Chinese. Sometimes I wonder whether this is good or not. Maybe my German language will regress. But what kind of change? I became more grateful. No matter if I am ill, or have difficulty, I do think God has his reason. Previously I knew too, but I had more complaints. Now I have become more generous. Because I've seen that everybody opens their family to one another, and everyone is ready to help each other, so I became more ready to help others.

S: Are you becoming generous to the community members?

E: I become generous to everyone.

Miss E realizes the change after her joining the community. The extension of community life into her daily life changes the constitution of her friend circle. She spends less time with German friends. Without frequent language practice, a regression of German language knowledge is inevitable, but Miss E does not regard it as a huge negative impact. She emphasizes the positive change of her attitude towards life. She is becoming more grateful for everything and more generous to everyone after joining the community. Because of the “*enthusiastic*” style of the community in religious practices as well as in daily life, Miss E feels the authenticity and generosity of the community members that influence her to give the same contribution to the community and to the fellow members. The community life forms the spiritual dimensions of her migrant life. Like a paradox, Miss E has strong reservations toward the evangelical collective religious practices in the community, while she enjoys the religionization of her daily life by getting more involved with the community life. She regards community members as “*other friends with spiritual profoundness*”, who she could not find in Taiwan or in Germany before she joined the community. She likes the spiritual dimension when she takes part in the community activities. For Miss E, participation in the community activities is her religious practice; whether it is a religious activity or a barbeque is not important. The engagement itself is her effort to behave like a Christian. Miss E has been looking for a Presbyterian church in Leipzig but did not find one. She looked for a substitute church to resume her religious practice. She wants to be a member of a religious community. At last she chose the community as the substitute for

the church in Taiwan. Due to the different community history and community constitution, Miss E's religious practice witnessed a transformation process to adapt to the new community. As a transnational new member of the community, she has a selected integration strategy to resume her religious practice and keep balance with her other identities.

Her friendship with community members is her religious practice because it is a "*spiritual growth*". She has more attachment to the community members than to the community as a religious institution. The community life and the friendship are attractive for Miss E. She enjoys them and justifies them as her religious practices. As a transnational religious migrant, her wish to resume religious practice leads Miss E to a religious community. And she joins one, which has spiritual attraction for her.

10.4.4 Embeddedness of Miss E

S: What did you contribute to the community?

E: Hehe. I do not know. Are you asking about the service? I am in the choir. It's all labor work. Choir, musical service, and otherwise I'm one leader of the small group, a member of the diaconal committee. This can influence the development of the small group. But I think the pastor has his own idea; it's hard to influence him. My contribution is in the small group. I hope I have some impact on the development of the group. For example, the process of Bible reading, and for example, to decide whether a prayer meeting is needed. For example, the weekly group newspaper is my idea. Because my church in Taiwan makes a weekly newspaper... I am familiar with community works.

S: Making a weekly newspaper, sharing experiences: Are these all your experiences in the Presbyterian Church? And did you bring them here?

E: Yes. It was not that strict here. It was a simple Bible reading group. But I made them do it so that people sing songs before reading. After singing the Bible reading begins. After that there must be a prayer meeting and sharing. Before this program, it was always the situation that one was supposed to read a chapter, but too much talking

prevented us from having a detailed reading. After that people said goodbye, and did not have time to share and have private talk. I do not think this is good, since many people came because they had something to share with the others. This is the program I had in the church in Taiwan. First singing, then Bible reading, then sharing and praying. At last the weekly newspaper was distributed.

E:...Previously everyone said that it would last too long. But when this program is carried out, it works. We can get back home just in time.

Miss E joined the community and participated actively in the group activities. She is in the choir and she is one leader of one of the small reading groups.⁹² She is a member of the diaconal committee. She makes constructive suggestions on how to organize a Bible reading night. She introduces a weekly newspaper into the small group and shows them how to design it. Miss E's former experience in the Taiwan Presbyterian Church turns out to be very useful in the community. Her knowledge on program designing inspires the community to set up new programs for developing the community, which handles the problem of membership expansion and group organization.

Miss E's identity as a Christian from Taiwan is helpful for her to provide the community with advice on administration and organization. She tries to recreate the program that she experienced in Taiwan. But she is aware that the Leipzig community is not the same community as the one in Taiwan. Miss E has selectively made efforts on the things she wants to change. This selection reflects her strategy of selective integration again. Because she attaches much importance to the communication among the community members, she tries to improve the efficiency of the Bible reading group. Thereby she is able to have more time for the Bible reading. She benefits from the change, too. It is a religious goal, too. Her personal likes and dislikes have influence on the community.

She does not have influence on theological education. Maybe she chooses not to interfere with the theological education of the community according to her selective integration strategy. The pastor is in charge of the theological education and the development of the community. Miss E can have her influence on the issues, which the

⁹² See chapter 3

pastor is not familiar with or has little experience. These issues are about the interaction and communication of the community members, Miss E has more experience than the other members on how to arrange a little group and how to manage the group discussion. The pastor has always been a leader of a community, and he is good at assigning the administrative work and organizing transnational resources. His function of supporting the community is on the macro level of the community. His contribution is different from Miss E's contribution. On the micro level of the community, Miss E is an expert on the details of how to organize an attractive and efficient Bible reading activity. Miss E's community organizational experience in the Taiwan church qualifies her as a leader of a small group. Although she chooses to selectively integrate into the community, she still becomes an important part of the community. It is not her former religious knowledge that makes her so valuable for the community, but her experience with community activities gives her the chance to have a deep embeddedness in the community.

While Miss E's religious practice experiences a transformation process to adapt to the new community, the community itself experiences a transformation process, too. The community adopts Miss E's knowledge on community works, which was learned in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Along with the change of the constitution of its members, the community corresponds simultaneously to the change and develops its programs in order to utilize the favorable elements in the change. When a member like Miss E joins the community, there is the possibility that some of Miss E's experiences become a standard of the community's program.

The localization of the community means its adaptation to the local environment, which includes transnational geographical and cultural elements and its constitution of members. The utilization of local resources like Miss E's experience interestingly forms the community's transnationality as it applies the transnational experiences. As a religious field, the community adopts the transnational resources not only from the pastor's connection to the global institutions, but also due to the single unplanned but

useful personal experiences. It is transnational networking from the below.⁹³ It indicates how a transnational religious community manages local resources. Human capital belongs to the management.

Because Miss E is able to provide her constructive advice to the community, she has an obvious function in the community, which causes her deep embeddedness.

10.4.5 Missionary Work and the Role of the Pastor

S: If you leave the Leipzig community, what will you think?

E: If I leave now, it will be pity. But after one year or half year, who knows how the church will become. Maybe everybody would get bored, and feel free to go. If there is some pity, it may be the friendship. Because I do feel that the sermon from the pastor is not very worth listening to. What I would regret is losing contact with the people.

S: What about the missionary groups?

E: The priests were good. Priest Zhong was good. He came to the summer camp... I went and took part in summer camping. Many were good. Some should not have come, I feel.

S: Why?

E: Once there were many old aunties. Once a very old teacher came, who did not offer us any actual help. We had to take care of them. But my position is from the outside. Maybe they had had a big influence in other small towns.

S: Did you introduce anybody to convert?

E: I've brought people to the community. They may have converted after a few years. Then they came and told me I was the one who made the first Christian contact with them. But I don't have this kind of experience, to introduce people into the community and make them believe. What I can do is to bring people here, and sing songs.

Religious education in the community is not attractive to Miss E. The local pastor's sermon does not attract Miss E at all. There could be three reasons.

⁹³ Andretta, Massimiliano, Donatella della Porta, Lorenzo Mosca, and Herbert Reiter. 2006. *Globalization from Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks*, Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press.

Firstly, because most of the community members are not familiar with Christianity, the pastor's religious teaching focuses on the basic opinions and definitions of Christianity, which Miss E has already learned in Taiwan. The pastor's sermons are therefore not interesting for her.

Secondly, it could be a personal problem. The pastor is not capable of being a charismatic spiritual leader of the community. The pastor is not totally convincing for Miss E, neither in a theological sense, nor in daily life. Due to Miss E's selective integration, she does not accept the authority of the pastor. She does not question the pastor's role as the administrative leader of the community, but she sometimes questions his capability as a spiritual guide. The Leipzig community is for Miss E a substitute community, because she recognizes the Taiwan Presbyterian Church as her mother church. She is led by her mother church, although she is in the substitute community. Her spiritual guide is not in the Leipzig community. Even the community members who are intelligent in theological reading cannot convince Miss E in religious teaching, either. If there are conflicts of opinion, Miss E chooses to avoid the discussion or keeps silent. The religious teaching in the community has little influence on her.

Thirdly, it is also possible that Miss E's experience in the Taiwan church may have taught her some theological opinions, which are not compatible with the pastor's. This possibility is very small. If it were to happen, Miss E could choose to avoid the conflict as she always does.

These three reasons explain why the religious teachings of the community are not attractive to Miss E. As an "experienced" Christian, Miss E is not satisfied with the religious teaching in the community.

The transnational missionary groups⁹⁴ do not attract Miss E, either. She frankly says that it is rather a burden for her, because the old ladies have to be taken care of. The transnational missionary groups are organized by the pastor and other relevant institutions⁹⁵ with the goal of enhancing the religiosity of the community members. It does not work for Miss E.

⁹⁴ See chapter 4.

⁹⁵ See chapter 4.

The form of communication with experienced elder Christians is sometimes attractive for newly converted members who are eager to know more things about Christianity. But Miss E may have more experiences than the members of the missionary groups. She is not a newly-converted Christian. She has already formed her religious system. She learns nothing from them. Due to her selective integration, she participates in these activities in order to integrate into this community. She does not express her reservation. The theological education in the community is for the new members, since most of them are newly converted. She demands teachings with much higher quality than the current ones. Only at the summer camp did she meet some interesting pastors, and even they seldom came. Miss E cannot get a satisfactory systematic religious education in the community. Her staying in the community has nothing to do with transnational religious education.

Miss E mentions her spiritual “growth” after joining the community. Regarding her dissatisfaction with the religious teachings, the growth is gained by being involved in the community life. She is not interested in theological teachings. Sharing her daily life with community members and participating the community activities are the content of her religious practices.

For Miss E, the pastor is neither a spiritual guide nor a common friend in the community. Emotional support and practical help, which the pastor can provide, are not useful for Miss E. The pastor is neither a supporter nor a supplier. They have a loose administrative relationship. Miss E’s community experience is useful for supporting the pastor to organize the community. The pastor plays an unimportant role in Miss E’s decision of joining the community. As a consequence of her entry into the community, Miss E is an unexpected and accidental supporter of the pastor. At least on the administrative level, she offers a constructive contribution, which makes her almost a semi-leader.

But regarding the missionary work, Miss E does not actively take part in motivating people to visit the community. “*Introduce people into the community and make them believe*” is too much for Miss E. The work “*make*” requires constant contact with people. It includes keeping in touch, constantly inviting, answering theological

questions, arguing the necessity to convert, et cetera. It means an active and strong missionary intention. Again, Miss E has a selective missionary strategy. She invites people to visit the community to let them feel the atmosphere. She is not willing to conduct any further missionary work. Her position is between a follower and a leader. She does want to contribute a bit to the community, but she does not conduct the missionary work as enthusiastically as the other active members. To proselytize people is not the main interest of Miss E. She does not want to be active in “making” others convert.

In this sense, Miss E is also a type between follower and leader, due to her selective integration strategy and her less active missionary work.

10.4.6 Circle outside the Community

S: Before you joined this community, did you attend the German church?

E: I'd been there. I felt I did not really get involved in their community... they report who had childbirth, or who had done something, and then people applauded. But people do not know each other. I felt just so-so, so I did not go there anymore. But the sermon was really good. Their Free Church is not the same as we Presbyterian.

E: I think the German church is the same as the church in Taiwan: If you want to stay, then stay. They do not take special care of the newcomers. It's not like in our community, when a new face comes, then great! (Miss E made a quick catching gesture.) I do not say this is better, but this is the difference. Taiwan churches do not think much about the development or increasing the members.

E: I do not attend the Chinese students association. But I attend the Taiwan students association.

S: Is there any kind of difference?

E: We talk about some secular things. And we gossip, talk about money, and eat some good food.

Miss E makes a comparison of four communities: A German Christian community, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig, and a

Taiwanese students' community in Leipzig. Miss E joins them at different times. To understand the differences among these communities is helpful to understand Miss E's choice of staying or leaving a community.

Miss E did not get much involved in the German Christian community. Her embeddedness in it was not at a deep level. She was a listener during the community activities. The childbirth of strange people had nothing to do with her. Because of the lack of communication between the community members, the German Christian community lost its attraction for Miss E. The sermons impressed her very much. Due to a long tradition of theological education, German pastors may have an advantage regarding theological teaching. The quality of the sermons is good, but not decisive for Miss E to choose to stay.

Although the sermons in the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig did not meet Miss E's expectation, she chooses to join and stay in the community. The intensive communication with community members makes Miss E deeply involved in the community life. She enjoys the friendship with the community members. She regards the participation of community activities as her religious practice, which is more important than listening to a good sermon.

In the comparison Miss E confirms a routinized style of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, which does not take "*special care of newcomers*". Miss E regards it as her mother church, because she has grown up in it and gotten used to its style. In comparison to the Leipzig community, the latter pays much more attention on the development of the community and the increase of its members. The highly motivated missionary atmosphere is the distinctiveness of the Leipzig community. The "*enthusiastic*" style is reflected in the religious practices as well as in the relations between people. Miss E involves herself in both, and selectively enjoys the latter.

Life in the Chinese Christian Community does not become Miss E's whole social life. Miss E has her own circle of friends outside the community. For example, she has been and always was in the Taiwan students' association in Leipzig. She talks about food and money issues with the Taiwanese, and exchanges gossips with friends. Miss E does not share gossips with the Christian community members. This means she is fully aware of

which part of her life should be shared, and with whom. The fun of gossiping only exists among close dear friends, who are not the community members. So she calls the community members “*other friends with profoundness.*” Due to the “*profoundness*” she treats the relation with the community members as serious relations, which excludes the fun of gossip. Miss E’s identity as a Taiwanese remains a heterogonous element in her membership of the community. But her identity as a Taiwanese ensures her entry into the Taiwan students’ association.

Due to her different identities, Miss E joins different organizations and communities. The various aspects of Miss E’s identities are unfolded during her efforts in attaining different memberships of different communities. According to her needs, she selectively chooses to join or leave a community.

10.5 Summary

10.5.1 Motive of Joining the Community

10.5.1.1 A Selective Integration as Solution of Identity Conflicts

Miss E did not accept the community at the beginning. She was invited by the pastor to visit a community activity and was shocked by evangelical religious practices (shouting and crying). Her identity and experience as a member of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan conflicted with some aspects of the community. Later Miss E discovers other aspects of the community during a barbeque. She got to know the community members personally, and liked the atmosphere of the community. Personal communication with the community members forms an attraction for Miss E, so she visited the community again and joined it. Miss E’s different experiences in the community were related to the community’s diversity. The analysis tries to find out the content of the diversity and how Miss E responds to different parts of it.

Miss E developed an adaptation strategy to handle the possible conflicts between her new membership and her identities. The strategy is a selective integration in the community. She accepts the community separately on two levels: One is on an abstract

institutional level; the other is on a concrete personal communication level. The difference of the two levels reflects exactly the different responses of her two visits to the community. Her joining the community is not directly related to religion, but directly related to the community members. On the institutional level, she regards the community as a whole unit, which is the substitute community of her Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. On this level, her former identity may have some conflicts with her new membership, and she has reservation on religious practices and opinions, so she has some reluctance to integrate fully into the community. On the concrete personal level, she has friendships with community members and shares daily life with them. On the personal level, she does not have any reservation or reluctance to integrate. The diversity of the community forms its attractive aspect for Miss E. Miss E chooses to attend all the activities of the community, but only to be active in small-scale activities. These involve many personal interactions of community members; for example, the small group activity, and meetings with community members.

She has an ambivalent response regarding the enthusiastic style of the community. On the collective religious activity, the emotional ways of expressing make her uncomfortable, because she did not experience such religious practices in Taiwan. But on the personal level, she feels warm and happy that the community members treat each other authentically, because she did not experience such intensive relationships between members in Taiwan. Her selective integration strategy helps her to accept the religious practices in the community without feeling a contradiction to her former religious identity; meanwhile she can enjoy the friendships with community members.

Miss E represents the possible responses of a member of another denomination to an evangelical community. She could reject the community due to its different religious practices or religious teachings, or she could join the community and adopt the new religious practices. Miss E chooses selective integration. She becomes a member of the community and keeps her reservation. She regards the Taiwan church as mother church, and the Leipzig community as a substitute for her mother church. She joins it in order to resume her religious practice. She does not feel that she belongs to the community, because the community is a transition community in her transnational situation. A

selective integration is a solution for her to smoothly join the community. In Levitt's book,⁹⁶ the transnational migrants resume their religious lives in the host country by recreating their communities. Levitt does not handle the question in detail, but she explores the transformation of migrants' religious life within the same denomination, not how the members from other denominations integrate into new communities. This is because in big cities in America, different communities are already developed. Migrants can choose from the beginning which community they want to join. What about the people who cannot find the same community as the ones in their homeland? Miss E's strategy can be an answer to this question.

An assumption of migrants joining a religious community is that they try to seek emotional and practical help in the community, in order to have a better adaptation in the new country. In Miss E's case, she does not need this help from the community because her adaptation and integration in the German society is without problems. It also depends on the timing. As she got in touch with the community, she was already well integrated into German society. She joins the community because she can resume her religious practice. Her adaptation in the community becomes smooth by applying a selective integration strategy.

10.5.1.2 Community Life as Religious Practice

Miss E enjoys a deep embeddedness in the community, although she does not want a full membership. On some theological or political controversial issues she keeps her own opinions and tries to avoid conflicts during discussions. Her motive of joining the community is not directly related to the institutional aspect of the community, but her embeddedness is deeply interwoven with the institutional development of the community.

Her former experiences of community activities inspire the development of the community. Making a weekly newspaper and setting up standard programs for Bible reading, skills Miss E learned from her mother church in Taiwan, are constructively

⁹⁶ Levitt, Peggy. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

applied in the community. Her experiences on administrative issues are applied. She has little influence on religious teaching and theological lectures in the community.

But she still regards her joining the community as a spiritual growth, because she spends more time with community members, and the community life becomes the spiritual dimension of her migrant life. For Miss E, participation in the community activities is her religious practice. Although the religious teachings are not interesting, although the evangelical worship is too emotional for her, she selectively finds her own way to practice her religion by participating in the community life. She lets the community life extend to her daily life only by actively sharing things, for which she does not have reservation. This is the dimension where she can really integrate into the community.

Miss E has different circles of friends outside the community, so the community does not prevent her from integrating into the host society. The Chinese Christian community provides her with something the other communities cannot provide: A religious dimension in daily life. She did not get deeply involved with the German Christian community, because the German community lacked a close interaction of community members. She has fun in the friendly Taiwanese student community, but it lacks the spiritual dimension. Miss E wanted to resume her religious practice in Germany, but she did not find satisfactory religious practice in either a German Christian community or in the Taiwanese students' association. In comparison to these other communities, the Chinese Christian community offers her the possibility to resume her religious practice. Despite her reservation with the religious practice of the community, she finds her own way to integrate into the community and live religiously as she wishes. So she joined the community and became a member of it.

10.5.2 The Type of Miss E

10.5.2.1 Miss E as a Selective Integrated Type

Miss E's type in the community is directly related to her identities. As a Taiwanese Presbyterian, she will not tend to give up her identity as a member of her mother church

in Taiwan. Therefore the community in Leipzig is a transition community for Miss E. It is substantially a substitute community of her mother church. Miss E has been looking for and joined some communities and meanwhile she considers herself as a permanent member of her mother church. The rejection of the community in Miss E's first visit indicates her "retreating to mother church" strategy. Her identity as a member of the Presbyterian Church is at the center of her decision making.

She did not accept the community at the beginning due to its "*enthusiastic style*" during the evangelical religious practice. After a comfortable barbeque with the community members, she decided to join the community. The community's offers present a considerable diversity, which make it possible for Miss E to like some aspects of it and others not.

After the second visit her identity as a religious migrant in Germany influenced her decision on whether she should join the community. The relaxed and comfortable aspects of community life form a huge attraction for her. Communicating with the community members can satisfy her need for social communication. She regards these social communications as religious practice and spiritual growth.

Miss E does not need guidance from the community. The pastor is not her spiritual guide. She has her own judgment on how to practice religion in daily life. Therefore, the pastor and the community do not need to support or help her in daily life. She does not want to get anything from the community, and she does not need the resources of the community, neither practical supports nor religious teachings. In this sense, she is not a follower type.

She develops a selective integration strategy and decides to partly integrate. She has reservation with the religious practices, she does not like the sermons of the pastor, and she cannot influence the future development of the community. Her membership of the community is a result of her seeking to resume religious practice. Meanwhile a transformation takes place in her life. Her daily life is religionized by getting involved in many community activities. But interestingly, her religious identity is not much influenced by her joining the community. She resumes her religious practice in the Leipzig community and remains loyal to her mother church in Taiwan.

Miss E is not fully integrated into the community. As a selective integrated type, she needs to have her own judgment on how far she should get involved in the community activities, especially in religious practices. If there is something that contradicts with her other identities, she chooses to avoid the confrontation.

Miss E has little interest with the missionary work. Although her experience of community organization is valuable for the community, her influence on the development of the community is limited; it is constructive but not vital. She is therefore not a leader in the community.

Miss E is neither a leader nor a follower. She responds selectively to different aspects of the community. A partial membership is what Miss E has and what she wants. The diversity of community life provides a possible and flexible space for her to develop and realize her strategy.

10.5.2.2 The Function of Miss E's Type

Miss E integrates into the community without giving up her former community religious identity. It is possible to join and stay in a community with reservation.

As a selective integrated type, Miss E indicates an important character of transnational religious communities: Simultaneous incorporation and integration, which forms the diversity of the community.

There are some other competitive communities in the city, but Miss E chooses to join this community because she has a real and deep embeddedness in it. She contributes a lot of organizational work to the community activities due to her experiences in the Taiwan community. She is not a follower who seeks different resources in the community, and is guided by the community. Nevertheless, Miss E becomes a constructive administrative resource for the community and has effects on the community developments.

Miss E indicates the flexibility of the transnational religious community, which simultaneously integrated different transnational religious resources. The shaping of a community is not only decided by the resources “from above”, but also influenced by

many incidental resources “from below”.⁹⁷ The type of Miss E plays a supporting role in the community. She supplies transnational religious community experiences and contributes them to the community. Her own religious life in Germany witnesses a transformation due to her selective integration strategy, and meanwhile the community also has a transformation by adopting her advice. The process is like a two-way selection: Miss E chooses the community as a substitute community in her migrant situation and the community integrates her experiences and knowledge simultaneously as a valuable resource. What kind of her religious experience can be applied in the community is selected by the pastor and other members. Most of her advice is not about theological issues, but about the institutional and administrative development of the community. A distinguishing mark of transnational religious communities in the 21st century is the capability of utilizing any kind of transnational resources, not only the resources “from above”, but also “from below”. This means the community is organized and transformed by transnational experiences.

The pastor may be in charge of the theological orientation of the community, but he is not able to take care of everything in the community. Those who are willing to organize the community activities become important community members.

Miss E as a selective integrated type does not have any obligation to fulfill any administrative duties. But her contribution to the community life makes her important and deeply involved. She is active in the community life and is responsible for some administrative work. Despite her partly integrated status, her function and identity is not only being a “guest in the community” like a normal follower. But she does not take part in the “host activities” actively, for example, the missionary work at the university. She does not regard herself as a representative of the community.

The type like Miss E does not want or need resources of the community. The pastor can provide almost nothing for Miss E, because she does not want anything. The relation between the pastor and Miss E is administrative. They are not personally connected, but

⁹⁷ Weißköppel, Cordula. 2008. ""You don's get lost". Transnationales Handeln von Sudanesen in einer Protestantischer Kirchengemeinde. " In: Andrea Lauser (ed.), *Migation und religöse Dynamik. Ethnologische Religionsforschung im transnationalen Kontext*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

indirectly through community life. Miss E is an invisible resource to the pastor, because her contributions supplement his organization work in Germany. She becomes a component element of the diversity of the community.

Miss E does not come from mainland China and will not go there in the future. She plans to stay in Germany or go back to Taiwan. The pastor's wish of "bringing the faith to China" is not expected to be realized by the selective integrated type like Miss E.

During her stay in Germany and her joining the community, simultaneous incorporation and integration provides the possibility for her to play a role in the transnational religious community.

11 Analysis of Miss M

11.1 Biographical Outline of Miss M

Miss M is a student from Beijing, the capital of China. She studies economics and mathematics in Leipzig. She joined the community in the early stage of its formation, and got baptized. However, she left the community later and did not visit the community again.

11.2 Analysis of Beginning Sequences

11.2.1 The Beginning Stimulus

S: How did you join the community?

The interviewer asks the research question directly. The interviewer's intention is to know the motive and reason for Miss M joining the community.

M: I was studying at Student College in Leipzig.

Miss M answers the question by telling her story. She mentions three elements: She is studying, she is in the Student College, and she is in Leipzig. These three elements could be related to her joining the community. The fact that she is studying implies that she has come to Germany to further her studies. The aim of her stay in Germany is not related to religion. Her joining the community could be an unexpected decision that is not in her plan. Student College is a one-year program that serves as preparation for students who will study at the university. It means that Miss M is at the beginning of her studies in Germany. She is new in the town and a freshman at the college. She might not have got to know a lot of friends. Miss M is in her phase of adapting to the new environment as a new migrant. The third element is Leipzig, where the community is. It implies that Miss M gets to know the community in Leipzig. She might have bumped into an activity of the community; she might be introduced to visit the community; she

might know someone in the community; she might be informed by a flyer with the information of the community. There are many possibilities for Miss M getting to know the community. They should all happen in the city of Leipzig.

11.2.2 The Narrative Opens

M: I knew no one at that time.

Miss M's phase of adapting to the new environment can be confirmed through the narrative. She is new in Leipzig and is just starting her life as a short-term migrant. This sentence also implies that Miss M has a very small social space at the beginning of her life in Leipzig. Totally isolated from the outside world makes people feel lonely. Miss M might feel the need to find some friends to spend some time together. The community might fit her needs.

M: There were some classmates in the Student College and one of them introduced a girl to me.

Miss M does know some persons who were her classmates. However, she does not count them as "friends", so she says "*I knew no one*". The classmates are "*no one*" for her. It indicates Miss M's criteria of "friend": Friend ought to be more than a common acquaintance. The classmates introduce a girl to Miss M. Why do the classmates introduce a girl to Miss M? The girl might be a German girl, who can help Miss M to better her language skills. The girl could also be a Chinese girl, who can speak Chinese with Miss M. The classmates see the potential of developing a relationship between Miss M and the girl. Nonetheless, there are some similarities between Miss M and the girl, or otherwise the classmates would not have introduced them. The girl might be a member of the community, so through her, Miss M gets to know the community. Miss M's classmates perhaps do not have the intention to introduce a community member to Miss M, so the girl might have another identity besides that of the community members.

M: Since we didn't live far from one another, we got in contact with each other

occasionally.

The girl lives near Miss M. They soon become more than acquaintances. Because Miss M knows “no one” in Leipzig, the girl might be her first friend. The girl plays an important role during the adapting phase of Miss M, since she is not only Miss M’s only close acquaintance in her social life, but also Miss M’s access to a larger social space. If the girl has been in Leipzig longer than Miss M, the girl might know more people than Miss M does. The girl might also introduce some people to Miss M. So the girl is an important line for the development of Miss M’s social life. If the girl is related to the community, Miss M’s getting to know the community is just a question of time.

M: She was a member of the community.

The aforementioned speculation is confirmed. The girl is a member of the community, so she speaks Chinese and probably comes from China. This is why Miss M’s classmates introduce them to each other. The ethnic similarity is one of the categories for distinguishing migrant. The girl is “a member of the community” implies that the community already exists before Miss M gets to know it. Miss M not knowing the community may be a result of her small social space. It could be possible that the community is not well known in Leipzig and is only familiar to a small group of people, so Miss M could not know the community without a personal connection. However, the girl is the connection between Miss M and the community. The girl might invite Miss M to visit the community.

M: I stayed in Leipzig almost a year, and until May of the next year I had almost no contact with the outside world except my classmates.

The aforementioned speculation is confirmed, too. Miss M has a very small social space in Leipzig. She uses the word “outside world” to describe the social life outside the college. It is an interesting dichotomy of her understanding of life. She regards her life in the college as an isolated life, which has very limited contact with people outside the college. During one year she spends all her time in Student College. Maybe her studies keep her so busy that she does not have time to socialize, or maybe in Leipzig there are

almost no social spaces for Chinese, so Miss M has to stay with her classmates. She expresses her unsatisfactory situation as a new migrant in the city. She is interested in the “*outside world*”, which is different from the Student College. However Miss M does not have access to the “*outside world*”. It is difficult for a migrant with poor language skills to explore a fitting social space in a host society. If the community is such a social space, Miss M would like to join, in order to explore the “*outside world*”.

M: The girl said to me, she knew that I was an extroverted person and I should get to know more people, so let's go to the community.

As speculated above, the girl invites Miss M to visit the community. However, the girl does not persuade Miss M to come with her with a religious reason. The reason the girl invites Miss M to visit the community is to get to know more people, because Miss M is an extroverted person. To visit the community means the possibility to get to know more people and to make some friends.

It might be a missionary strategy of the community to allure people by offering the opportunities of getting to know more people and making some friends. It is also possible that during this phase the aim of the community is to provide a social space for Chinese, and the missionary task is not necessary. Maybe in that phase the community is just for making friends. It cannot be known whether the girl has the wish to proselytize Miss M by introducing her to visit the community. Nevertheless the girl does provide Miss M with access to another social space, which is different from the Student College. The girl's use of the expression “*let's*” implies her accompaniment. Miss M does not need to visit the community alone, but is guided and introduced by the girl. A reliable personal connection guarantees a successful introduction. Miss M is introduced into a group by a confidential person from both sides. The girl uses the word “*let's*”, as if visiting the community is a common activity like going together to a canteen. The visit is reliable and has no risk.

M: I was not against that; I regarded it as getting know friends anyway.

Miss M accepts the invitation due to its potential of enlarging her social life. It is not a

religious reason, either. Miss M might know the community is a religious community, but she still decides to go because Miss M is eager to explore the “*outside world*”. The girl’s invitation is exactly what Miss M wants and needs. “Friend” could be a key word in analyzing Miss M’s case. Her decision could be greatly influenced by her social needs.

M: They organized a barbeque; we went there and had fun. I regarded it as a party. So I went there.

The activity is a barbeque. Miss M regards it as a party and has a good time with the community members. The girl might intentionally introduce Miss M to the community on the occasion of a barbeque, and not on an occasion of Sunday worship in a church. The girl might think the barbeque is an interesting and relaxed activity, which could attract Miss M, and after she shows interest in the community life, the girl could go on to her missionary work. The girl might regard a barbeque as a good beginning of proselytizing a person. If this is true, the community should have a systematic missionary plan. The girl might not want to do missionary work at all, she might just want to share the barbeque and happiness with Miss M, and so she brings Miss M to the barbeque. The girl’s intention is not clear, but the result is obvious: Miss M enjoys the barbeque.

M: At that time, the community was fewer than ten people, very small, since the pastor hadn’t come yet.

This narrative indicates the phase of Miss M getting to know the community. It is at the early stage of the community, as it was a very small group with fewer than ten people. It could hardly be possible that the community has a systematic missionary strategy or plan, so the girl most likely invites Miss M with the purpose of sharing happiness with her.

The pastor has not yet come during this phase. Miss M mentioning the pastor implies the pastor’s influence on her understanding of the community. The pastor must have made some big impact on the community and made some changes, so his coming can be

considered a turning point in the history of the community. What Miss M enjoys is the atmosphere and activity during the early stage of the community.

M: G and L were religious investigators then. We had a lot of fun.

Miss M makes friends at the barbeque. G and L are mentioned as religious investigators. Religious investigators in the community are people who have interest in Christianity and visit the community regularly, but have not converted yet. If this group is under ten people, and G and L are not Christians yet, then the Christians in the group are fewer than eight people. If there are some other people who are also religious investigators, there could be only three or four Christians in the community, so the community is a combination of people who are Christians and non-Christians. Miss M belongs to the non-Christian group. If she was the only one who was not a Christian in the community, she might feel strange or uncomfortable. But there are some others who are not Christians in the community, either. There is not a dominant religious atmosphere or a dominant Christian culture within the community yet, so Miss M does not feel isolated or very different from the others. She does not need to adapt to the community because she already has fun with the members. Miss M meets the community in its very early stage, in which the community has not yet formed its structure and formality. Maybe this is the reason why Miss M regards the barbeque as a “party” and why she likes it.

M: G and L told me there were some people from Beijing.

The topic between M, G and L might be their home town. After knowing Miss M comes from Beijing, G and L tell Miss M that there are some people who come from Beijing too. They might try to introduce more friends to Miss M. Miss M could meet more people and make more friends. It seems that the community is a place for making friends. The community members are helping Miss M to enlarge her social space. If Miss M’s purpose of participating in the community activity is to make friends, she has successfully reached her aim. She gets to know G and L, and they want to introduce her to more friends. G and L do not talk about religious topics with Miss M. Maybe Miss M is not interested in the religious topics, or maybe G and L do not want to talk about

religious topics with a community guest. If the community had a clear and aggressive missionary strategy, Miss M could have been talked to with the purpose of proselytizing her. G and L do not have the intention to proselytize Miss M, instead, they want her meet more friends. As mentioned before, the community might not be interested in missionary work when Miss M meets the community for the first time.

M: We had a good time, so after that I went to the community when they called me.

Miss M enjoys herself very much when she meets the community, so she wants to experience the joy again. After the barbeque, she is willing to participate in the community activities again. The community members are not different than other people for Miss M. Her purpose has nothing to do with religion. Miss M wants to be together with the community members. The community means a pleasant social place to Miss M. She wants to be friends with them.

“I went to the community when they called me” implies two interesting things. The first is that she is the passive part in the relationship with the community. She does not actively join the community activity. So it implies that during this phase a personal invitation is necessary for access to the community. The community is not a social space for all Chinese in Leipzig; rather, the activity participants are selected. The second is that the community is regarded as a unit by Miss M. When Miss M is invited to a community activity, she should be called by a member. But she says, *“when they called me”*. It makes no difference which community member actually calls. *“They”* is the word that Miss M uses to describe the members from the community. She might think that the community members share some common character so *“they”* should be a kind of people.

M: However, they couldn't simply let you have fun, they did missionary work. During the barbeque, we sang songs. We had lyric sheets in hand, but the songs were quite easy to learn. We sang when we were happy, it was really pleasant.

The barbeque is however a religious activity. Miss M learns and sings songs with lyric sheets in hand. Miss M prefers to *“simply” “have fun”*. Fun is her goal of participating

in the activity. But she is not against the singing, because the songs are easy to learn, and it does not annoy Miss M's mood. She can tolerate the singing and other missionary work as long as she has fun at the activity. Singing hymns might be a normal community ritual, but Miss M regards the singing as a part of the community's "missionary work". Miss M participated in the religious activity without realizing the religious meaning. Her understanding of "missionary work" could be an important element in the analysis.

M: Leipzig was not depressing, but was really boring. Suddenly, a group of people appeared and we had a good time, I felt good.

The city is mentioned in the narrative. It indicates Miss M's migrant status: She cannot find interesting amusement in Leipzig. The community members appear in her life as a great surprise which enriches her life in the "boring" city. It is a great emotional support for her in migrant status. She emphasizes the people, and not the community, as an abstract unit. She does not say "it is good to be in the community". She does not have the identity of a member of the community yet. She still regards herself as a guest outside the community, but she has a good time with the people. The people are members of the community and the good time takes place in the community, so therefore she accepts the community.

M: So I participated in their activities more.

Here again, Miss M uses "their activities" to describe the community activities. She regards the community members as a unit.

Unlike mentioned before, instead of waiting for an invitation from the community, Miss M becomes more active in participating in the community activities. She turns from passively waiting to actively participating. So it is most likely that later she becomes a regular member of the community instead of being a guest of it.

11.3 The Hypothesis of Latent Meaning Generating Rules and Structure

Miss M gets to know the community during the phase of adapting to the new environment as a migrant. She has a very small social space at the beginning of her life in Leipzig; she knows no one outside the Student College. She is very curious of outside world, which is different from college life. Her actions and decisions could be greatly influenced by her social needs.

Miss M has a high criterion of “friend”: Friend should be more than an acquaintance. She looks for friends. A Chinese girl becomes a close acquaintance in Miss M’s social life, and through her Miss M gets to know the community, which is not well-known in Leipzig yet. A personal connection plays an important role in Miss M’s path to the community. She provides Miss M with access to a larger social space.

The girl invited Miss M to participate in a barbeque--a community activity--in order to get to know more people and to make some friends. Miss M accepts the invitation due to its potential of enlarging her social life, not because of any religious reason. Her motive of joining the community is most likely of social needs.

Miss M enjoys the activity. There is not a dominant religious atmosphere or a Christian culture within the community yet, so Miss M does not feel different from the others. It is probably because Miss M meets the community in its very early stage, in which the community has not formed its structure and formality. There are only few obligations for the community members to fulfill. They do not need to develop the community. Miss M has no obligation at all in the community as a guest, so she is willing to participate in the community activities again, because the community represents a pleasant social place. She wants to enlarge her social space. The community offers Miss M a great emotional support in her migrant status.

Miss M’s attitude towards the community is neutral. As long as she has fun at the activity, she can accept some religious activity like singing hymns. She regards the community members as a unit and should share some common character. What attract

Miss M are the community members, who potentially could be her friends. Gradually she turns from passively waiting to actively participating. She joins the community with the purpose of entering a larger social space. Her desire of seeking friendship leads her to the community. So later she becomes a regular member of the community.

Her dropout of the community might also relate to her social needs and her criterion of friends. These will be proved in the following narratives.

11.4 Indications from the Interview

11.4.1 Practical Support of the Community

M: When I went to the community for the first time, it was 2004, in May, and it was a barbeque. Later the pastor came. He didn't have a residence, so we looked for one for him. I wanted to work and R told me that there was a job in an ice cream shop. So I went and tried, and got the job. I was very grateful for them. Later I worked in the ice cream shop, and went home very late and didn't want to cook. They considered that I didn't have dinner so they called me to join them to eat dinner. They were like brothers. The people around me were one by one converted. They were warm, and nice. When we met, they greeted me and told me tips and tricks for the courses I was taking.

Since Miss M participates in the community's activities, she gets more and more help from the community. The community helps her in some practical aspects. She gets the information about available jobs and hence finds one. She is invited by the community members to have dinner when she is tired after work. Miss M is grateful for this help and feels that the people of the community are nice. The practical help is very important for a migrant like Miss M at her beginning phase in the host society. It forms the attraction of the community. For Miss M, the community is a social space with friends who are willing to help her.

M: After a while, you find out that you've been in the community for a period of time, so you should do something for the community. The others will tell you that you are one of

the community, and you should commit yourself to the community. I think they are right. It is like you are joining a circle of friends. Everyone in the community helps and serves you, so you should do the same thing for them. It's ok.

“The others will tell you that you are one of the community” implies that Miss M’s identity as a member of the community is formed by recognition of the other community members. Miss M shows up regularly in the community, so the others regard her as a regular member. She might not regard herself as a member until the community members regards her as one of them. So Miss M is recognized as one member of the religious community before she becomes a Christian.

She still regards joining the community as “*joining a circle of friends*”. The others help her, and she helps them, too. Miss M’s concern remains with people and relationships. She has little interest in the community as an organization and religion. Her deeds of helping the community members are the results of paying a debt of gratitude. Miss M regards her service in the community as a part of “giving” and “taking” in a personal relationship.

She accepts the obligation of paying the others back of gratitude, because it corresponds to her understanding of friendship. It may have nothing to do with religion or spirituality. Her embeddedness in the community becomes deeper with her developing friendships with the community members.

11.4.2 Being Baptized as Qualification of Staying in the Community

M: Later the first group of religious investigators began to convert. I thought that if so many people believed in such a thing, it couldn't be bad.

Miss M begins to get to know Christianity with her deeper involvement in the community. Her involvement in the community always relates to the people in the community. These people undergo an identity change: They begin to convert one by one. The community was a combination of Christians and non-Christians, but with the change, it is turning to be a community with a dominant majority of Christians. Miss M

tries to adapt to the change, so she tries to accept the religion the others believe in. Her opinion on Christianity is quite according to conformity, because the others believe in it, so it cannot “*be bad*”. She regards Christianity as a “*thing*”, which is optional for people to believe. Miss M does not have her own opinion on religion. She might not understand what conversion means. She forms her opinion based on the opinions and actions of others. She is not motivated to seek a religious relief according to her spiritual needs. Because she regards herself as one of the community, she wants to share the same identity with the others. If the others begin to convert, Miss M might regard it necessary to convert, in order to keep her identity as a community member. It has nothing to do with religion; it is pressure of conformity.

M: I was baptized during a camping trip. At the beginning of the camping trip, I did not feel anything touch me. I didn't think that I was a numb person; I thought that the Bible was a thing far away from me.

M: The decision to get baptized was not a result of some great moving moment. I didn't have a big move. But the Pastor kept saying and saying, you've come here for two months, why haven't you decided to believe? So I had pressure. That was the feeling. I thought, it couldn't do any harm if I decide to believe, then I'll do it. Anyway, I didn't feel any influence of the decision. After I did it, I was relieved from the pressure. Maybe it was because of the pastor, he could really push people, put invisible pressure on them. After the decision to believe in God, I felt relaxed a little.

Miss M gets baptized due to the constant urge of the pastor. She feels pressure when she is asked why she has not converted yet. Miss M did not intend to convert. But her identity as non-Christian becomes an obstacle of her being in the community. It was not an obstacle before the pastor came. It was not necessary to be a Christian in order to join the community. During that phase non-Christians could stay in the community and have fun.

After the pastor comes, the community might develop its formation, form its formality and gradually become a serious organization. With his missionary task, the pastor expects the community members to be Christians. He regards Christian identity as a

necessary condition of being a community member. Miss M is thus required to accept the Christian identity by means of being baptized.

Before the pastor comes, there are very few obligations of being in the community. Miss M joined the community activities and had fun. That was all she wanted. But after the pastor comes, conversion becomes an obligation for those who want to stay in the community long term. A line is drawn by the pastor between the Christian community members and non-Christian members. If the non-Christian members do not want to be excluded by the community, there is only one choice: Convert and become a Christian. Otherwise the non-Christian members could be urged to formally convert before they are sure they want to become Christians, or leave the community.

Those who do not convert are under pressure of being forced to choose a Christian identity. Miss M also makes her choice under pressure of conformity, despite the fact that she does not have the intention to convert. *“It couldn’t do any harm if I decide to believe, then I’ll do it.”* This narrative implies Miss M’s attitude towards her decision of accepting the identity as a Christian. She regards conversion as a *“thing”* with no bad consequence; she does not have a clear goal of why she converts, but she is aware of the consequence of not converting: Pressure of constant urging, and the fear of not being a member of the community. She chooses to gain and accept the Christian identity, in order to avoid the pressure and fear, which could be caused by not converting to Christianity as long as she stays in the community.

The pastor plays a role as a judge. He judges who is qualified to be in the community. Before the pastor comes, the entry to the community requires no extra qualification. But now, a Christian identity is required for those who want to stay in the community in the long term. Being baptized is a qualification of an official member of the community.

Miss M wants to stay in the community, so she accepts becoming a Christian. Although she makes the decision on her own, she still feels the compulsion. The compulsion comes directly from the pastor, who urges Miss M to convert. The compulsion comes also indirectly from the community itself, which is experiencing a transformation from a small group of friends to a relatively large religious institution that has a dominant Christian majority. Miss M’s decision of joining the community and becoming a

Christian both have little to do with religion.

11.4.3 Estrangement from the Community

M: Later something happened in my life. When you are in the bad mood, you want to talk with some good friends, some friends you trust. At that time, there were some community members showing their concerns and told me to visit the community. Sometimes they made me feel that I should rely on God, look up to God and God would help me. I felt depressed. I am an ordinary person; I just wanted to talk to human being. I didn't have a deep spiritual life and I could not communicate with God. I suddenly had some scunner against them.

M: In the community, it was depressive. People needed to pray before dinner. When they tell stories, they always say "Thank God". It was not a relaxed dinner. I just wanted ordinary friends.

Miss M begins to live as a Christian after being baptized. She does not like the religious life in the community. She uses “*depressive*” to describe the religious rituals. Because her decision of conversion is made under compulsion of conformity, she is not willing to learn to be a Christian. Miss M discovers that being baptized is just the beginning of being a Christian, and that her life could be influenced by many aspects. She needs to pray before the dinner and constantly thank God. She regards these new changes in life as not “*ordinary*”, not “*relaxed*”, even “*depressive*”. The word “*ordinary*” appears in Miss M’s narrative with a high frequency. “*Ordinary*” means simple, to have a life without obligation and compulsion. Being a Christian means not being ordinary. She wants to be an “*ordinary person*”, and wants “*ordinary friends*”. The religious life in the community is not “*ordinary*”, so it is uncomfortable for Miss M to stay in the community. She begins her estrangement from the community.

Miss M joins the community because of the attraction of making new friends. She gets practical help from the community members and also cares about them. After being baptized, Miss M discovers that she now has an abstract relationship with the community, and with God. Miss M prefers to establish concrete relationships with the

community members, not with an institution or a god. But when she meets some difficulties, the community members recommend solving the problem by visiting the community and praying, which does not help Miss M at all during her difficult time. What Miss M wants is some practical help, which the community members are now not able to provide.

With the development of the community, the relationship between the community members is not as familiar as the beginning phase, in which less ritual was applied. A formal community as an organization does not attract Miss M. For Miss M, the community begins to lose its attraction.

M: At the beginning, you think there are several people who don't do the right thing. However you come to the community for God, not for them. However later, if we admire the same God, why are they able to do such bad things that are not possible for an ordinary person to commit. If they pray, will God still help them? I think God still helps them, even though what they do is evil. Then what is God doing?

Although Miss M does not like the community as an abstract organization, she still stays in it as long as she has friendships with the community members. She can tolerate the rituals that make her uncomfortable. But when Miss M begins to doubt and condemn the community members, it might shake the basis of her joining the community.

There must have been some conflicts among the community members, and they might hurt Miss M. The result of the conflict is Miss M's question on morals and religion. For Miss M, being a Christian means to behave according to a higher standard, so the community members should be nice and moral persons. She finds out that some community members are not nobler than others, but they might be worse. She thinks it is unfair that God also helps people who hurt others. Miss M has an ideal image of the community, which corresponds to a high moral standard. If the community members cannot meet the standard, Miss M can be very disappointed and she could regret having joined the community.

Miss M might not be directly involved in the conflicts among the community members.

But she is disappointed by the community, and hence she estranges the community gradually but firmly.

11.4.4 Religious Understanding and Teaching

M: I was new in the community. I didn't read the Bible. I am not the type who likes to read. They told me that I should read the Bible from the beginning to the end. Were they kidding? I didn't read through the chapter I should have read even once. L23-26

Miss M is not interested in the Bible. Her attitude towards the Bible reading proves her decision of being baptized has nothing to do with spiritual pursuit. She did not want to be a Christian. Even after being baptized, she does not want to learn to be a Christian. Reading the Bible is another obligation of her stay in the community as a Christian. Miss M cannot fulfill the obligation, nor does she want to. Miss M gradually realizes that her joining the community means more and more obligations, which she does not like.

S: Did you ever participate in the Sunday school?

M: Never. During the Bible reading, they always argued and argued about certain questions. It is not like one plus one equals two. It is meaningless for one thought to try to persuade another thought. The Bible reading lasted for one hour and they argued for two hours. It was meaningless to stay there.

I went there a long time ago. At that time, there were groups who were arguing. One group thought this was what the Bible says; another group thought that was what the Bible says. I was always listening. At last, the Bible remains the same. Arguing is a waste of time. It is like reading a book; everyone has his own understanding.

Miss M does not attend the Sunday school, which is designed and provided for the newly converted community members. She is not interested in any religious relevant activity of the community. She regards the Bible reading as a boring activity, “*The Bible reading lasted for one hour and they argued for two hours. It was meaningless to stay there*”. Miss M does not enjoy the religious activity of the community. She regards the

discussion during the Bible reading “*a waste of time*”, and thinks attending the Bible reading is “*meaningless*”.

All religious activities that the pastor provides do not attract Miss M at all. On the contrary, she gets bored and estranges herself from the community. It corresponds to the aforementioned hypothesis that Miss M is interested in making friends in a larger social space. The community was once very attractive for Miss M because of its informality and lack of obligation. After the pastor comes, the community turns into a social space that restrains Miss M’s fun of making friends and forces her to fulfill many obligations. The community was attractive as a social space to Miss M, so she decides to be baptized and stays in it. When the community emphasizes missionary work and religious life, it loses its attraction to Miss M. What the community provides is not what Miss M wants.

M: However, when I was in the community, I never did missionary work on my friends. I said to them, if they were interested in this, I could bring them to the community. I didn’t chase them for the missionary work. Whether I believe in God or not doesn’t affect my friends.

Miss M does not actively participate in community missionary work, so there is not a chance for her to be a leader. She is not interested in doing missionary work among her friends. The narrative “*whether I believe in God or not doesn’t affect my friends*” implies that Miss M regards her conversion as a private thing which does not change her life much. It also implies that she has some friends outside the community, so she has developed another social space in the meanwhile of joining the community.

For Miss M, doing missionary work is an obligation of being a Christian. She treats religious activity as a part of being a community member. She is not against the obligation, so she cautiously brings people to the community, but only when they are interested in it. Miss M does not want to pass the obligation to her friends, either.

11.4.5 The Role of the Pastor

M: As we didn’t go to the community, the pastor came to visit us. At that time, we

suffered so much because my boyfriend had depression, which affected my life so much, as well as his. I was out of solutions. The pastor knew a little about this because he was familiar with R. R helped us also. Later the pastor came to our house and I had the hope that he might be able to help us. If not materially, at least spiritually. Then the pastor came and we talked about the situation. The pastor's wife asked about my family. At last, I thought, although the pastor was the same age as my parents, we couldn't get any help, which we might get from our parents. There was not a little help at all from the pastor. I didn't understand why he came. L66-74

S: What did he say?

M: Nothing. The pastor made me feel that he was helpless too. He said the sickness should be clinically diagnosed. We couldn't do that. As an elder, he could have taught us something. But the pastor did not even reach this level. I was so disappointed. The pastor could repeat a joke in prayer and sermon over and over; he has only one joke in his mind. Suddenly, I felt, I might be the one who didn't read the Bible, but the pastor was the one who could recite the Bible without really understanding the content.

Miss M expected the pastor to guide her during her difficult time. Her boyfriend suffered from depression, which influenced her life a lot. Miss M expected emotional support and spiritual guidance. She was disappointed again when the pastor visited her and her boyfriend.

The pastor might have tried to comfort Miss M but he failed to comfort her. *"There was not a little help at all from the pastor"* implies that Miss M did not get any help she expected. She ascribes the situation to the pastor's poor communication skills. Miss M may have respected the pastor as an authority of the community and have regarded him as a leader, but after this visit, the authority of the pastor loses its effect on Miss M. She thinks that the pastor cannot provide any help she needs.

Her expectation of the community diverges from what the pastor and the community can provide. The religious activities are not Miss M's need. Guidance of practical issues in life is what Miss M needs, but the pastor cannot provide. Some practical and concrete needs are especially important for migrants, but these needs are beyond the community's ability. A religious community might help migrants in some aspects, but

not all wishes can be realized.

If a religious community cannot provide what the member needs in practical life, it could lose its attraction for its members.

Miss M enlarges her disappointment to a doubt of the pastor's qualification as the community leader. *"The pastor could repeat a joke in prayer and sermon over and over; he has only one joke in his mind."* She complains about the pastor's boring sermon, which she has been tolerating for a long time. She was not against the sermon, but the failed visit causes Miss M's doubt on the pastor's authority: *"I might be the one who didn't read the Bible, but the pastor was the one who could recite the Bible without really understanding the content."* She does not regard the pastor as a theological authority anymore. She even criticizes the pastor's religious teaching, which does not inspire her.

S: What is your comment on the pastor?

M: The pastor. If I may comment a little harshly, it would be that the pastor hasn't a high quality. He can recite the whole Bible, but he is a human being with a human body. He is not bad. But as a missionary worker, he hasn't experienced the things of real society. It has nothing to do with education. I thought he could help us as elder, but he had no solution. He only said: Let's pray.

Miss M expresses her disappointment about the pastor. Her criterion of an authority figure is not related to the Bible. So the pastor's good theological knowledge of the Bible is not a persuasive argument for his authority. Miss M regards the pastor as someone who *"hasn't experienced the things of real society"*, which implies that the pastor cannot provide practical advice to help Miss M deal with her difficulty. Although the pastor has some overseas missionary work experience, he cannot provide Miss M with some useful advice as she expected. The real needs of a migrant do not always match what the pastor provides. The pastor might intend to show his concerns for Miss M's life, but his solutions are to pray and to rely on God. Miss M expected a personal communication and some emotional support, but the pastor did not successfully

communicate with Miss M. The consequence of Miss M's disappointment is her doubt on the pastor and the faith that the pastor represents.

Miss M has already estranged herself from the community. She is not interested in the community religious activity, she is disappointed by the pastor and by some community members, and she doubts the faith that the pastor advocates, so Miss M's affection for the community might be used up.

Miss M represents a migrant who wants to get practical help in real life. She expected the community to help her, but the community lets her down. Miss M realizes that the community is not the social space that she expected. Maybe at the beginning of her joining the community, Miss M still feels that the community enlarges her social life. But later, since the pastor carries out the formal formation of the community, she cannot enjoy the social space anymore.

11.4.6 Dropout from the Community

M: However, why I didn't go to the community later, I cannot figure out. Later I broke up with my boyfriend, and it was chaos. I wanted to talk to someone, and I found no one in the community. I went to Cologne and found my good friend, and I shared everything with her. We called each other several times everyday.

Miss M does not go to the community again. As mentioned before, the community does not attract Miss M anymore, neither its religious activities nor its religious teaching. Miss M joins the community because of the possibility of making friends. Her dropout from the community could be related to friendship, too.

During Miss M's difficult time, she cannot find anyone in the community to talk to. She has to cross Germany and go to Cologne to find a friend to talk to face to face and gets comfort and some relief. Miss M cannot have this kind of comfort and relief within the community. She realizes that the friendship in the community is not the same as she expected. The community members might be friends who have fun together, but Miss M can neither share her worry with them, nor get practical help from them. Miss M accepts the Christian identity and gets baptized, in order to stay in the community and to be

friends with the community members. But she discovers that the friends in the community are not worthy of these efforts. After she experiences the difficult situation, there is no reason for Miss M to stay in the community.

M: They regard me as someone who reads little about the Bible and does not have a profound spiritual life. I regard myself as someone who lives with her own principles. They did something that I, as an ordinary person, would not do. So I don't think it is necessary to go back to the community. Now that I am not in the community, I still have many, or several good friends. In the community, there are also some good people, or some who I can accept, and there are some I cannot accept. I have a quality that says if I cannot accept you in life, I will draw a line between you and me.

Miss M justifies her decision of not visiting the community again. She emphasizes her own principles, which is better than those who read the Bible but hurt others. She thinks that the community is not a guarantee for a better moral standard, so she does not want to go back to the community. She gives up her identity as a member of the community, which might also mean that she gives up her identity as a Christian. So in the narrative she describes herself as “*an ordinary person*”. She regains her identity as “*an ordinary person*” by giving up the membership of the community.

Miss M is very disappointed by some community members and does not want to share the same identity with them. Being a community member means being one of them. Miss M wants to “*draw a line*” between her and the community members she cannot accept. Because these people stay in the community, she chooses to leave and never go back to the community again.

Miss M does not worry about the consequences of the dropout, because at that time she still has “*many or several good friends*”. Her social needs do not depend on the community any more. There is a substitute for the community as Miss M's social space. Her dropout does no harm to her.

M: If I continued to be a part of the community, it wouldn't have been painful, but I am surely happy when I am outside the community. Inside the community, there are a lot of

people. There are few friends of mine who don't force me to participate in the community. We can be friends in private. It is meaningless for me now to be in the community.

Miss M explains again the reason why she does not visit to the community again. It is acceptable to continue her membership of the community and to stay in the community. It is not “*painful*” for her. But she regards staying in the community as “*meaningless*”, because some community members, who she can accept, keep friendships with her despite her absence from the community. Miss M’s aim of joining the community was to make friends. If she can make friends without joining the community, she would rather skip the step of joining the community and the step of fulfilling many obligations. It also implies that besides the community there is a growing social space among Chinese in Leipzig.

Miss M’s trajectory changes from an outsider of the community to a member of it, and later she estranges herself from the community and now she has become a dropout member, who is again an outsider of the community.

S: Do you still read the Bible?

M: Never again. I still feel the God is a powerful god, but I don't read the Bible anymore. I have two or three Bibles at home. I wanted to throw them away but didn't dare to do that...

The community is like a wall, and I am a small ball that knocked on the wall and bounces back. How much the ball knocks on the wall depends on the ball's flexibility and power. Now I still hear a lot of things about the community, as a listener.

Miss M gives up her identity as a community member, but she hesitated to totally give up her identity as a Christian. She dares not break up with God, so she does not throw away the Bibles at home. She is influenced by her stay in the community and still stands in awe of God. Although she does not regard herself as a Christian, she admits the existence of God. She does not want to offend God, although she does not believe in God. The identity as a Christian does not vanish with her giving up her identity as a community member. Miss M has to deal with the identity problem. She describes

herself as “*a small ball that knocked on the wall and comes back.*” It is an accurate and beautiful description of her trajectory. She does not want to officially resign from the community. Christian may be a selective identity for Miss M. She could regard herself as a Christian if she wants.

11.4.7 Contact outside the Community

M: I did experience a long period of desperation. At that time, nobody could help me. I felt the members of the community were not willing to help. On the contrast, my friends outside the community asked me to have dinner with them, because they didn't let me be alone at home. They invited me to drink beer, and I got drunk, then went home and slept. Those who were brothers and sisters in the community, they called me and said: Pray. I thought, go to hell. Y asked me whether I was upset, if I had time I could go to the church and pray. I was so upset. I just wanted to talk to some human being.

M: So I have a lot of friends outside the community. It is easy to compare and judge. Every group has its good and bad sides.

During Miss M's difficult time, two groups of people pay attention to her difficulty and show their concerns in different ways. One group of people is the community members who call Miss M and ask her to go to the community and to pray. Miss M wants practical help and concrete emotional support; she does not want to do anything that cannot comfort her, like praying. So she rejects the suggestion of going to the community and praying, which are not helpful for her situation. Miss M represents a migrant whose needs are different from what the community can provide. The community cannot help Miss M as she expects.

Another group of people who are concerned with Miss M's status does not belong to the community. They offer Miss M company: They “*asked me to have dinner with them, they didn't let me be alone at home.*” Miss M needs accompaniment, so she can overcome the loneliness and desperation. The people outside the community offer time and care to Miss M, and she appreciates that very much, even if it includes drinking, which helps her escape from reality for a couple of hours. “*They invited me to drink beer,*

and I got drunk". Miss M finds her emotional shelter outside the community. Also outside the community she finds friends who are willing to support her and to accompany her when she is weak. Miss M's real needs are satisfied when she is outside the community. There is no wonder that later Miss M prefers to be with the people outside the community.

It indicates also the competitive relation between two social spaces. The community is one of the social spaces of Chinese migrants in Leipzig. If a migrant like Miss M cannot find what she needs in the community, she probably turns to the other social spaces. Those who are outside the community might not form an organization like the community, but they form a relaxed social space for the Chinese in Leipzig. It could be a competitive social space. The community members might join both of the social spaces, but the community might require a commitment from its members. The membership of the community could be a barrier for its members to join the other social spaces.

M: If I want to play badminton, I have friends to play with. If I want to have dinner, I have enough friends to sit beside the table. We can chat, talk, even day dream. I am an extroverted person. When we get along with each other, I am your guy. We can have a great time. I am in this mood now, I don't want to go back to the community at all.

L117-121

Miss M emphasizes her contacts outside the community. She has friends who play badminton with her, and friends who share daily life with her. Her social needs are well tended to by friends outside the community. She chooses to stay outside the community because she loses nothing if she does not go back to the community.

The community loses its attraction for Miss M at the beginning. Later the obligation as a community member becomes a burden to Miss M. Her disappointment by the pastor and some community members are the centrifugal force, which drives her make the decision of leaving the community. At last the community loses Miss M as a member.

If people like Miss M are not satisfied with the social space within the community, they will probably find another substitute. In the competition of attracting members, the

community loses Miss M.

M: I didn't participate in activities of a photography group⁹⁸. I was afraid that if they knew I was a community member, they would regard me as a person who cannot get along with others. Now I am out of the community, I can participate in their activities. Sometimes they still mock me.

Miss M did not participate in the activities organized by people outside the community. She was afraid that the non-community members would not accept her as one of them. Miss M's identity as a Christian was a barrier for her to join the social space outside the community. It implies a distinction between the community members and people outside the community.

People outside the community may have some negative impressions of the community. If a person is a community member, then the person is labeled by them as "*a person cannot get along with others*". It is most likely that the community members always gather together and have less contact with people outside the community. It could make the impression that the community members are not interested in making friends with people outside the community. The community turns to be a small circle for Chinese Christians. The community might exclude those who are not interested in religion.

People outside the community "*mock*" Miss M even after she leaves the community. The Chinese Christian community might be distanced and isolated by some Chinese migrants who are not in the community. They might hold strong negative opinions against the community. So Miss M's identity as a Christian is a laughingstock for them. In order to integrate into the new social space outside the community, Miss M has to give up her identity as a Christian. The community membership might be an obstacle of her integrating into the social space outside the community.

The distinction between social space within the community and outside the community is huge. It might cause conflicts and splitting up of the Chinese migrant society in Leipzig. As a result, the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig contributes to the

⁹⁸ Photography group, a self organized group of Chinese whose hobby is photographing.

diversity and complexity of the Chinese migrant society in Leipzig.

11.5 Summary

11.5.1 Motive of Joining the Community

Miss M's motive of joining the community is deeply influenced by her social needs. There are two steps of Miss M's joining the community. The first step is to join the community as a regular guest. The second step is to be a member of the community, which means to become a Christian.

The first step is a decision according to Miss M's social needs. As a migrant who starts studying in a new city, Miss M has a very small social space before she met the community. Later she gets to know a girl through an introduction of her classmates. The girl happens to be a community member. Through the girl's introduction Miss M gets to know the community at a barbeque activity. Personal connections play an important role in Miss M's finding the community. Miss M does not find the community herself; she was introduced and accompanied by a community member when she visited the community at a barbeque for the first time. She has a pleasant time and likes joining more activities. The community provides Miss M with a larger social space with a group of people who could potentially be her friends. The community was Miss M's only access to explore the world outside college, so she enjoys the new social space the community provides.

The second step is a decision under force of conformity. With her regular attendance in the community, she is regarded by the community members as one of them. Later Miss M accepts the identity as a community member. After the pastor comes and leads the community, the focus of the community activities becomes more religious. A dominant Christian majority is formed in the community. Miss M is required by the pastor to convert since she is one of the community members. Miss M is under pressure for being a non-Christian in the community. At last Miss M accepts baptism, which signifies an official announcement of being a total community member. Her conversion has almost

nothing to do with religion, so it is a decision under force of conformity.

Non-Christian identity was not a problem at the beginning, because Miss M gets to know the community in its early stage of formation, so there was little formality of the community. Later non-Christian identity becomes less compatible with the identity of a community member, so Miss M has to make a choice to give up her non-Christian identity. Despite the compulsion, Miss M makes the decision. Just like people sing hymns during the barbeque, Miss M accepts the ritual as long as it does not annoy her. It is her same attitude towards the religious teaching and religious activities in the community. She attends the Bible reading group and sometimes the Sunday worship. She gets bored by the pastor's sermons and regards the discussion in the Bible reading as meaningless. But as long as these activities do not annoy her, she can accept and tolerate them, in order to stay in the community and be friends with the community members. She is not interested in any religious activity, nor does she want to learn how to be a Christian. Accepting the identity as a Christian is her strategy of staying in the community.

11.5.2 Reasons of Leaving the Community

Miss M's motive for leaving the community is also influenced by her social needs. Her estrangement from the community is related to the transformation of the community.

There are three main reasons for Miss M's leaving the community: The community loses its attraction due to its formality, huge disappointment by the pastor and the community members, and the competition of other social spaces.

Miss M converts to Christianity due to constant urging by the pastor. She finds out that to be a community member means fulfilling many other obligations besides being baptized. The community is turning into an organization, which focuses on religious activity and develops its administrative structure. The pastor carries out the formalization of the community according to his strategy and his transnational resources, in order to obtain his missionary goal. But Miss M does not like the formalization of the community; what she wants is a group of people who can have fun together. She does

not care whether the activity is religious or not. Her social needs are disturbed by the pastor's development of the community. The community loses its attraction for Miss M. As a social space, the community requires more and more from its members: The religious learning, involvement in religious activities and in missionary work, etc. These are obligations of the community members and Miss M likes none of them. The change of the community restrains Miss M's social needs. She accepts many obligations for a community she no longer enjoys. Miss M now regards it as meaningless.

The turning point is Miss M's difficult time. The community does help her in some practical ways like finding a job, but during her desperation, neither the pastor nor the community could comfort her. She expected the pastor to give her some guidance and discovers that he is helpless, too. The disappointment causes her doubt in the pastor's authority. The community members could not provide practical help and ask Miss M to pray and rely on God. These suggestions did not help Miss M out of her desperation. She is disappointed by the community members. Maybe her wishes are beyond the community's ability, but she realizes that she cannot find the friendship that she needs in the community.

The conflict between some community members disappoints Miss M again, so she doubts the faith in which the community members believe. She thinks that to be a Christian is not a guarantee of a higher moral standard, because sometimes the community members use the religion as an excuse for their wrong deeds. Miss M does not want to be a member of this kind of group of people, so she wants to draw a line between her and the community.

During Miss M's difficult time, she finds her emotional shelter outside the community. The people outside the community offer Miss E care and accompaniment that she needs. As a result Miss M is attracted by the social space outside the community. She has many friends outside the community; her dropout from the community does no harm to her social life. Outside the community is a social space without obligation, which is more relaxed than the community. It forms a competitive social space in relation to the community.

People outside the community might not be well organized like the community, but its

informality attracts people like Miss M. Miss M's dropout from the community is a rational decision. Miss M makes up her mind to give up her community membership, because she wants to join and to enjoy the other social spaces, where her social needs are well contented. She regains her identity as an ordinary person, which means without many obligations.

11.5.3 The Type of Miss M

11.5.3.1 Miss M as a Dropout Type

Miss M is a dropout type because she decides to give up her identity as a community member. Although she has spent a period of time in the community and was baptized, she does not want to be a member of the community due to the above-mentioned reasons of her leave.

Miss M's trajectory changes during the whole process. She was an outsider of the community. She became a member of it for friends, later she estranges herself from the community and now she becomes a dropout member, who is again an outsider of the community.

Miss M indicates some characters of the dropout type.

The dropout type may have a non-religious purpose in joining the community. Miss M's purpose is friendship-oriented. She is never really interested in religion, which is the most important element of the community. Miss M is looking for a social space to explore potential friends. Once the community loses the function of providing friendship, it loses its attraction for Miss M.

The dropout type may not have a deep embeddedness in the community. Miss M is neither a leader nor a member in the diaconal committee. She does not care about the development of the community and she is never responsible for a Bible reading activity. Her dropout affects neither the community's structure or function, nor her own life much.

The dropout type has a loose relationship with the pastor. Miss M respected the pastor

as an authority until the pastor failed to comfort her. The pastor's sermon bores her; the religious teaching in the community is meaningless to her. The transnational resources of the pastor are not valuable for Miss M, because she does not want them. The pastor is neither a provider nor a leader for her, so she does not recognize the hierarchy of the community, in which the pastor is the power center and authority of the community. The pastor has very little influence on dropout types like Miss M.

The dropout type could assimilate into other social spaces after dropping out from the community. Miss M has developed her own circle of friends outside the community. She keeps friendships with some community members, but she claims that she will never go back to the community again. Miss M lives independently from the community's support and resources.

11.5.3.2 The Function of Miss M's type

Despite the fact that Miss M is a dropout type, she still has her function in the community.

Dropout types like Miss M join the community at the beginning because of different motives. It could be friendship, or love, or looking for help. When dropout type joins the community, the size of the community expands. It affects the quantity of the community members. If the pastor is pursuing an increase of community members, a dropout type like Miss M would affect the numbers of converted people in a certain phase.

A dropout type like Miss M does not influence the development of the community, because she does not have a deep embeddedness in the community and plays no important role in the community. She was never in the center of the community. Her dropout affects almost no one. The pastor will recruit more people to join the community.

The consequences of Miss M's dropout are worth looking into.

Her dropout reflects the problem of the community, which is caused by diversity of community members' needs. Miss M's social needs cannot be contented in the

community since the formalization of the community. The pastor does what he thinks is the best for the community, maybe some community members also regard the formality of the community as an important improvement in the development of the community. But it also causes Miss M's estrangement from the community. Because the community cannot provide what Miss M wants, she looks for friends in other social spaces.

The dropout type also implies that the Chinese Christian community is not the only social space for Chinese migrants in Leipzig. People outside the community form their own spaces, which are competitive to the community because there are not the many obligations that exist within the community.

Miss M's case implies the limit of the community's ability. Not all migrants' needs can be satisfied in the community. The priority of the pastor's concern is not always the members' concern.

The Chinese Christian community in Leipzig has experienced a transformation of the community since the pastor has come. The transformation may have some consequences which may contradict each other. Some members like Miss M drop out, while some other members are attracted by its formality. The diverse responses depend on the members' subjective expectation of the community.

In Miss M's case, the community loses her as a member. The pastor's plan of "China mission" cannot be realized by Miss M.

12 Conclusion

12.1 Typology of the Community Members

After analyzing the seven above interviews, the reconstruction of the subjective dimension of individual agents is achieved, so a typology of the community members can be established. The community members are often treated as a homogenous unit in other research on migration and religion. Actually, they play different roles in the formation of the community. The established typology will display their differences and their dynamic relationships.

Pastor H is the leader type.

Mr. R is the reproduced leader type.

Miss Q is the follower type.

Miss F is another follower type, too.

Mr. W is the competitive leader type.

Miss E is the selective integrated type.

Miss M is the dropout type.

The typology is able to answer the research questions raised in the beginning of the study. The typology has a theoretical significance in explaining the dynamic relationship between the transnational mission and migration life.

12.1.1 Question One

Why do they join the community?

Pastor H, as the leader type, joins the community in order to do missionary work in Germany, in order to realize the ultimate goal of turning China to a blessed country. Pastor H joins the community and becomes its leader due to his abundant transnational resources. He takes active approaches to young students, provides local and transnational religious teaching, develops the administrative structure of the community, organizes different community activities, and shapes the theological orientation of the

community. The pastor tries to transform the community from a small group of Chinese people to an organized religious organization, which is a part of the chain of the transnational missionary work.

Mr. R, as the reproduced leader type, joins the community in order to achieve a smooth adaptation and reorientation with new conversion. By means of converting to Christianity, he achieves a new attitude towards his relationships and career. He becomes an executive authority of the community after accepting the religious teaching that was provided by the pastor. He experiences his spiritual growth with his deep involvement in the community.

Miss Q, as the follower type, joins the community as an adaptation to her new environment. The community is a family substitute for her, and provides security and protection. She obtains emotional and practical support from the community. Due to Miss Q's Christian family background, her conversion corresponds to her spiritual pursuit, which relates to her childhood experience. The religious teaching of the community satisfies Miss Q's needs for religious education. Joining the community guarantees her progress in spiritual study.

Miss F, as another follower type, joins the community due to different reasons in comparison to Miss Q. Miss F experiences a process from rejection to acceptance. The constancy and activeness of the community plays an important role in attracting Miss F to visit the community at the beginning phase. She finds a shelter for her emotions in the Bible. She joins the community to achieve a distinguishing mark of spiritual conversion. By means of converting to Christianity, she gives up studying Buddhism Sutra and regards the Bible as guidance of life. Through the new world view according to the Bible, she reconstructs her family values, and reconciles herself with her family members. The religious teaching of the community does not attract Miss F very much, but she is satisfied with her membership in the community.

Mr. W, as the competitive leader type, initiates forming the community at the beginning, in order to resume his religious practice in Germany. He has converted to Christianity in China and wants to resume religious practice in Leipzig. As there was no other religious community for Chinese to join, he started to form one. Mr. W is aware of his role as a

community leader and takes responsibility of the community at the beginning of its formation. He has neither the resources to develop the community nor ambition for doing missionary work. So the pastor replaces Mr. W's center position after the pastor joins the community. Although Mr. W was marginalized due to some different theological understanding by the pastor, Mr. W is still supportive in the community issues.

Miss E, as the selective integrated type, joins the community in order to resume her religious practice because she has converted to Christianity in Taiwan. Miss E also experiences a process from rejection to acceptance. The religious teaching of the community does not satisfy her at all, but the community life and friendship attract Miss E, so she develops her strategy of handling the identity conflicts. She regards the community life as her religious practice. Because of her experience with the community work, Miss E has a relatively deep embeddedness in the community.

Miss M, as the dropout type, joins the community in order to enlarge her social space. At the beginning her social needs are contented by the community. She benefits from some practical help of the community members. By means of converting to Christianity, she achieves a stable membership with the community, although she is not interested in religion. After the pastor comes, the formality of the community bores Miss M. She has huge disappointments by the pastor and the community members, which are blows to her expectations. As a result, she leaves the community and joins another social space, which does not have as many obligations as the community does.

12.1.2 Question Two

What types of people will likely play a role in the transnational mission, and what types do not?

Pastor H, the leader type, plays an important role in the transnational mission, because he is the channel connecting the transnational resources and local demands of the community members. He has experiences with developing the community and drives the community to move on.

Mr. R, the reproduced leader type, is the necessary part of establishing the transnational missionary chain. He keeps the routine and stability of the community. The reproduced leader type is incorporated in the whole transnational mission mechanism.

The transnational mission influences the follower type, like Miss Q and Miss F. But their contribution to the transnational mission is very limited due to their less involvement.

Mr. W, the competitive leader type, has established a foundation of the community for the pastor's transnational mission. The competitive leader type could have several possible roles in the transnational mission. As long as the competitive leader type insists on his center position of the community and resists the pastor's replacement, he could challenge the authority of the pastor, and disturb and even jeopardize the development of the community as well as the transnational mission. But if the competitive leader type accepts the pastor's arrangement and turns to be a reproduced leader type, it is still possible for him to become a successor of the pastor and move back to the power center of the community.

Miss E, the selective integrated type, contributes her experiences in community work to the transnational mission. She indicates one characteristic of the transnational religious community: Simultaneous incorporation. If the selective integrated type does not have contribution, its role in the transnational mission will be the same as the follower type: Limited and without any significance.

Miss M, the dropout type, does not have any influence on the transnational mission. But the dropout type indicates the limitation of the transnational mission. If the community put the transnational mission as the priority concern, the dropout type could make the decision of leaving the community.

12.2 Dynamic Relationships of the Community Members

Among the different types, dynamic relationships take place according to characteristics of their types.

With the typology it is possible to explore how individual agent responds to the

transnational mission. The pastor H has some strategies to carry out the transnational mission: Active approach of young students, providing local and transnational religious teaching, construction of structure of the community, organization of community activities, and endeavors in concurrence with other communities.

Mr. R, as a reproduced leader type, responds to the pastor's strategies almost in every aspect. Mr. R accepts the guidance of the pastor; he recognizes the pastor's authority and follows his religious teaching. With his deep involvement in the community, Mr. R helps organize the community activities and becomes an executive authority. The pastor's transnational resources have a great effect on the reproduced leader type. The reproduced leader type can be expected to realize the pastor's "China mission".

Miss Q, as a follower type, responds to some of the pastor's strategies positively. Miss Q accepts the authority of the pastor, and attends the transnational religious teaching the pastor provides. She does not actively do missionary work, and also has no interest in the development of the community. She does not have a deep involvement in the community. For Miss Q, the pastor is an invisible provider.

Miss F is a follower type, too. Miss F responds to some of the pastor's strategies in a different way. Miss F does not need the transnational resources as much as Miss Q does. Miss F joins the community because she is a spiritual seeker; she finds her emotional shelter and values in the Bible. What Miss F needs is the Bible, not the pastor's different offers. For follower like Miss F, the pastor is not indispensable for her joining the community. Miss F does not have a direct personal relationship with the pastor. The pastor is an abstract existence for Miss F.

Mr. W is a competitive leader type, which has a direct encounter with the pastor. Mr. W responds to some of the pastor's strategies positively, and some not. Mr. W appreciates the pastor's efforts on local and transnational religious teaching, although it develops the pastor's authority in the community and weakens Mr. W's center position. Mr. W also supports the pastor's construction of structure of the community, because the community can benefit from the development. Mr. W shares the same opinion with the pastor regarding the concurrence with other communities. So despite the fact that Mr. W has some different theological understandings, he does not mind that the pastor replaces

his center position in the community. But the pastor does mind if Mr. W spreads some different theological thoughts. The tension between Mr. W and the pastor comes from the pastor's side due to the pastor's requirement for conformity. Although the pastor is ready to adjust to the transnational environment, it includes many practical elements outside of the Christian doctrines. The pastor's rejective response to Mr. W's Pentecostal religious practice indicates the line of the pastor's tolerance and the limit of his adaptation.

Miss E as a selective integrated type has very little demand on the pastor's offers. Miss E is approached by the pastor, but she is not interested in the religious teaching of the community. Miss E likes some community activities, and contributes her experiences in the Taiwan community to improve the administrative issues of the Leipzig community. The pastor appreciates Miss E's experience in organization and applies them as a standard of the community. He learns from Miss E and makes her contribution a useful part of the development of the community. So Miss E supports the pastor's transnational mission although it is not her intention.

Miss M as a dropout type could have been a follower type if the pastor had successfully comforted her during her difficult time. She does not need the offers that the pastor can provide. The more religious activities he organizes, the more Miss M feels bored. The pastor has a negative encounter with Miss M. Because the pastor and some community members disappoint Miss M, she leaves the community and joins the other social space, which does not have as many obligations as the community does.

The pastor's strategies do not have an impact on every member who joins the community. A differentiated view should be taken in exploring their motives, which are absolutely not homogeneous.

12.3 The Trajectories of the Community Members

According to the typology, a trajectory of the community dynamics could be discovered. It displays and explains the formation and diversity of the community.

Different types have different trajectories during the change of the community. It forms

the community and its diversity in the meantime.

The trajectory of the Chinese Christian community in Leipzig can be described in three phases. In phase one, before the pastor comes, the community is small and has little impact on Chinese migrants in Leipzig. In phase two, after the pastor comes and joins the community, the community develops and transforms, and has attracted many Chinese migrants in Leipzig to visit it. In phase three, the community is relatively stable and forms its routine. A certain group of people are the community members. The community becomes a part of the transnational missionary chain.

The trajectories of the community dynamics can be illustrated by the following figures.

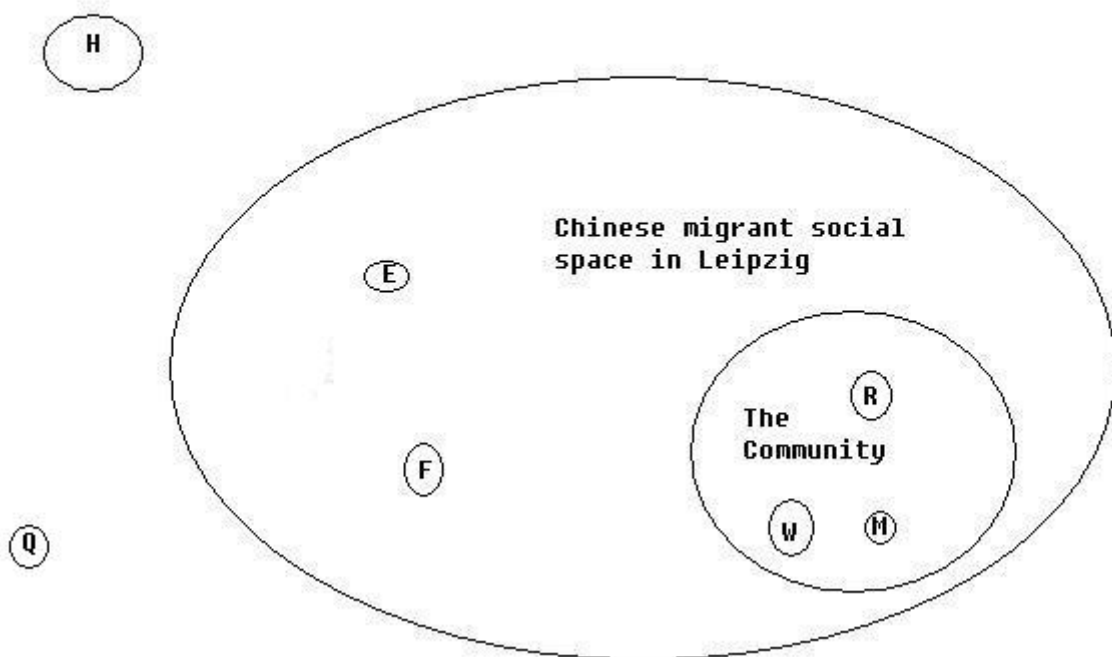


Figure 1: Phase One, the community before the pastor comes.

In phase one, the community is a part of Chinese migrant social space in Leipzig. The original form of the community is a small group of people who are interested in Christianity. Mr. W, Mr. R and Miss M are members of the small group. Miss E and Miss F are outside the community, not interested in the community. The follower type like Miss Q has not yet come to Germany. The pastor is far away from the community;

He has no influence on anybody yet.

In phase two, the pastor comes and joins the community. The pastor is a facilitator, enabler, motivator, supplier, spiritual authority and power center. He combines transnational resources and local demands. Due to his transnational resources and efforts, Miss E and Miss F visit the community and become members of it. Miss Q comes and joins the community, too. Mr. W is marginalized because the pastor H is becoming the authority of the community and the power center of it. Miss E still shares a large part of her life with people outside of the community. Mr. R is becoming a reproduced leader. Mr. R participates in the formation of the community by his active involvement.

Mr. R's trajectory proves a successful reproduction of the community structure. The reproduced leader type like Mr. R is an important structural component of the reproductive chain. This could be a mode of the transnational missionary work. The reproduced leader type guarantees the successful reproduction of the pastor's successor.

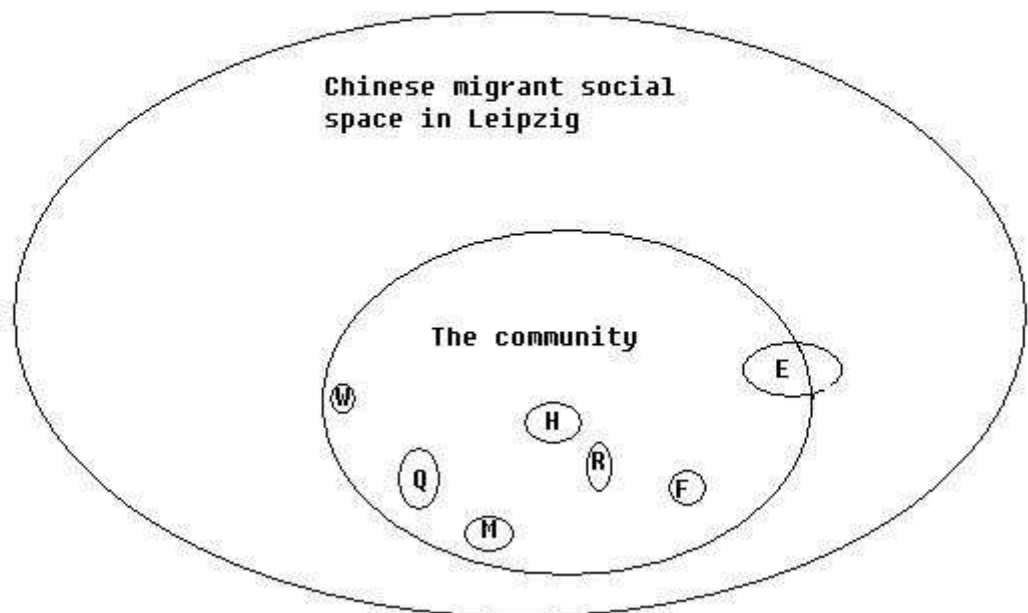


Figure 2: Phase Two, after the pastor comes, the community is in transformation.

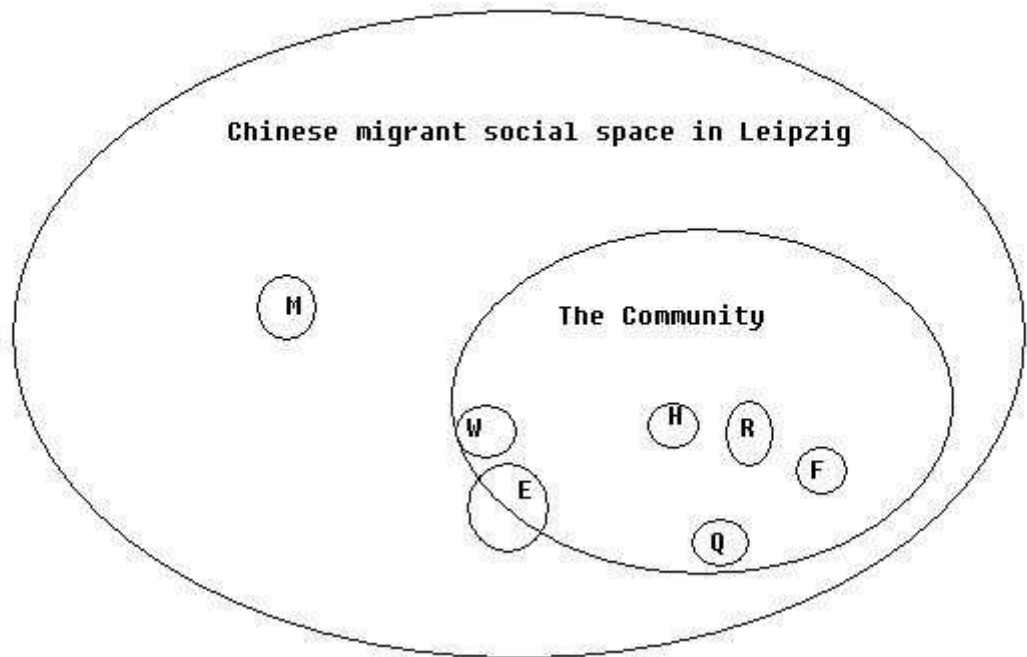


Figure 3: Phase Three, the pastor comes, the community is stabilized and forms its structure.

In phase three, the community is stabilized and forms its structure. Miss M moves outside the community because she finds another way to satisfy her social needs in the Chinese migrant social space in Leipzig besides joining the community. The rest of the members keep their position and stay in the community until they leave Germany. Mr. W is still marginalized by the pastor. Mr. W, the competitive type and Miss M, the dropout type, tend to resist the change. Mr. R, the reproduced leader type adapts to the change very well.

In the center of the community are pastor H and Mr. R, so the community has a tendency towards homogenizing reproduction of its structure.

The Chinese Christian community in Leipzig helps some Chinese Christian communities in other cities to develop, and financially supports them. The transnational missionary chain goes deeper and wider through the network among the Chinese migrants worldwide.

12.4 Theoretical Significance Regarding Transnationalism

As previously mentioned, there are four approaches to religion in contemporary transnational migration studies.⁹⁹ The typology of the community members can complement some of the approaches.

The first approach is the “rational-choice” approach. Miss M, the dropout type, might support the “rational-choice” approach, because she chooses to leave the community after comparing the community and other social spaces. Advantages and disadvantages of staying the community are her measure of comparison. But the other types can hardly be explained by the “rational-choice” theory. For example, Miss E, the selective integrated type, joins the community notwithstanding her dissatisfaction of the religious teaching and the rituals. Mr. W, the competitive leader type, allows himself be marginalized while the pastor replaces him. A reduction and simplification of religion cannot explain the complex decisions.

The typology and all the analyses of different members indicate the complexity of their decision-making. The decision of joining the community could relate to many aspects. To understand the role that religion plays in the migration, the subjective understanding should not be ignored or reduced.

The second approach is the “second sphere” approach. Peggy Levitt calls religion “a second sphere of activity” because the first sphere refers to daily life; the second sphere is influenced by the change of the first sphere¹⁰⁰. Miss E, the selective integrated type, might support this theory. Miss E wants to resume her religious practice in Germany, so she joins the community despite the fact that the community is not a Presbyterian Church. Miss E adapts her migrant status and accepts the membership of another religious community. But Mr. W, the competitive leader type, might be a different case. Mr. W also wants to resume his religious practice in Germany. Mr. W initiates the formation of the community and becomes its leader. He spends almost all his time within the community and with the community members. Mr. W’s religious sphere is

⁹⁹ See chapter 2.

¹⁰⁰ See chapter 2.

his first sphere. His daily life and his religious practice cannot be separated, since he comes to Germany and grounds the community.

What Levitt underestimates is the impact of the “second sphere”. Sometimes the religious practice could have priority in the migrant’s life. The priority can change when the migrant changes his status. For example, Mr. R, the reproduced leader type, might have regarded religion as a secondary issue in life as he was not a leader in the community. Later, with Mr. R’s deeper involvement, he spends more time on the community and even puts the community at the top of his priorities. The second sphere turns to be the more dominant sphere in his migrant life. So the typology can complement Levitt’s underestimation of the potential of the religious sphere.

The third approach on religion in transnational migration studies is about institution. The typology might answer the question from Lehmann’s question of “new quality” of the new migration religious institutions¹⁰¹. He argues that the new quality represents the new religious aggregation and new process of institutionalization. The trajectory of the Chinese Christian community indicates that the formation of the community does have a new way to collaborate its members and its resources. The new way might be a “new quality”: The community is not only developed by the pastor and the transnational institution which supports him, but also by local resources that are simultaneously incorporated. For example, Miss Q’s music skill, Miss E’s organizational experience of community in Taiwan, and Mr. W’s experience in the community in China: These resources are gradually incorporated in the formation of the community. The local resources have more influences on the community’s development than the transnational missionary groups do.

The fourth approach is about attaining a pluralistic understanding of culture and coexistence of people from different religious backgrounds. The typology of the community members might also inspire this approach. The typology of the community members shows that the community provides the Chinese migrants with emotional and practical help during their stay in Germany. The community does help its members to

¹⁰¹ See chapter 2.

adapt to the new environment. On one side, the community plays an important role in the migrant's adaptation of the host society, but on the other side, the community might prevent some community members from exploring the host society. For example, Miss Q, the follower type, makes friends with the community members and her social life is only in the community. There is no need for Miss Q to explore the host society because all her needs are well contented within the community. It could hinder her integration into the host society.

The community could become a barrier for its community members in adapting to German society. The transnational mission of the pastor can influence the migrant's life in many aspects. One of them is help them to adapt to the new environment. When the community members become reliant on the social space the community provides, the help could turn to be a kind of hindrance.

From the trajectories of different types, Mr. R, the reproduced leader type, the follower type like Miss Q and Miss F, and Mr. W, the competitive leader type regard the community as their main social space. They are not interested in the social space outside the community.

Miss E, the selective integrated type, keeps contact with the social space outside the community. The community life is only a part of Miss E. Miss M, the dropout type, is not satisfied with the social space in the community in comparison to other social spaces. Miss M later has no community life at all.

12.5 Influences of Transnational Institutions

The migration lives of the community members are influenced by the transnational missionary institutions.

Pastor H is able to be the leader type and maintain his status in the community due to the support from transnational missionary resources. The CEM (China Evangelistic Mission)¹⁰² helps him to allocate and organize the transnational financial and educational resources, the F.M.C.D (the "Freundeskreis für Mission unter Chinesen in

¹⁰² See chapter 3.

Deutschland”, or Friends of Mission among Chinese in Germany)¹⁰³ helps him organize the local missionary work and networking among Chinese Christian communities in Germany.

During the process of reproduction of community leaders transnational institutions play an important roll. Mr. W has chance to become professional missionary workers because the Chinese biblical seminary in Europe offers him the possibility to have access to a systematical theological education in Barcelona. The pastor H arranges the necessary financial support that Mr. W needs within the transnational missionary apparatus. The Chinese Christian community in North America supports Mr. W’s study, so that later he can continue the missionary work that the pastor H started. It indicates the significance of institutional dimension in the transnational mission: By supporting to establish a self-sufficient local missionary system in Europe, the transnational missionary work in North America has extended to Europe. Pastor H is a successful example in Germany.

As Yang in his article argues, three factors are important to maintain transnational networks: Cosmopolitan membership, organizational independence, theological evangelism.¹⁰⁴ A fourth element can be added concerning transnational networks in Europe: Local training. It includes the local training of reproduced leader type like Mr. R as well as the professional training of the competitive leader type like Mr. W. Without the institutions that cooperate with the pastor, the transformation of Mr. W from competitive leader type to reproductive leader type is not possible.

Local religious teachings benefit follower types like Miss Q and Miss F, too. All these are not possible without the transnational religious institutions, which influence the private person in the community.

Miss E as selective integrated type is less influenced by the transnational religious institutions because she does not want any resource from the institutions. Miss M as dropout type is also less influenced by the transnational religious institutions, because dropout type does not interest in the offers and possibilities that the institutions provide.

¹⁰³ See chapter 3.

¹⁰⁴ See chapter 2.

Different types are influenced by transnational religious institutions in different ways. The institutional dimension in transnational mission should not be underestimated and should be differentiated treated in analyzing various types.

12.6 Consequences of Transnational Mission

According to the typology, the migration lives of the community members are influenced by the transnational mission. This is one of the consequences of the transnational mission. The goal of the pastor's transnational missionary detour is to let the community members bring the Gospel back to China. The impact after they return to China is the other significant consequence of the transnational mission.

The "China mission" can be realized by Mr. R, the reproduced leader type, who wants to proselytize his family members. For Mr. R, the task could be very difficult, because his family members are Buddhists and Christianity does not belong to the local culture of his home town.

Mr. W, the competitive leader type, can also carry out the "China mission", because he is now active in missionary work and has the ability to lead a community. Since he has initiated one community in Germany, he could initiate another wherever he stays.

Miss Q is not active in missionary work, and has a Christian family background. So Miss Q does not need to proselytize anyone. Miss F is a follower type, too. But Miss F has a Buddhist family background and she wants to share her beliefs with her family. Miss F can carry out the "China mission", at least on a family scale. In this point, the follower type without Christian family background will have more influence in the whole transnational missionary mechanism.

Miss E has no interest in turning China into a blessed land. When she goes back, she lives in Taiwan. The "China mission" cannot be expected to be realized by her.

Miss M drops out from the community. She does not want to have anything to do with religion. She cannot realize the "China mission", either. The transnational mission does not affect much of her trajectory.

Besides the above-mentioned consequences, the transnational mission could have more

influence on migration life. Between the transnational mission and migration life, the evangelical Chinese Community in Germany displays its formation and diversity. The typology is open for modification and complementation. It could be a start for further study on religion and migration.

Appendix

The complete transcriptions of the interviews with Pastor H, Mr. R, Miss Q, Miss F, Mr. W, Miss E and Miss M.

Interview with Pastor H

Date: May 18th, 2007

Place: Leipzig Train station

H: Pastor H

S: Interviewer

Initial Situation: We drink coffee together. I ask him, whether I could take a tape of our dialogue.

H: You want to take a tape?

S: The name and the personal details can be concealed if you request.

H: All right then.

H: How a Christian understands the will of God, the guidance of God, and the will of God, can be understood from four aspects.

The first one is to listen to the words of God from the bible and prove the words of God.

The second is to pray. You yourself pray to the God. You'll find that your prayer will be the words of God which time and time again remind you, touch you. You have such strong feelings more and more in the pray.

The third is that you should consult some spiritual elders, like the pastors or the Christians, who are relatively mature in the church.

The fourth is to prove by means of people and things and the environment.

When these four aspects are all fulfilled, it will be relatively reliable. That is to say, this is the guidance of God, this is the Will of God. It is always like that.

Now you may ask your questions. What do you want to know?

S: How did you begin your search for the young student believers?

H: I came back to Germany in the summer of 2004. A long time before I had already heard that here, in the east, there are thousands of foreign students. Chinese students. There are barely more than 1,000 Chinese in Leipzig and 700 or 800 of them are students. There are quite a few cities in the vicinity and together they make thousands of students. At the beginning I had to explore, to search, to attract them by some activities. Then you have to actively find people, on the streets, in the supermarkets; many students are reachable in a lot of places. After that, by using some flyers and information materials, some of them gradually developed an interest in the belief, and they will be more and more attracted by the belief. God makes the Holy Spirit work here to touch people and attract people, to create a good atmosphere in the church. Only with together being with God and the love of God can people be attracted. What can be the real help to the foreign students is to let them find a home, with the love of God. The love, which people pretend to have, is limited, it may last three days or five days. After three months it may not continue any more. The normal communities all experience this phenomenon. If it is God, or with the love of God and the being of God, it is different, it can be long lasting. Rely on this I can do my work better. Christians are all grateful for God. My work has brought about two hundred or nearly three hundred people to the conversion.

S: How do you deal with the problem of the high mobility of the believers?

H: Generally speaking the communication with students, no matter in the west or the east of Germany, faces the same difficulty: The high mobility. The east is bigger than the West. Our mission is to introduce the best to them, to introduce the gospel to them. We don't care very much where they go later. We are in the hope that one day they may go to China, and bring the good news to a higher level in China. Then China, I think, could be changed by the right thoughts, by the education of love, by the true and good believe, and filled by these, China could be a truly blessed country. This is also our expectation.

S: Do you want to change China with Christianity?

H: Christian religion can hardly change anything. First what we believe is not a religion, not dogma. What we believe in is life, is the truth, is the true life, is the perfect life, which God teaches human and supplies human, and then changes human. So it is relevant to life. The normal dogma has nothing to do with life. It educates people in knowledge. But the bible helps people in believe and life, they are different. You have to believe in heart first, and to change, and your thoughts and words will have a new form. Of course it doesn't happen in one night, it happens gradually, becoming more and more mature, gradually eliminating the human weakness of the "old -I", to welcome God's perfection live in ourselves. In this way, the people can be changed.

H: Human beings are all adherents of egoism, quite selfish. Particularly now in post modernism, totally set themselves as the centre, totally without regard to others. This state of mind has great influence on our country, on our society and on the whole world. If there is a good belief, it is to let them know that human beings are not individually living on the earth, but are together living in a huge community. And everyone in this community should have loving care, because the love of every individual is limited, so the love of a permanent transcending God will be needed, to move and call the people. So that people can live in a balanced, healthy and harmonic way, a better way, not in this world that is full of hate and competition.

S: How do the campings begin?

H: When I came to Berlin in 1993 no... that was in the end of 1991. In 1993 I already had the wish to promote such campings. Because at that time the meetings and bible-reading-groups were rare, and a little bit immature. The guidance and the lead and what was taught had some deviations. So I wanted to have a combined communication and combined teachings, to invite some good teachers, to have a unified direction. This will be very positive to the development of the missionary works in Germany. So since '93 there are "Campings for Christians in Germany", from 80 people to more than 300 people. They come from all over Germany. The biggest youth hotel in Germany is in

Nuremberg, it can content 400 people. The great hall can hold 400 people. So now we always borrow that one. Every year is being held by different people. At the beginning it was held by me and another German pastor. Together. Later by different people.

S: I have seen an announcement for a camping excursion from 3rd August to 6th August.

H: Oh, that is to train the co-workers. Some students who are leaders should be educated,. They are relatively, the people should be relatively mature, then they can have an advanced training.

S: Are the courses different from time to time?

H: Yes, yes, yes, the Christian training camping excursion in August is the co-worker camp, for the mature, for the leaders or those who will be the leaders in Bible reading groups. We fit them to become stronger.

S: Now there are four bible-reading-groups in Leipzig. Have you appointed the leader of each group?

H: Yes. First it should be observed, whether these people are relatively mature. He has experienced some training and exercise, and does have actual practice.

S: If you have time, do you also attend the activities of bible reading groups?

H: In the first one and a half years, there was only one group, it was held at my home. The bible-reading-group was held at my home. The groups would be divided, because my home could not content so many people. At the beginning there were two groups, later four. In the beginning I was the leader of each group, until the believers were familiar with the Bible: Why the Bible is systematic, which are the focal points of each volume. With some training and practice, they were able to lead themselves, and have done very well.

S: Do you give them guidance for example, which volume should be read?

H: Yes, I will arrange that. I try to make four groups move in the same pace. some flexibility is occasionally given to each group. Some group wants to delve in this, some group maybe slower because of other activities, but they will catch up with the others. One group among them is different. The group which we visited yesterday is quite deep. That group consists of new believers, and will be a little more shallow. They read the gospels.

S: How did you divide these four groups?

H: First of all it is mainly according to where they live, according to the region. Second, some people who are in the middle of two regions can go to this group and they can also go to that group. These people will be divided and balanced according to their levels and conditions into different groups. Every group must take the ration between Christians and religious investigators into consideration. All this will be considered. Most of the members are students. Two or three Chinese, who work in Germany, also joined. But it is still a student and scholar group.

S: You have been back to Canada after your stay in Germany?

H: I spent a period of time in Germany, and then established the church in Berlin, came back to Canada at the end of 99.

S: What is the difference between the Chinese church in Germany and the Chinese church in other countries?

H: Today is actually different from two years ago. The ages and layers are different. Those who come to Germany are younger and younger. The students now are younger than before. In the past they were almost over 30, now most of them are in their twenties. There are also 30 something people, but only very few. So if the age is different, your work object is also different. So it needs to be seen, how to conduct the works, that focuses on them. Experience is needed.

S: What kind of activities did you hold?

H: First, when it comes to students, the activities should be vivid and cannot be stiff.

Second is the cooperation of the singing of psalms. We've sung relatively traditional psalms before, the traditional hymn. Now the younger and new, lively psalm are applied. Their own needs will be taken into consideration. What they are interested in and all other aspects are complementary. We also teach the old psalm, but it is selective.

S: Is there a competition between the Chinese church and the Jehovah's witnesses?

H: Yes. There are many Jehovah's witnesses and Mormons in the east and in some cities in the vicinity. They spread their word to the dormitories, and knock on doors. So it disturbs us. When we later go and knock on the doors of these students, they will be afraid and think: Why is such a thing coming again? They cannot figure that out. Some of them will have such a bad attitude, that they lock the door, and touch nothing of any religious kind. Then they become totally disinterested in any belief. Because once you open the door for the members of Jehovah's witnesses, they will visit you every week. This calls up some difficulties. I do not think it is a problem. Because Bible is the word of God and God's word says: Gospel is capable, so the words of God surely produce some power. If we positively act according to the will of God and the guide of God, God will help us. Don't be afraid of difficulties. The more difficult the situations are, the brighter is the truth.

S: What is your attitude to the Jehovah's witnesses?

H: We won't attack them. We fulfill our duty. If someone has an interest to ask, we will point out the errors of the Jehovah's witnesses. But we should speak out.

S: How would you answer if someone asks?

H: We will indicate from basic aspects: what are our believes, what are their believes, what are their errors. As for the listeners, how they understand, how they choose, is their individual choice. We cannot control that. There are some people who first contact with the Jehovah's witnesses, and then come back to the church, back to the believe in Jesus.

S: Are there some other functions of the church in Leipzig and the cities around?

H: We hold celebration twice a year, in the open. These outlying cities will gather together and celebrate. That way they have a social gathering.

S: Do you have social charity activities?

H: Frankly speaking we are not able to do that. In north America there are professional people with very good income. They are teachers, engineers, professors, lawyers. America, particularly America, is different from Germany. There are only two types of people in Germany. One kind is those, who come here to study and for research. The other are so called normal people, or with an refugee identity. They do some part-time job, or work in the restaurant. So the my working objects are different.

S: Do people in this community have some “helping-each-other” activities?

H: Yes, we do. If someone moves house, or somebody needs some counseling, we will provide some information.

(Pastor’s cell phone rang up. He walked to the window, and talked to the other side for a while, then came back.)

Yes, we do often offer some help, like moving house, or providing some help to a limited extent. Because we are not a charity institution. Church is not a charity institution, but church should helpfully contribute to society. But this is not the main intent of the community. The community is for spreading the belief of Jesus, this means we spread to the people what we think is best. So there are some people with misunderstandings. There are some Buddhist communities in Taiwan. What is it called? The community from Master Zhengyan? Ciji. They take always the first step. They have many journalists in all kinds of jobs to support them. It’s easy to report about them. They go everywhere on the world, where a catastrophe takes place. They have economical capabilities. They have a lot of rich men in Taiwan. They aim on this, aim on charity.

But charity can never be done, finished, no matter how many years it takes. Catastrophes are over the world. Humans are always in need. You can never fill up this hole. Charity should be done. But if you don’t help yourself, don’t do something for the

root, against the phenomenon of corruption and rotting of society, this cannot be mended. This hole can never be mended. The believe in God must be used, let God change this social community. This hole can become smaller and smaller. Then it will be healed. This is the most important part of the gospel we spread.

S: I've heard one of the activities is to visit the thermal spring?

H: That is just once a year. Information is provided on the Internet. We rent a big bus. It can only hold 50 people, so we limit the number of the community members, and provide some place for the people outside the community. It's cheap, one person, for 10 Euros, for a visit to a gorgeous place. So this is also a service. Many people did not take an interest in the belief, they came just once, and then never again. They came just when there were good activities. But our attitude is that we do not reject anyone, despite a few people who are like that. We keep an open mind. Maybe one day, the call of God will work on them.

S: I've heard that some of the believers were baptized in the lake?

H: Oh, sometimes the House of Church cannot organize the place of baptizing. Sometimes somebody is prepared to be baptized, but the pond of the church cannot be used. It must be taken into consideration, if the Hausmeister of the church has time. So sometimes we do it straightforward outdoors, in the river or in the lake.

It is rare. Because first, the weather must be good and stable. There are a lot of elements that cannot be controlled. Sometimes the bottom of the lake is not solid. Or there are stones on the bottom. Last time I almost fell in the river. But even a drop in the water doesn't matter, we don't stand that deep. It is a very fresh and good way. Many people are willing to do it outdoors. This is very occasionally.

S: Does this community belong to any denomination?

H: We are an evangelical free church. We are different from the German national churches. They are quite traditional. Their meetings are similar to the Catholic's. Many things are already fixed, like what kind of speech should be used. The forms are almost

same. They have their advantages; they talk about the Bible and social gospels. They have very good things, which we could apply. For example, they have very good analogies, which we could apply a sermon. But if this is taken as the main theme and you talk little about the Bible, it cannot change the people a lot. So the German national churches have become relatively traditional. It is not a bad thing, but not lively enough. We are a so called free church and do not belong to the national churches. The national churches must pay church taxes, we don't. We are protestant. We organize the church according to the local conditions; we won't be limited by the whole situation of the national churches. So, this would be a difference.

S: Does the church in Leipzig have contact with the other churches in Germany?

H: There are a few relations. Now the place which we borrow for the worship on Sundays is a German free church. Our believes are relatively identical. Every year we get in touch with the German church, a gathering. For example we hold some sport competitions, China-German Volleyball or football. They will make lunch; we provide Chinese desserts like spring rolls. This is a very good communication.

S: Are there some Chinese students who join the German church and community?

H: Most of the Chinese are in the Chinese church. There are a few of them who, owing to their character, like for example they do not want to have contact with Chinese, will go to the German churches. Maybe they have the motivation of looking for a German partner. Maybe their initial motivation is not the best, but God will guide them. But it will still be difficult. It is not that easy for them to integrate into that community. They may stay two years or three years, and it can still feel difficult to move deeply into the German community. There are only speeches which can be heard. You cannot join the ministration work of family. For example, if you believe in God, you must join into the family, do some work. This way you can share, you can grow up. Only through work you can grow. If you don't work, you just sit there and listen, you cannot grow up.

They have their needs. They may have the needs of words. After a year, they may consider the helpfulness of that community, but they may also search for Chinese

community.

But there is a kind of person, so called “cultural Christian”. They stay in the German Christian communities. They don’t have true lives, they stay on the layer of knowledge or culture. They think that because they have such kind of knowledge and understanding, they visit the churches regularly and all seem good. They also think people who visit church are better people. So they are also willing to contact Christian community. But this way cannot truly acknowledge the believe. This kind of people is called “cultural Christians”. There are many in Germany, also in the west.

Maybe one day God opens his mind and heart. Although they are this way now they can change if they listen more, and listen long, and if that community is a lively community.

S: Is your main task to develop the communities in Leipzig and the east region?

H: It is my responsibility at the present time. My mission still is to build a certain base in the east region. If God doesn’t have a special plan, I will stay and work in the east.

S: A pastor is very important to the church. Some Chinese churches in Germany have some problem because of the lack of pastors.

H: Many churches have a long history; they have internal problems. After all, every church is constructed by people. Humans are not perfect. Some traditions, old problems, or simply the long time of these churches make their thoughts different from the new ideas. Communications will be difficult. Without good guidance some conflicts and difficulties will occur. As far as I know, there are also simple communities and bible-reading-groups. Nowadays there are over 50 to 60 bible-reading-groups and communities in Germany, and over 10 Chinese churches.

S: Do you have contact with each other?

H: Every two or three months. The leaders have a meeting to communicate. We introduce our works to each other, pray for each other’s work. A very short meeting, just half a day. We gather together in one city.

S: Do you all belong to the same evangelism?

H: Yes.

S: What is your opinion about Pentecostalism?

H: That is a few Pentecostals here. We do not have very much communication with each other. I myself do not know much. What to say? I know that there is a Pentecostal sect in Germany. We have only little contact, but we do not have a so called contradiction either. They do what they do; we do what we should do. If there is some individual exchange in knowledge and communication, it is ok.

Basically, there is none.

S: I have seen on your website an on-line Chinese theological school?

H: Yes, yes. There is a Chinese evangelical Seminary in Taiwan. Many organizations have online education. This has its advantage for the knowledge. It also has its disadvantages. If someone really wants to study in a Seminar, he has to grow up in that environment just like you study in your university. He will have a training in his spiritual integrity. This is relatively complete. Speeches can be delivered online; it contributes to the knowledge. This means you can take some courses of the Seminar online. Today it is popular to use the remote online education.

S: Is this online education important for your Christians?

H: Online education is different from the face to face education. If you cannot be face to face, you cannot see the real situations. The real situation of learning will be difficult to know. It is an electronic learning, not a dynamic communication in the presence of people. If there is somebody willing to take these courses, I will also encourage him. I am not against online education, but it doesn't have the better effect of the face to face teaching.

S: The camping in August will invite Liang Jialin to be the speaker. How do you make these oversea contacts?

H: We do have some speakers and pastors, who live in overseas. If there are proper themes, we will invite them to come and give speeches.

S: Does every camping have different themes?

H: We decide the theme in the meeting of the regional leaders. Is there only one person in the camping in August?

S: He is the main speaker.

H: Oh, main speaker.

S: How do you organize and keep this network?

H: Everyone recommends some people. We make a priority together, who will be the first to invite. Or whether the speaker has time to come to Germany. Then we invite them. Because we are a student community, we do not have money to pay for their flight tickets. We can provide accommodation and food at camp. But they have to pay for the flight tickets themselves, or their church assumes the costs. They must find the solution themselves. This is the situation in Germany; it is different in America and other places like Asia.

S: You have said that Germany is most “worthy of investing”? Why?

H: I make this judgment according to all the missionary works in the world. I’ve done some research on this question. I think there are only these few foreign countries, where most of students and scholars gather. Of all these countries, Germany has the highest ratio of people who return to China.

But those countries that have a high number of people who go back to China will have the biggest influence on China. Then China will be a great evangelical nation, a nation that is blessed by God. This is the beginning. This is a very good chance, very good way. Those who go back to China have more or less influence. These intellectuals may be leaders in the middle, even in the upper class. They will be relatively able to touch, to change China. Then there will be a better China.

So to be patriotic is the duty of every one. He should love his own country. But this is

not our main task. Our work will influence this aspect. It means that our main work is to spread the gospel, to bring people the good news. This good news will have an impact on the lives and thoughts of people, towards a positive, healthy, and better future: To the individual, to society, to the country. It will have a positive impact on all of them. So I regard the missionary work in Germany as important.

S: Germany is a very good educating experiment field. But the flowers must be taken good care of.

H: There are two aspects. The students here will go back; the ratio is very high. There are a few who go to America or England or stay, but 80% of them return to China. In America it is the other way around: 80%-90% of the students stay there. So Germany will offer a better chance of missionary work, because the German people are special, they are not like ordinary people. It is a relatively serious nation. The foreigners in Germany, especially the Asians, don't easily adapt to it. The more difficult it is to adapt, the more eagerly they want to go back home. Both make them want to go back to their home country. Now China is a well-developed country; there are a lot of jobs there.

Here is worth investing. The work in Germany is actually really hard, not as comfortable as in North America. All aspects, energies, etc. If you want to be a missionary, you will spend a lot of energy and love and patience.

I have to go now.

S: Thank you very much.

Interview with Mr. R

Date: 29th July, 2007

Place: Activity Room in a Church

R: Miss R

S: Interviewer

S: How did you join this community?

R: I came to Germany in February 2002 with my girlfriend, who is now my wife. We were classmates together in senior high school. I knew that her grandfather, as well as the rest of her family is Christian. When we were in China my girlfriend told me that due to our different faiths, our relationship might not be possible. At that time we had feelings for each other so we tried to have a relationship. At that point, I neither knew about God, nor was a Christian. I thought we could give the relationship a try, but she thought that we wouldn't have a chance, as, according to the Bible, a person who believes in God is different from the people who do not believe. They have different values in life, which could cause conflict. She took me to the local church and tried to proselytize me. The impression that I got about Christianity was that it was full of love, but I come from a rural Buddhist area and my mother is Buddhist. I regarded faith as a spiritual relief for people of a certain age. At that time I was living in a good environment and had friends. I was an extroverted person with a great life and skills. I thought I did not need such a thing. After having finished studying at college, we decided we wanted to study abroad, so we came to Germany.

(A cell phone call interrupted his narrative. After Mr. R answered the call, he continued the story.)

We then came to Germany together, and, after arriving in February we studied language for four months. At the end of June, a missionary group came, who proselytized me, and then I began believing in God.

I did not study the language well. Because of my accent, I struggled to learn the

language, and I only got a 6¹⁰⁵ on my listening test. At first, I wasn't even sure if I would be able to pass the exam. ...Even though I worked very hard, I did not have a good basis of the language, and there was a possibility I might not reach it. I worked very hard, but I did not have a good basis, I might not accomplish it. Before Five years ago, internet access wasn't as convenient as it is today, so, in order to speak to our family and friends we had to use our cell phones, which was really expensive, and meant that we couldn't talk for long. We only had us. I was satisfied with Leipzig, but my girlfriend thought that we should move to West Germany. Every day we spent time together: ... as a result, we argued and argued over lots of little things. This relationship seemed fragile.

My reason for coming to Germany wasn't to study. In Junior High School I studied well, but later in Senior High School and college I did not study very much. I come from the FuJian province in China, where a lot of people do business, and all of my friends and my family are business people. I had looked to develop my career in this direction, and, at the time, I had a lot of business ideas

However my environment upset me: I was totally alone, with a girlfriend who did not understand me and who had different goals in life. Anyway I passed through the language test and had a 3 month vocation. I looked on the Internet at the university and met a couple of peers who were in a missionary group from Taiwan who were the same age as me. They used their holidays to do missionary work here. They had a book stand where they distributed books. One day I walked by their book stand and they caught my attention.

After arriving in Germany, I found that anything I saw that had Chinese symbols on it, I would like to take a look. They told me there was going to be a "Taiwanese Night", where people could gather together, watch performances, and eat Taiwanese food. Because they spoke the same Southern Min dialect that I speak, there was an affinity among us. As I knew they were Christians, I asked my girlfriend if she wanted to come too, and we went together.

¹⁰⁵ According to German test system, marks of examination are leveled from 1 to 6. 1 is the best score. 6 is the worst score.

At night there were lectures, and after the lectures there was the calling for whoever wanted to believe in God. I am very appreciative of God; I raised my hand and decided to believe in him. I can't rationally explain why I only believed in God during this time, but I felt something inside, and I knew somebody loved me. Because the end of human is the beginning of God, when people are in predicaments, they look for God. When they are in favorable circumstances, people think they just have a good life.

I find myself changes. After believing in God, my view of life and values all change. I am not a person who is good at thinking. The world must have such a creator. The Bible tells us we can know from what we see. How did the world from a big bang become a world in order? So there must be a creator. I experienced God since I believed in him. The Holy Spirit guides me.

I had a roommate who my girlfriend and I used to eat with. He was an introverted person, and I am extroverted. When people share the same space, different personal characteristics can cause a lot of problems. We came to Germany together as friends and, after arriving, I always thought of myself and protected myself from being taken advantage of by others. Therefore, our differences became too big to live with, and even though occasionally I was to blame, I did not think so at the time. After three months, I stopped speaking to him. ...I was just thinking about myself. This is how our friendship ended.

Later I read the Bible and think about these things, I know it is not right. The Bible lets me know that human is guilty. The guilt might not be crime like killing, but the pride, the behaviors which God will not be pleased with, are guilty too. When I prayed, there was a voice inside me telling me that I should reconcile with my friend.... After apologizing, I was able to find peace in my heart and my heart was freed. He forgave me, and we were able to be friends again.

I was in the language school, he was back to China. At that time there was only QQ¹⁰⁶, MSN has not been used. I used QQ to apologize to him. After I apologized, I found peace in my heart. My heart was freed. He accepted me again and we could be friends

¹⁰⁶ QQ is a Chinese online chatting software.

again.

My character has changed since believing in God. My goals have gradually become the same as my wife's goals. We are now able to understand each other, and, even though we still quarrel sometimes, when I am in front of God, I try to find out my problems first

From 2002 till now I am about to graduate. I tell my witness in the church. I came to Germany with purpose of doing business. I applied for Student College and was turned down twice. As I never finished my senior year of school in China, I wasn't able to apply for German universities. I was only able to apply for FH¹⁰⁷. I prayed that I would be accepted. I prepared and prayed: God, please let me pass the exam, otherwise I have to go back to China, and the money would be wasted. God let me know that he had a great plan, and that his will was higher than any human's wish, and his guidance was good for me. However, I did not pass the second exam, and, even though I was very upset.... I relied on God so I was peaceful inside. Later, a German Christian told me, that in HTWK¹⁰⁸ there was the department I could apply for if I wanted to. He himself was, and still is, a student of this university, so he knew about the departments. He helped me a lot.

It is through God's guidance that I found my course. I wanted to do business, but from then on I let God guide me through the five-year course. At the first semester there were 7 examinations. Later every semester there were 9 to 13 examinations. We have 6 semesters like this. In the meantime I also worked to earn money. God took good care of me and thanks to his care, step by step; I got to where I am now. So God changed my view of life, my values and my character. I thought I was supposed to go another way, but God led me to choose this direction. This path makes me face lots of difficulties, but the Bible teaches that although there are sufferings on earth, with Jesus there is peace. I am now in the last phase of my studies. God will guide me to the finish.

We have a limited mind, which cannot understand the purpose of God. He is unlimited,

¹⁰⁷ Fachhochschule: University of applied sciences

¹⁰⁸ HTWK: Hochschule für Technik, Wirtschaft und Kultur. University of Technique, Economics and Culture

we are limited. I would rather look up at him. I experience him in my life. People who know me can feel my change.

We look up at the nature, every second of the nature. Human cannot recognize God due to his sin. If he believes in God, he will be able to come in front of God. I am very appreciated of God for these 5 years.

S: What will you do next?

R: Since starting to believe in God, I have always supported the community. For example, the church hall can now hold 150 people; before, it was a small Bible reading group, which consisted of 5 to 6 people, who sat beside the piano reading the Bible. I found it so moving. At the beginning God put the responsibility of the community in my heart.

I look up at God and I know he has his will. I am willing to devote with my expertise in protecting environment. It is difficult to find a relevant job, but God will make a way for me in the desert, he can even make a river in the desert. I know in this phase I should finish my study. After that God will guide me.

My family has a tradition of doing business, and even though doing business may seem fabulous from the outside, you have to pay for the price by sacrificing time with family members, as you are always on the go. When I took the exam for college, my mother suggested that I should become a teacher, a job which includes two holidays every year. My father is so busy; that there isn't a day in the year for him to have a rest. The products from China are very cheap; so many people are in business. I believe that God will guide me. Whatever I do later, have a job or do business; I have my responsibility to this community.

S: Where did the activities take place in 2002?

R: At home of sisters and brothers. Sometimes at my home. We gathered together, read the Bible, sang hymns.

S: How did the community come to this size since then?

R: After the missionary group came in June 2002, more people were proselytized. W believed in God when he was in China and, as he knew more than us, he could lead us. There was also an American pastor who helped us. We gathered together. When I look back to the history of the community, I can see that God really led the community. At the time when we started to meet with each other, we were confronted with difficulties, because we felt that there wasn't much progress with our spiritual lives. So God led us to meet a missionary group from America. We met them three times a year. We never looked for them; they always came to us, to our Bible reading group. God used a blessed missionary group to lead us to compatriots from China. Although we did not have a pastor, we continued to gather together. With help from friends we borrowed a church building, which the church provided us for free, including heating in winter. Thanks to God, Pastor H and his wife came in 2004; he called us together and supported us. The community grew and soon we had more than 50 people coming to Sunday Worship.

After a year we divided ourselves into small groups. The pastor's home was big, but it was only big enough for 20 people. Last year, we were two small groups, but more recently, God brought the saved ones to us. More and more people, so now we are four small groups.

S: How do you organize your work in the community?

R: Three or four years ago, I could only listen to the other people, as I was learning from others. Now I have grown up spiritually, so I try to share what I have learnt as much as possible. We now live like this in a small group and we share our lives together, and in order for everyone to find God, we try to encourage everyone to read the Bible themselves, and only when they do so can they grow.

After a period of time, after the division into small groups, we needed to review our work. For example; what we did, what we should keep the same and what we should change or correct. So we had to write reports. That is why everyone had to be registered when they joined, so that if someone was absent, or if they needed some help, we could talk with them about their studies and life. People came together and united and in the end we knew a lot more about each other. A small group should have clear goals, so that

it does not become conventional. So every now and then each individual group had a “life discussion”. With this we are able to develop the good sides and correct the mistakes.

S: You are a leader of a small group. How do you do your job?

R: The Bible tells us that Jesus served his disciples. The church has a clear structure; the community consists of the people who have been called there by God. These people have their own structure: The Pastor, co-workers, and brothers and sisters. Private firms and companies outside the church also have their own structure; there is a bottom layer and a top layer, like a pyramid. The church is a pyramid too, but an up-side-down pyramid. The pastor is great because he serves the most, but because the pastor is over 60, he takes care of the brothers and sisters spiritually. The as many co-workers as possible help the pastor to deal with the administration, for example, somebody prepares before a Bible reading activity. This kind of duty does affect me, as it takes time, but the time it takes is protected by God. I believe that God will guide me. Whatever I do later, either working or doing business; I have my responsibility to this community.

At the end of the semester, some religious investigators don't come because of the examinations. I have as many examinations as they have, but I still hold the gathering. Because “what you ask for, God will give you.” When I prepare for the examination, I read the Bible everyday, pray and communicate with God. Prayer seems like talking into air, but I feel very intimate with God when I pray. If pray while preparing for an examination, it makes me feel closer to God.

During the preparation, teacher gave us some important points. We need to look more materials. One day I got stuck in one question. The word ending should be “tial”, not “zial”, but I couldn't figure it out. So I gave up. On the next day after my prayer, God let me realize the problem. So I solved the problem very quickly. That's it. I prayed and I found my materials I needed. God says: “God is the beginning of wisdom. Respect God is wise.” I use these words to encourage the others. If we believe God, we will see him in our life.

Prayer takes time, which we could use for watching a movie, but if I pray, it pleases God, and he protects me, and makes me efficient when I prepare for an examination.

S: Did you attend the summer camps?

R: I took part in a camping trip once, which was for the brothers and sisters who lived in East Germany and are interested in Gospels. I also attended a camping in Nuremberg, which at the time consisted of over 300 people who came from all over Germany.

Members of the diaconal committee in the community are selected by the brothers and sisters. Some of the congregation is selected to work as co-workers, and after a while other people are selected to take over their position. Other churches have permanent co-workers, but our community is different. A person's progression in life helps us to choose new co-workers. Everyone brings his or her former opinions into the community. It should be the community that changes the society, not society changes the community. So the selected co-workers should make progresses in life and should be willing to serve. The Bible has the qualification of co-works in Paul's letters.

I am in Germany, I could be weak. After I left here, the co-worker can continue my work. D is the president of co-workers. He begins to write his thesis and is about to leave. So we hope people who are pious and willing to serve can join the camping. During the trip, which lasts several days, there are good lectures, teachers from theology schools and pastors who preach the truth of the Bible. During this time, we are able to learn a lot, so we encourage members of the community, who are willing to serve, to join the trip. The community reimburses them for their accommodation, food and travel costs. Everyone can get some sort of financial support from the community.

S: How does the community support itself financially?

R: The pastor comes from a missionary institution in North America. He was sent to here to develop the community, so the churches of North America support him. We are not able to pay him. The community's fund relied on donations from brothers and sisters. The Bible says that is with God's blessing.

Maybe some people would have such opinion: Why should I give you the money, you

can create the heaven and earth, you don't need such small amount money. When we change our aspect, the Bible teaches us: You are a guest on the world and everything you have is entrusted by God. Everything on your hand is given by God. You keep nine tenth for yourself and hand in one tenth. That is it. The Bible also says: "Try me, I open the window of heaven and pour out the fortune over you." When we do things that please God, we get blessed in every aspect. It does not mean that you give 10 Yuan, God gives you 100 Yuan back. It is your life, which can be more blessed by God.

People can be hesitated by donation. I hesitate too. As a student, every month I earn 200 to 300 Euros. I donate 20 to 30 Euros. It is already a test. There was a period of time I went work and had more money. It was really difficult to donate that one tenth money. But God would like to see that you are willingly to donate. In a story there is a man who wanted to donate 10 Yuan, but he donated 100 Yuan by mistaken the paper money. He went back and prayed: God, I donated 100 Yuan. God said to him: I only recognize the 10 Yuan you wanted to donate. We should be willingly to do this. We encourage brothers and sisters to donate, but it is not an obligation. Because of God's support, it is abundant in our community. Without order or force, we have enough money, which means we can even help some Bible reading groups in other cities in East Germany. When they organize activities, or do missionary work, we can help them.

S: Who is in charge of money?

R: In German churches there are small baskets that are used to collect money and our church has a bank account. We do not have a legal representative, but we use a bank account which is under my name, but I give out the bank card. There is one person who is in charge of money and another who is responsible for bookkeeping. When people handle money, Satan comes to test them therefore we have three people to manage the financial administration.

Donations are transferred from my bank account to the community bank account. There is a special category especially for this transfer. For some people it isn't convenient to use bank transfer system, so they put their money into an envelope and put it into the community mail box. We encourage bank transfers. We try to do free cash donations.

S: Then it will be recorded, who donated how much.

R: Only the person, who in charge of bookkeeping, knows the concrete numbers. We don't make it public. I only offer my bank account. I don't know who donates how much.

S: Tell me something about the missionary groups.

R: They all speak Chinese. They are all Chinese who live in American.

S: Do you have close contact with them?

R: Yes. The missionary groups keep coming, and they do give us some support. They are not the decisive part, God is decisive. Reading the Bible is the most important thing, as only then can real life be established. In the whole belief system, there can be a heretic or paranoid element, but, if we read the Bible carefully, we won't be influenced by those things.

We are guilty human, so our spirits are closer to God. God is our savior. The missionary groups come here and stay for about 10 days. We have only a couple of hours to communicate. But we feel so familiar and intimate to each other. We can have good conversation in the small groups and quickly develop very good relationships. Because we have the same feelings, which connect us. Actually, the activity is a form; we use these activities to communicate the brothers and sisters. When brothers and sisters from other cities come, we really want to hug each other. Usually we only shake hands with friends. But it feels so intimate with brothers and sisters from other cities after several communications. Just like a family.

Usually people do not tell their friends what they are worrying about, but in our gatherings it is easier to share these worries. If you are happy, we are happy for you, if you are worried, we can share your problem with you, and try to help you. Sharing happiness can be at any time, but only when a person really trusts you do they tell you what they are worrying about. So the small group is a real active body; we accept each other, and do not leak information to people outside the group.

S: Is there any conflict between members?

R: Yes, there is. Everyone has his own character. When conflict occurs, we should back to the Bible. Sometimes the lack of communication causes conflicts. We should pray together. Now when I have conflict with my wife, we can communicate to each other and guided by the Holy Spirit. The problem can be solved. People outside the church say, it is a group of good people in the community. But actually we are a group guilty people. We don't regard ourselves good; we need God to save us, so we stay together.

S: How were you baptized?

R: Our Pastor was not yet in our community when I was baptized. My wife was baptized in China, by the pastor there. I started to believe in God in June, and my birthday is July the eighth. At that time I regarded the pastor as someone in a very high position. He can ask me to do things, but I shouldn't ask him to do things. The preacher in the missionary group told me that if you believe in God in your heart, and admit it out loud, then you are able to become God's son or daughter, and to be baptized and united with Jesus. I decided to get baptized. Then, I went to Berlin with the missionary group and was baptized in the bathtub in the bathroom that was upstairs in a church in Berlin. Nowadays there is a special pool for baptizing in the church. I took photos, digital camera wasn't invented yet, so I used films. The camera was broken, the film was not good. The preacher wanted to keep some photos as souvenir, so I gave him. Now I haven't any photos.

Many brothers have changed after they were baptized. Baptize is a proof for God in front of the others: I am willing to follow Jesus.

S: How many people are baptized in the community?

R: In April there were 10 people. From 2004 to 2007 about 60 were baptized. Here the mobility is very high. People leave and come. East Germany, it means instability. When people establish their lives here and follow God, then the task is accomplished.

S: How does the community continue to develop with this instability?

R: For the community to develop, it should bring new members into it. We grow, people come, and we accept them. Everybody is led by God and moved by the Holy Spirit. We are merely the instruments that God uses.

S: Do you have contact with community members who later move to other cities?

R: Not much. Sometimes we meet in the camping. Some people did not accept Jesus here. But they believed God later and were baptized in Cologne. The Bible says: The sowers and reapers are happy together. They believe God because of the seeds of Gospels.

S: When you were back in China, did anyone recognize your change?

R: My wife's environment is full of Christians. I am in a different situation. I found myself so weak. Here in Germany the environment is simple, I can read the Bible everyday. When I was in China, I didn't want to read Bible at all because of the environment. My mother witnesses my change. My mother is a Buddhist. I didn't call my family very often, it is expensive. I didn't understand my parents well. I had a bad note in my exam for college enrollment. My father said some words that hurt me. We actually love each other.

Ancestor worship is not allowed in Christianity, and this seems to contradict the Chinese moral of "obey your elders". Actually, the Bible says: "You should respect your parents." I have had a more intimate relationship with my family since I've believed God. I enjoy the silent love they give me. My father is just not good at expressing his emotions. I call my family now every weekend, and, you know, they always say the same thing. I listen to them; and now there is more love and more listening.

When I was back at home for the first time, my mother did not agree with my conversion, but she was not against it; she saw that I had changed, so I introduced her to read the Gospels. They are such a good thing, and I really wanted to share them with my family, and lead them to know Jesus. One time my wife and I visited my mother, and, as my mother is a Buddhist, she does worship rituals on the first day and the fifteenth day

of every month. She did not force my wife to join in with the rituals, because she knew my wife was a Christian. The time before we visited, we held a wedding ceremony at home, and my father invited the big Buddha from the temple to our house. We did not use it. On the second day we were supposed go to ancestral hall to worship our ancestors. We were upset, because we are not supposed to worship our ancestors. We can miss our ancestors, but not worship them. Later my wife discussed this with my mother, and she agreed to not worship them. My mother saw our changes; how we had grown up and become responsible. They are happy too.

To convince family members to believe in God is not done by talking, as they know you too well. Only when your life really changes, can they be moved to do something. I have two brothers, and I have more chances to talk to my mother. I talk to her on the phone about my faith, and my mother is gradually starting to respect me, and so I am appreciative of God. I hope my family can believe in God at some point, but their domestic environment makes it difficult for them to get know the Gospel.

S: Where did you hold the wedding ceremony?

R: We did twice, here once, and once at home. Excuse me; I should leave now for some preparation.

S: Thank you for your time.

Interview with Miss Q

Date: August 23rd, 2007

Place: Student dormitory in Leipzig

Q: Miss Q

S: Interviewer

Q: Is the tape already recording? Should I say that once again?

S: No, just go on. How did you join the community?

Q: I haven't had a conversion before, because my studies were too busy. I believed in it when I was in my fifth class in primary school. And my grandma and mother are Christians. So I knew this Christian religion already in my fifth class in primary school. Moreover, I wasn't influenced by any other religions. I haven't this conversion because my I was really busy with my studies; I had to study and practice playing the violin. I hadn't got this energy. But in my heart this (Jesus) always exists, he is always in my heart.

Later, I came to Germany; I felt it was so marvelous. I came here to take the exam at the music academic school. It was impossible to pass the exam directly. There was someone who passed the exam directly, but it was very difficult. I came to Germany on February the first, took the exam on February the eighth in Leipzig, and I passed. After that, I came to Leipzig.

On the first day I came to Leipzig, I applied for the student dormitory. A boy led me to the office. I got a room in a dormitory on the day I applied. I was worried because I had nowhere to sleep that night. A friend laughed at me and said that I could stay overnight in the boy's home. But that day I got my place to stay. My neighbor is a person in this community. So it was effortless for me to find this community. Then it was very natural for me to decide to pray, to have the conversion and have this belief.

S: Where did you have your decision pray?

Q: It is here. I was baptized here.

S: Is it in this year?

Q: Last year. Last year February I came here.

S: So it has been a long time that you join this community.

Q: One year.

S: How do you feel about the community?

Q: Good. Nevertheless, there must be some conflicts. I have few conflicts, because I am not those who are very warmhearted Christians. I am not one of them. So I feel a little embarrassing. I just attend their normal Bible study group and the worship on Lord's day. My contribution on Lord's day is only to play my violin. Because I am not suited to, or I am not that suited to care the others. So I don't have many contacts with brothers and sisters in the community. I have only good relationships with F and those few else. So sometimes the conflicts will be felt in the community, but it is ok. However, if there was not such a community when I came to Germany, maybe I couldn't be so good and happy as now I am.

S: Why?

Q: The community is like a family, it is really like a family. Particularly because there is Shi-Mu (the wife of the pastor). At the very beginning of my arrival, she asked us to visit her home whenever she cooked something delicious. She took special care of me, because I was the new there. I never felt it was hard to study and to live abroad. Never feel that.

S: Last year is 2006. Shi-Mu has already come.

Q: Shi-Mu has been here for 5 years.

S: How were you asked to visit her?

Q: Telephone. Shi-Mu called and said, today there was something very delicious, please come.

However my finding of the community is very strange. On the day I came I was thinking, I couldn't find community in Lübeck, because there was no community in Lübeck. I said I would try to find the community in Leipzig. A Christian in Lübeck told me to be cautious; here were many Jehovah's witnesses and Mormons. Don't get it wrong. The first day I came, I hadn't time to think about it, my neighbor is a Christian. I said I wanted to attend your activities. Then I came.

S: Who is that then?

Q: Ms. W.

S: What kind of change has this belief brought to you?

Q: Just like the boy you told me, when I am in the difficulties, I will think: there is he, it will be fine. And he will really bring you some surprise, some pleasant surprise. And he will and he's really in somewhere taking care of you.

When I came last year, my professor is a professor with strange character in Leipzig musical school. After I had only two lessons with him, he began to scold me. He's very fierce, he beats my violin, he threw my violin, and he could not be fiercer. He asked me to have German language class. Then I went to have the class. I could not receive phone calls when I was having the lessons. When he called me, I had to shut off the cell phone. Then he became angry. He scolded me before many people in the school hall. I could not understand much, but I did understand he wanted me to get back to my China.

He asked me to go back, "you don't need to learn any more", something like that. The others I could not understand.

Then, I changed my professor. Because he has a big power in the school, many people worried about me after I put forward my application. They thought, I was almost being expelled.

However everything went smooth. Now my professor is very kind. You see, he gives me

lectures in the holidays. And each time although how slowly I reflected, when he says a word, that I cannot understand, he will use another simple word. If I still not understand, he will show me how. It is a very good professor.

Actually, at that while when I tried to change the professor, I could hardly bear. The brothers and sisters all prayed for me, I felt peaceful in my heart. Now it was proven. I offended a man, who is not to be trifled with.

S: Did he take revenge against you later?

Q: He did. At the beginning of this year, because after a year of registration, if your notes are not equal to your registration level, it will be a Probezeitpruefung¹⁰⁹. Then last semester I haven't change to this kind professor yet, there is a women professor currently be in command of my study. She teaches me, but she's not responsible for me .She doesn't have any rights to ask me do anything. She just teaches lessons.

Then this professor said to the department head that I got the problem, he insisted that I had to take this Probezeitpruefung.

I was so upset. Because this exam is for those who are not good in professional skills. I felt, why should I take this exam? And the most of the people, who take this exam, go back to where they come.

Then on that day before the exam, I was praying the whole time. Different people who belong to L's group were praying for me and crying, they were praying for me the whole night through. One week before the exam, I was not afraid of it any more, and I felt I could pass that exam.

On the exam day, I was the first one. After the test, the teachers let me wait, they said, wait outside. After me there were four other students. After they took exams, I was always waiting. The department head came to me and said, I should take this exam again. I thought, what's wrong. When I took this exam again, the kind professor went in the room. Because I was the first one, this professor was old and hadn't gone to this

¹⁰⁹ It is an examination, which students take in the middle of their studies to prove that they are qualified for further studying. Failing the examination means disqualification of further studying and the student will consequently be dismissed.

room. After a while, he came, I played the violin just a few minutes, he said, I accepted you. Then I passed the exam smoothly. The other four students, they all haven't passed this exam.

I passed the exam smoothly, and now I am studying very well with the professor.

The former professor, I think I must have the problem. I cannot understand him. He is quite hot-tempered. I had been misunderstanding with him, I did not understand what he's talking about. I could not communicate with him. I speak very slow. When I say "Entschuldigung" and I just say to "Entschu", he cannot wait and bear.

So I think the change of professor is another thing to cause his angry. I haven't told him that I was going to change professor. I just wrote him a letter. I said, I was really sorry, my character was actually not suited with you, I would change professor. He became very angry. This might be the problems of my ways of dealing. I really did not have the ability to explain to him at that moment. And now when I see him, I smile to him. However, each time he sees me, he looks just like looking through the air and doesn't look at me. However, I behave what the Bible says. I behave according the will of God, I follow the model of God, and then to do it.

S: Would you understand, it is God to let you take this exam, and God let you play the violin again, so that this kind old professor could have heard your performance?

Q: I don't know. At that moment, I did feel, this exam was just informed two weeks ago before the exam date. The first week after I knew that I was going to take this exam, I did have some panic, I felt so unfair. After a week, by praying, I knew sure that I could pass this exam. I hadn't think of to change a professor and change to such a good professor. I absolutely haven't thought about it. But I did feel, a sound told me that I could in this school stay, I would not be expelled by the school. So the professor change is a surprise, an additional surprise, an additional bonus to me.

S: So you have more faith in him?

Q: I have already strong faith in him. I dare to say this.

S: We're talking about the changes, which the belief brings to you. Is there some influence to your character?

Q: My Character is always like this, since I was young. But my character is quite different before the first year of junior high school. My character now is the character after the first year of junior high school. Before that I was like a crazy boy, my mother could not teach me at all. After that I became suddenly quiet. When I encounter big things, I won't behave extreme. I still have impulsion, or current worry, but I will know soon how to figure it out.

The change of my character, my friends witness this. My friends, who are in the same university with me, during our visual talking in internet, said, now I look like very quite, in a very good situation, very stable situation.

However, I don't feel it myself. I don't like those, who have many difficulties and then accept God. I grew up in this family. Maybe I was already educated since I was a child.

S: When were you baptized?

Q: Last year. In June. Here.

S: What kind of ritual did you have?

Q: There is a water pool in the church, which can be opened. During the baptizing, I wore white clothes and stepped into the pool. And the pastor said: I baptize you in the name of the Holy Father and the Holy Son and the Holy Spirit. It was said twice. I stepped into the water, and then stepped out.

S: How did you feel?

Q: Exited. Just exited. Just pure exited.

S: What did your family say?

Q: My mother is of course very happy. She is particularly happy. My auntie is happy, too. My grandma always taught her daughters about religious faith. But my grandma passed away, and after that they were busy with the children, so they did not lead a

regular Christian life. But in their hearts, they have faith. My mother has good practice.

S: In which church did your family take part in?

Q: I don't know. I just know the community my grandma took me to when I was in fifth grade at primary school. It was a community with old people. They were all old. What I felt particularly marvelous about, was what happened to my mouth ulcer. It was a very big and terrible mouth ulcer. My grandma took me there and said, look at this old lady, let her pray for you. I remember so well that old lady prayed for me. After two days the mouth ulcer was gone. This is what I remember very well. I thought it was marvelous. How could it be possible?

S: It was not Catholic?

Q: It was the authentic Christians.

S: What do you mean by "the authentic Christians"?

Q: They are not heretics like the Mormons. They are the authentic Christians like our community here.

S: Do you know which kind of denomination you belong to?

Q: Denomination? I have no idea. I am the kind of person, for which it is enough to take care of herself. I know that what I believe is right, that's enough. I do not need to participate in the debates in theology. That belongs to theology. I just need to rely on God.

S: Did you attend their camping trips?

Q: I've participated in the camping trips. It will be divided into ten important partitions. The current section is about why we should join the community. The other sections are about why the Christians should go to church, or why Christians should donate the tithe, and how we should spread the gospels, etc. The content is divided into different parts. Because of the limited duration of the camps, the content could not be explained in a

very detailed way every time. So we have to do extra study ourselves later.

S: How do you study yourself?

Q: Read the Bible. Bible studying, reading the reference books, surfing in internet, or read the booklets, which church gives. I read following this booklet, day by day. And then think about, what God means in this paragraph. This paragraph means that, you should have faith in God. Etc.

S: How did you come to this Bible reading group?

Q: At the beginning of last year, we were all in the home of pastor. Once a week, Shi-Mu made the supper. Later because of too many people, we have to be divided into groups. The first division is according to the geographical convenience. Here is near to where I live. So I came to this group. Because I was here at the beginning, and had good relationships with the people, we are familiar with each other. Because we are familiar with each other, then we are a small family. Then I always stay here.

S: You always follow the destiny.

Q: I feel that I am so lucky. I could directly begin to study after I came to Germany. I hadn't waste time. Wasting time is also a waste of money, if without the identity of student.

I have thought about that. If I hadn't passed the exam, I would go back home, because my mother cannot afford more, absolutely not. To study music is already very expensive in China. I had a chance to come here. My mother said, then go and take the chance. I believe that, if I hadn't passed the exam, my mother would afford my study further. But I don't want to make her so much trouble. However I did pass the exam. My mother prayed for me at that time.

S: Now can you afford your life here by your own?

Q: I afford the half of it. I have the job on the same day when I had my Probezeitpruefung. On the morning is the exam, on the evening I went to work. That is

the first day I work. I check my account at the end of 2006. There were only 3000 Euros left. I spent every month 300 Euro, and 1600 Euros must be stable in the account. I have calculated and found that, I can only afford a few months. What shall I do? I have to look for a job. Since having this idea, I've prayed for it. I just had the time to pray for a job once, then came the Probezeitprüfung .. I devoted all of my attention and energy to this Probezeitprüfung. Before the exam, marvelously, I met a Sister on the Lord's Day in the church. She was about to go back home. She'd been working in the Café near the school. She asked me, whether I wanted to do the job. If I wanted to, I would have to be quick, because the advertisement was hung in the window. So I went there directly.

I was afraid of my language skills would hinder my job. It was without a hitch. The boss wanted me to have this job. After trying two days, I began to work there. The boss is very kind, he doesn't make any difficulties in my work. Unless you didn't make something clean, he will point it out the next day. He doesn't make things difficult. And why I couldn't work because the works in canteens in the universities are all in the noon. The noon time for me is the most unpredictable time, because I have practice in the schools. Sometimes it began at 1 pm, sometimes is to 1 pm. It is not for sure. So I can't work in the daytime. But this work is so good, that I can work in the night. It doesn't disturb my study.

S: Is it hard?

Q: It is ok, just work until 11:30pm and arrive home at 12. Before the semester beginning, I work five days a week, after the semester beginning four days a week. Because I don't have so much energy. Last half year was three days per week.

S: It seems that at the day you took the exam, God took particular care of you.

Q: Yes. That day is. The exam was in the morning and in the afternoon I was already looking for a job. I think that without the community's help, I may have been able to stand the professor, but I wouldn't have gained anything, if I had followed this professor. Actually, the idea of changing the professor was a suggestion from a sister in the church. She encouraged me to change the professor.... I am a very timid person, actually, that

means I would have never changed the professor on my own. Nowadays, I would be able to do this on my own. If I had asked the students in the music schools, they would have suggested that I not change, because they know he's a powerful man. But I did not have the opportunity to ask anyone because I only knew a few people from the music school. But I knew a few people from our community, so I just asked for their opinions and they strongly suggested to switch the professor, which I did.

S: Did you have this as a prove?

Q: I've talked about it a few times.

S: It's quite moving.

Q: It was...I was almost expelled. I didn't tell my mother this before the exam. After that I told her. She was a little shocked.

S: Laozi said, behind disaster is luck, behind luck is disaster.

Q: Exactly. If I hadn't taken this exam, I would still study with that women professor. She gives you nothing outside the lessens. No greetings, not like mother or father. She is kind of "I am the professor, I leave when I finished with the class" professor. She doesn't make things difficult like the first one, but she doesn't care about my life like the one, from whom I'm learning now. She is an Italian, takes performance every season. So if I study with her, I cannot have many chances to learn. And she speaks English, her mother tongue is Italian, so her English is not good, either.

S: After your conversion, what is the change of your planning of your own life?

Q: Now I put all my life into his hand. I had hesitations, or sometimes don't know what to do, what on earth shall I do? Yes, I have. Now I know, I just need to do what I should do, the things come after, just let him decide. It depends on him where I go to in the future.

S: Don't you have panic?

Q: No. I believe that he will lead at anytime anywhere.

S: It is really nice to think so, do believe that someone's leading yourself.

Q: That's right.

S: What about the time when you were in the university?

Q: Of course, my dream was to become a teacher at the university. Now I have the same dream. But now I know that I need to study hard and play violin well. When I succeed, the road to the future will appear before me. There is no need to panic. I won't lack food; I won't lack clothes. I won't lack anything. I just need to rely on Him and believe in Him.

S: You have a face, which attracts luck.

Q: I don't know. Pray and believe and rely on him, that is enough.

S: It's a nice thing.

Q: That's right. One day a friend of my good friend was crossed in the love. Everyone has something, that is most important to his life. That boy takes love as the most important thing. But he said that was broken. When he's preparing his wedding, he found out that his fiancé had several abortions with other guys. He didn't know that before. He thought that his life and his dream was broken. She asks me, now music means everything to me, if one day I cannot touch the violin anymore, will I collapse? All in my mind is: I have God. If one day I cannot play music any more, I won't go to pieces. Maybe this is the greatness of religion and belief. It won't let people go to pieces when they loose all the secular things. It won't.

S: Belief is good. However, there are people, who take advantages and do bad things.

Q: Yes.

S: But you won't.

Q: I think, if he's a real Christian, he won't do that. Because all the things you did in the world will be judged at the last day. At that time, God will judge you. So I think a person who really relies on the God, won't do anything that betrays the Bible, or against the god's will. Those fake Christians sometimes may in the name of Christians do bad and not understandable things.

S: How do you like the pastors who are from the USA or Canada and come to Germany to give lectures?

Q: I like pastor Yuan. I like his sermons. There are some other pastors like pastor Hong: when I came to the community, I could fall asleep during his sermons. Really. I'm very honest. Many times during the Bible study at his home, I slept. But if you read the Bible carefully and in detail, then you will understand the sweetness and profoundness of his preaching. It takes time. But those pastors, pastor Yuan and pastor Zhan, do have a special way of preaching. When they speak, you will be attracted by the content. It does not matter whether you are Christian or not, because they have humor. Through humor, we learn a lot.

S: Is it important for the community life, to listen to the sermons of the pastors coming from other regions?

Q: The camping is important. Each time they taught us different things. I do not know the others' opinions about it, but to me it is important. It makes me better integrated into this community and able to obtain particular teachings.

It was taught little by little what a community life should look like, how to further your spiritual studies, how to treat others around you as a Christian. It does not matter whether you are Christian or not, how you could influence others, the people who around you. These teachings are very profound.

S: What about the teachings in the Bible study group?

Q: It will be a little slowly. Every time when something new comes, I will make a faster progress. The Bible study group is like...grandpa grandma, who are always listen to you,

so you will not listen to them. So inside the group we share our feelings and communicate. The real teachings are not so much. Inside the group the main activity is to read Bible, to search for some wisdom from the Bible. We learn in the Lord's day's study how we should in our daily lives behavior.

S: the Lord's day's study?

Q: It is the campings.

S: It is very rare of this kind of sermons.

Q: Very rare. So there were a lot of people. We watch some DVDs and VCDs of their sermons.

S: So what you cannot get in China, you can make an approach here?

Q: If I was in China, my religiousness would have developed much more slowly. I might arrive at the present state in my thirties. I feel the teachings here are intensive ones.

S: How intensive?

Q: There are many more chances to get to know Christians in Germany. Because inside China, the government has some control of the religion, and religion cannot be openly practiced in the public sphere.... Only when we have good relations, then we can know and talk about it. Here, there is free speech, everything is free. At the beginning of the Semester, the pastor and the workers in the churches will release magazines at the students' registration office. So it is easier to get in touch with Christianity here.

S: What do you think of your studying abroad and your belief?

Q: I could not believe so firmly, if I hadn't studied in Germany. There, religious life is much more focused. Inside China, there are relative few chances to get to know Christianity.

S: Have you ever been to German churches?

Q: Only once. I did not understand anything. Then I did not go there any more.

S: Where did you go?

Q: Take bus 1, it's near the central station. There are quite a few churches in Germany.

S: Did you go alone?

Q: I went there with a friend, who also does not speak German very well. But the atmosphere and singing were the same. The procedure was the same.

Q: Did you finish all your questions?

S: Almost. If I have more questions to ask, I'll call you. Do you have a phone number?

Q: Yes, I write it to you.

Interview with Miss F

Date: February 26th , 2008

Place: Student Dormitory in Leipzig

Q: Miss F

S: Interviewer

S: How did you join this community?

F: It was a coincidence. In February 2006 I went to Berlin to renew my passport, which was about to expire, and on the train I met a brother from the community. Because we are both Chinese, we began to talk. He said, if I had time, I could visit the church. Later he added me in the MSN¹¹⁰. We had chatted on MSN several times, and he invited me to visit the church. At that period of time I did not have time, and did not go. But the last time I happened to be nearby the church, so I went there. That day H led the singing, I felt it was quite OK. And it was very strange: On that day nobody talked to me about Christi any, Jesus was the savior, we relied on him to be saved etc. Nobody said these to me. I did not know whether this brother had done something and said I was hard-hearted. I did not know. I didn't know. Yang asked me whether I studied Buddhism, whether I would be interested in this, and chatted with me. I felt it was all right, that there was nothing I should resist. Then they told me on Wednesday night there was a Bible reading activity at the pastor's home. I said that's all right, I would go. I did not have class and had nothing to do, so I went to the pastor's home for Bible reading. I do not think the Sunday worship attracted me. Because of things like the sermon, when I did not believe, it was very far from me.

We read Bible during the Bible reading, what the Bible tells. I felt it was so interesting. I've read some Bible stories, but they were different from the Bible reading. Bible stories were like fairy tales or novels, not the same as the Bible. That night I felt very,

¹¹⁰ MSN is Windows living messenger software, which supports people talk and chat in internet. It requires email address from others as identity recognition online.

very interested. From that day on, I visited every Bible reading activity. That day the pastor gave me a Bible, the small Bible with a black cover. I read it after returning home. They told me to read the 4 Gospels first, and among them the Gospel according to John at first. Because it was short, I did not like it very much. I read the Gospel according to Matthew, and it was very detailed. After several times, I read bible at home and read how Matthew wrote about not worrying about tomorrow. He said, take a look at the lilies in the wild land, how did they grow up. Because my English name is Lily, I felt this was said to me when I read this. I cried suddenly, I did not know why. I was so moved and cried with much grief. That night, I decided to believe. For me it was not that somebody preached me, or I heard something and was so moved that I began to believe. I was totally touched by the Bible, and I decided to believe.

I think it was the work of the Holy Spirit, in my heart. If it was some testimony that had moved me, or I had read some theological things, those persuasive things, I wouldn't regard it as the work of Holy Spirit. I was touched simply by the words, which made a very big change in my heart. I think it was marvelous. I had resisted it so much; I had not attended any of the Christian activities, and I had even read the Buddhist sutras.

Then at the next Bible reading activity I decided to confess, to make it known, that I wanted to believe. After that, I attended the Sunday worship regularly and wanted to be baptized. In June I was baptized. This is the process.

S: Does the belief bring any change to your life?

F: The change is very huge, my friends in China say. I returned to hometown after my conversion, my best friend said, "I really think you're different now". It is not to say that I was bad or did something bad before, she means, the way you deal with things and the attitudes towards life are optimistic, just like that the heart is open. You don't care or argue about many things.

To me the most meaningful change is the relationship with my family. Because my parents were divorced. My father married again when I was in junior high school. The auntie brought a sister to the family. To sister it was all right, she was little. I was a teenager; I felt that they came suddenly into my family. My father was shared by the

others. Because sister called my father “Dad”, her father had passed away before. I couldn’t call the auntie “Mom”.... Actually my auntie is very nice, but I had been resisting her. After my conversion I rethought profoundly, why had I resisted her. Actually she had never hurt me; on the contrary she took good care of my father. She tried her best to take care of the family. During my exams, my going abroad, she’s always supporting me. She gets along very well with all the members of the family, my grandma, my aunties, the brothers and sisters of my father. What kind of reason did I have to resist her? Actually I resisted her just because I wanted to resist. I felt very sorry, very sorry. I wrote a letter. ... I wrote: Father, Auntie, thank you so much, etc. I wrote very long and very emotionally. My father was very moved by reading it, and he sent the letter to his brothers and sisters. All of them were very, very happy.

After writing that letter I returned home, and the feelings were very different. It was really a family. Why did I not get to know the Lord a little bit earlier, then I could have reached this step earlier. The feelings of family members were totally different. You regard her absolutely as one of the family. You can feel the love and care she gives you, and you will give her love and care in return...I feel it is the most meaningful change to my life.

I learned also how to treat people. I always niggle, and have cleanliness and perfectionist inclinations. Maybe the same towards my ex-boyfriend. I used to make everything very clean, if he mixed things I would say, why don’t you put things back. I was always finding fault and nagging. Later I moved to another place and lived with new neighbors. I had the conversion then. I think, that it is me who has high demanding, I cannot ask all the others to adjust to me. If I have demand then I shall clean it up. Later I think, I could do this to my neighbor, who doesn’t have any relation with me, why couldn’t I have done this to my boyfriend? Contrary, I had been doing exaction to him. This helped me to reflex myself, not to try to find the problems from the other.

The more reflexion on oneself is done, the happier a man could be. The faults can be corrected and problems can be better done. Then you get better along with the others. If you demand the other, you won’t get any feedbacks. Therefore, it is impossible to demand the other. You don’t have any qualifications. It will get worse and worse, and

you will feel how the life could be like this, it cannot get along any more. So now I'm getting happier and happier. Every day I am happy and peaceful. That's it.

S: Do you attend the workshops and camps?

F: It's a pity. I had never attended the camps that in eastern Germany. Every time was bad timing. Last year I've attended the camp for members in whole Germany. I felt very good. We gathered together in such intensive way for a few days, reading the Bible, discussion, preaching. The effect was good, too. It has a strong power of bond of sympathy. I was very inspired.

S: What is your service in the community?

F: I don't have a concrete work. I try to do my share. Recently I have led the singing. Because of my exam, I stopped. Now I am back to the singing group. I have the key of the activity room of our group. After every activity, I clean the room, before the activity I prepare some cakes and tee. I am not able to do other things. And my spiritual life is still limited, I've converted for a short time, I usually don't read theological things. Then I do most of the ordinary everyday service.

S: How did you come to Germany?

F: It was quite early. I studied German language in the university. I did not like that university; I did not like the environment. You know I'm a very nit-picky person. My senior high school was a very conservative school. Teachers and the people around were unsophisticated and honest people, and the environment of school is also very conservative. Then I suddenly came to Beijing, where there was every kind of person. I felt, how could it be, how could this be? I couldn't accept it. Later I felt that it was useless to learn language. When I was in the school, I hadn't known. It was so boring to learn the language alone. So I wanted to come to Germany and change my major course.

I applied in the first year in the university and left in the second year. I came here in 2001. I was here even earlier than the Chinese Christian community. At the beginning

they promoted themselves and pasted posters, and I did not go. I thought, how could Christianity judge other religions, how could they claim that all the other religions and gods are fakes. I hadn't read the Bible at that time.

And I thought, those activities were all gathering and eating. I could cook for myself, why should I go and eat your food. Using this method, this mean, to attract and gull people to go there, and own people's favors by offering food. I didn't like this kind of gathering, I wouldn't go.

A friend of mine attended the German community. Because of the poor language knowledge, she could not understand, and didn't go there anymore.

S: S: Do you have friends outside the community?

F: Actually I have always had a very small circle of friends. Before I joined the community, they were common friends. After I joined the community, two best friends were kept, others are not that important. Now I have these two best friends and the brothers and sisters in the community. Because at the beginning I was with my boyfriend, I felt it was all right. He had two friends, I had two or three friends, these friends together were enough, the quantity of information etc. After that, I had two friends and the classmates in the university, this was enough. German friends were language partners, we had some group work, but they cannot be counted as friends.

S: You study sociology, and believe in Jesus.

F: There is no conflict. I don't think that sociology had ever denied religion and belief. I think there is no conflict at all. I feel that Christianity helps me to change my ways of thinking, which become broader. It helps me to study when I deal with many problems. Now I cannot give concrete examples, but I feel it is helpful.

S: What do you think of the sermons of the pastor?

F: I have some video tapes. The pastor, I think, he preaches without many examples. You have to concentrate yourself to make it clear, what he wants to say today. So other pastors have preaches, which are quite like entertainment, very exciting. Different

pastors have different styles. I think, they are all the servants of God, when they are there preaching, their messages will be fruitful for those who hear.

S: Did anything change in your plan of life?

F: Yes. I'm now very strongly against premarital cohabitation. And now I've changed my ultimate goal. I had thought to find a job, to marry, to establish a family, and that's it. Now I think, finding the job is for the Lord, marrying and having a family is also for the Lord. If all these go smooth, I will be grateful for the Lord. My ultimate goal is to know the will of God in my life, what he wants me to do. I will think about this, not how to find a good job when I return to China, how to find a good husband, etc. Now it is different. The judge of my life changes, the judge is God, his will in me, his plan for me, his task planned for me. For example, when I go back to FZ University and become a teacher, because being a teacher is really a very good opportunity to communicate with the students. It will be very convenient for me to tell them my belief and my testimony. The students are gathering there, it will also be convenient to develop community activities. Concerning the family members, I am thinking of how to explain the Gospels to my grandma and father.

S: You said that you read Buddhist sutra before.

F: My family members do not have any beliefs. My father is a communist, but he has many interests. He likes to read things about Zen, he likes thoughtful books. He likes many great intellectuals, such as Su Dong Po, etc. He studies these things, and I am influenced by him and interested in this. Later I read Buddhist sutra. But Zen teachings cannot satisfy me. They talk about the emptiness and emptiness. What on earth is it? Why? Then I read some explanations about Buddhist sutra. But I found out, it was not right, the Buddhism teachings were not right. It is said that people should give up all their desires; people could be freed from the pains in world by putting aside the oppression in their hearts. I don't think it's right, because according to the teachings, the stones are more advanced than people; the stones do not have any desires and demands. Why should people work hard on it life after life, in order to get away from the circle of

human being. It is an effortless work. Even when people arrive in heaven, so what? You put everything aside. If you put everything aside, why do you chase this so hard? It is emptiness, too. Sakyamuni had never said that he was a god, what he told, I think, is what the world was. He did not tell the origin of the world. The world has a start and has an end. If there is no start and no end, it should have been an explanation theory. But he did not have one. So I do not think it is right.

S: What about your former thoughts: “How could Christianity judge other religions, how could they declaim that all the other religions and gods are fakes.”

F: I appreciate very much a saying: the authentic one will never acknowledge the fakes. The true God cannot acknowledge the other gods. This is the simplest. It will be too long to have the discussion. Now I think it is right, it is like this. Actually, we cannot acknowledge the other fakes. If God really exists, he creates the world, it is for sure that he cannot accept other gods and theories. This is understandable from logic and rationality.

S: Do you know which denomination you are a part of?

F: It is said, Baptist. Because the pastor comes from a Baptist organization. There are others, Methodist, Presbyterian. They also invite people from Presbyterian churches to come to preach. I think it is quite tolerant; there is no conflict among denominations.

S: You said that you are now strong against premarital cohabitation, why?

F: Because it is the teaching of the Bible.

S: Did it not matter before?

F: Before, yes. I thought this was one’s own freedom. But it is better not to do so. It will be harmful for the girls, and this is also thoughtlessness. Now it is the teaching from the Bible. I think the guidance of God is right. His guidance is based on love, and tells people not to have casual sex. If that person is the person that God arranges for you, he will bless you to have this relation after marriage; it will be a very sweet and sanctified relationship.

S: Will you find a Christian as your boyfriend?

F: No. My boyfriend now is not a Christian. Yes, but he doesn't resist and is willing to know. I hope he could be a Christian one day. I pray for this always. This is very important, pray is very important. It is not because I want to find a Christian then I try to find one. I pray, God, if this one is the one you bestow me, you will let him convert to you.

S: What are your spiritual studies?

F: It is not that regular. Now since the exam I say to myself, I should not dawdle any more. I read every morning before 7. I pray before the meals. I pray when I meet something emergent. I sing the songs when I think of them. On the bus and train, I bring a Bible with me; I read it when I have time. I write down my thoughts.

I listen to the online sermons, sometimes read novels written by Christians. Some books they said would be helpful for the progress of spiritual life, such as "The Purpose Driven Life", I do not have interest in reading. If an article is useful to me, I will read it. But I do not read one book after another. I feel I cannot grasp the emphases. I read the Bible more, and read some additional material.

S: Do you visit Sunday school?

F: It is held by the community. At the beginning the class was for baptizing. It will be taught, what is the fundamental truth, what is Christianity, the definition of being reborn and being saved, why people are baptized. After that there is a disciple training class that is to teach how to have success in daily life. Baptizing is not the whole thing; Christians should make progress in life. This will be taught by some brothers in the Church, by Dong, Ren, and Rong. We use the books from Prof. Guo. Every week we have a topic, some questions, some reference. We should prepare for it, do the homework, and go over it again.

S: Did you ever read the Bible before you came to Germany?

F: I had never read it. But in my childhood as I remembered, there were Catholics in the Fujian province. There was a church near my grandma's house. I had never heard about a name like Jehovah, I did not know the difference between Catholics and Protestants. My family did not know about it. During primary school and junior high school, I thought that Christianity was quite Western. Westernization was kind of chic, modern, but I still had no idea about it, because there were no Christians around. Later I got to know philosophy, read Buddhist sutra, then began to resist Christianity. It was also due to the dark time in the Middle Ages. I thought, how could this religion mix the deeds of people with their beliefs.

S: If you back to Fujian, how will you continue your religious life?

F: I have been to the local church several times during the vocation at home. That church is in the centum of the city, transportation is also very convenient. I went there to participate in Sunday worship. Later when I live there, I will join their activities and join the youth community. They have a website with detailed information; there is English the Bible reading class.

S: How is the Sunday worship there?

F: So many people! There are three times in a day. I went to take part in the worship on Sunday night, which began at 7 o'clock. When people arrive about 6.45, there would be no seats in the main hall. There were two side halls with big television screens. A sermon of a pastor was broadcasting live. It's real, very many people. That night was usually for young people. There were a lot of young people, which I hadn't thought of. Some young couples came with their new born babies. I feel, the atmosphere by Sunday worship in China is so passionate. They stood up when they were singing, and raised their hands up with exciting emotions. It was a very big scene, I was so moved.

S: Is it an official church?

F: It is the "three-self" church. I haven't got contact with family community. I also worry about the family community, the quantity of its information, the quality of its

leaders. I'm afraid of the divergence.

S: How about the sermon?

F: Very good, very good. That pastor mentioned also that he just came back from America. The information I've heard there, is not differently to what I can get here. In big cities, the opener the environment is, the healthier it grows. Contrary, if it is suppressed, like the villages in the north, the more suppress it receives, the more heresies come out.

S: What do you think about Buddhism and Islam now?

F: I hope, that Buddhism could return to its original philosophical state, not the form of "Baibai"(pray). Islam steals the old testament. Muhammad claimed himself the prophet. It is a very strange way. I hope the gospels can be spread to there. And for Judaism, I hope they could accept Jesus. God has sent the savior, believe this. That's it. I believe that I won't ostracize or be against to them. They are all human beings, are all created by God. God says, let all people convert to him.

S: What about Atheism?

F: There are different kinds of Atheism; they have too many starting points. I can only say that, to believe that the origin of Earth is coincidentally is a hypothesis, too. Why should the theory of God create the world be ridiculous?

I think the Atheism in China is implanted: the world is like this. People choose Atheism without comparison. I hope that they could get to know the other religions. The result should be the result of their rationality.

S: Do you think there is a relationship between your conversion and your stay in Germany?

F: This cannot be postulated. Now I take a back sight, it is God led me slowly, came along this way. It was this timing to get to know him. I return to hometown after the conversion, found that there were so many Christians around. The Christians in China

are used not to declare their Christian identities, when they are dealing with the non-Christians. They won't talk about this topic. They don't passionately proselytize. I don't know why.

Maybe since I came to Germany, I got to know many different thoughts. Not like in internal all people have the same idea, all are Atheism. Here, there are different ideas and religions, the whole thoughts are very free. You would like to hear what they say. But when the missionary people came, I always said that I didn't have time, I was a Buddhist. Actually, I was not. I just want to send him away. So for me is not this case.

Maybe it was related to the break-up with my ex-boyfriend. I tried not to blame him, I wanted a new life, I did not want to resent him. It was hard. I read Buddhist Sutra. Good, everything was emptiness. But it was self repression. After the conversion it was totally different, I did not force myself to repress the emotions or force myself to forgive him. You know, that he is actually pitiful; he does not know what he's done. He does not owe me, no one owes me anything, we all owe to God. It is like the story of the Bible: one man was exempted from 1000 liang debt, but when he went out, he encountered another one, who owed him 10 liang debt. These things did not actually hurt me, on the contrary bought out the actual grown-up in me. Maybe each step and chance makes life. Life cannot be repeated again and compared to the others.

S: What does your family say about your conversion?

F: At the beginning my father worried about me because of a woman he knows in his firm. I haven't got contact with her; I do not know what kind of status she has. My father says since she has started believing in Jesus, she doesn't go to work or take care of her family. She goes around to pray for the ill, to pray for healing. My father regards this as not attending to one's proper duties and business. Because she does not care about her family anymore. She is a wife, a woman; if she does not look after the family, it is a belief that disturbs normal life. He's afraid that I would give up my studies and live abnormally, do things like this everyday. I said it was not like that at all. After my conversion, I studied hard, and had a practice. Especially since the improvement of my family relations, he's not against it any more. What they worried most about is

superstition.

He regards Christianity as the same as Buddhism, both are religions. What matters is my happiness.

After my returning, I will explain to him slowly what I believe in and what is the truth. I will show him. I hope he will accept one day.

F: It is quite late, do you have other questions?

S: No. If I have any, I will contact with you. Thank you.

F: You're welcome. I've just had my exam and have time to do this.

Interview with Mr. W and Ms. W

Date: September 12th, 2007

Place: A Student Dormitory

W: Mr. W

Ms. W: Ms. W

S: Interviewer

W: Let's chat casually.

S: How did you join the community?

W: The community started from us. Before that there was no community. There were several people who converted. So we gathered together. Christians call the gathering community. Actually it means several people gather together.

We already believed in God when we were in China, and they believe in God here. We gathered together, and read the Bible. It was in 2002. It was probably in summer, that we started the community.

S: What did you do in the community?

W: We read the Bible, sang and prayed. At the beginning came only several people, so we stayed at home. There were only 4 to 5 persons. Some came and some went. Those who had finished the study went away. Those who had finished the language courses went to western Germany. Later the pastor came, and then the number of people increased.

The pastor came through the Chinese Library. He had been in Germany for many years, maybe eight years in Berlin. Then he went to Canada and came back to Germany again, he came to Leipzig. At that time, there were more than 10 people in the community. We were students, who hadn't much free time. The pastor could work full time. So could his wife. They did care about the brothers and sisters in the community.

(W's newly born son is crying.)

S: Are you going to hold him?

W: It's all right. Sometimes he cries don't mean he's unhappy.

S: How did you begin the community at home?

W: At first, my wife didn't come to Germany yet. I believed in God relative earlier. It was natural for Christians to gather together. At first there was an American Christian with us. It was difficult to communicate with him. We had just come to Germany, and did not speak German well. He was American, whose German language was not good, either. But he was patient. Chinese people are willing to be with Chinese. We Chinese lived in the same building, so it was natural to gather together. There was no other place to go.

S: Why didn't you go to the German communities?

W: I went. Due to the language it was very difficult to communicate. Because I didn't understand.

S: What kind of community was it?

W: A community in Leipzig. We went there only for one year. Chinese couldn't understand. They were nice to us, and cared about us. But the language was really a big problem.

S: Why didn't you go there after your language was improved?

W: Later the Chinese had already gathered together. Chinese people need Chinese ways. The most of them were hard to integrate in Germans.

It is a problem of faith. Faith is a question of spirituality. It is not a mathematics question like "one plus one". It requires the communication in the depth of heart. It is not only a problem of language, it is also a cultural one. It is more difficult when it is about cultural. If people are beginners of belief, and are listening to German sermons, they cannot have any clue. Even the Chinese Bible is not familiar to them. German sermons are too difficult for them. So to speak in Chinese is better for us to understand

belief.

Through Chinese Library the pastor found us. He had been to several cities and preferred to stay in Leipzig.

S: How did you form a community?

W: Later we borrowed a church. It was thus more official. The pastor made it more official, too. He did a lot of work. He invited people to have dinner, created some chances to communicate. Those who came from China had never heard about anything about belief. So they were really attracted by the community, by the love of God. And therefore, they stayed. Some were introduced by their friends, and later also stayed.

S: Who are willing to stay in the community?

Ms. W: We are the earliest ones who are in the community. He joined in 2001, I joined in 2003. The community started since 2002. It was 6 persons including me. At the beginning, we have taken care of the others. After the pastor came, our work reduced, as we were facing our graduation.

W: We had to work in an ice cream shop. So we did not have time for the community when we worked. Sometimes we had to work everyday including Sunday. If I took a day off, she had to work. If she went to the community, I had to work. Therefore, we were not becoming that familiar with everyone in the community.

To get to know everyone in the community requires the whole day. If the number is under 10, it is easy to remember who studies what. If the number is over 50, it is impossible. There are too many things and too many people. So there are small groups now.

We have a child now. Before the baby was born, we already had less participation in the community, because it was inconvenient and I had to work. Now that I am not in the small groups, I know even less about the other members. If you want to know one's belief, you have to be in his life, to communicate with him, to care about him..

S: So do you participating in the community less than before?

W: Now the time is not up to us. It is up to the baby. The child decides when we go sleep.

S: What did you do in the community before the baby was born?

W: Singing, etc. What the gatherings do. I was basically in charge. Every small group has a leader and some members.

W: Before the pastor came, we were not as official as in the church. We gathered around and read the Bible. The community meant family. Because we were at the same age, it was like a small family. A family community has its advantages. It is small and everybody cares about everybody. The community members knew each other very well. Now the community is bigger, and has had some changes. The pastor has more experience. He did this for a long time. It is more normalized. Before he came, we held the gathering very casually. We had pious hearts. The gathering was like what we are doing now, talking to each other. The room was half as big as this one. It was relatively relaxed and the form casual. After the pastor came, it became more and more normalized and became routine. Many people accepted the community for this reason. In the past it was too casual, so some people did not like it. When it turned to be formal, they felt it was serious and therefore became willing to join the community. The community is divided into small groups, so more people can participate in the service. In the past, there were less people participate in the community service. Now there are more.

S: Since when was the gathering in the pastor's home?

W: We went to the community less often once the gathering started in the pastor's home. We had to work everyday. The gathering at the pastor's home was always on Wednesday and started at 7 at night. She had to work from 6 to 8, couldn't take part in the gathering. Later there were small groups, so we took part in the small groups.

S: What was your contribution in the development of the community?

W: Not much. It was no one's contribution. We believe that was made by God.

S: You are the first one to start the community.

W: There were some others who were co-workers. I lead them to know God. What the community becomes is another thing.

At the beginning we were a group of people who read the Bible seriously. We regarded it not as a form of entertainment, like eating together. That was not my concern. My concern is how humans can really know God and experience God. This is my concern.

S: Before the pastor came, how did you lead them?

W: By my faith.

S: How did you believe in God?

W: I visited a Church since I was a child. My mother is a Christian. At that time the Chinese three-self Church¹¹¹ was just opened. It was about 1986. I didn't believe anything. I always fell asleep when the pastor preached. When people sang, then I woke. I believed in God since 1998.

On one day, someone came to my home and tried to evangelize my brother. It was in a summer vocation, I was back to H city. Because we both went to the church with our mother when we were children, we were familiar with the Bible stories. But on that day, the grace of God came upon to me.

Are these words too professional for you? It is a habit. Being a Christian for a long time, I get used to these words, which mixed with Chinese classical words.

On that day I suddenly understood, that God accepts me as a whole. The whole me, whether I study good or not, whether I have a good relationship or not, God accepts me. The faith is difficult to explain, everyone has a different experience when he gets to know God. For me, it was on that day, I realized this. For a Christian, it is the revelation. In Chinese context it is called awakening. It means that you understand something suddenly without knowing why you understand. Everyone has some demands. My

¹¹¹ Chinese three-self Church: Three-self means self-governance, self-support, self-propagation, it is the form of state-registered Protestant church in mainland China.

parents accept me also under some conditions. I believe, Jesus accepts me whatever I've done, whether I am good or not. I can find no where on the world this kind of love. So I decided to accept and believe in God. From then on, I believe in Jesus. On that night.

S: Were you baptized in China?

W: Yes. It was in family church, which didn't have good facilities. So I was baptized in a bathtub.

S: How did your mother convert?

W: There was a missionary worker from a family church in our region.

The family church we joined in China didn't have a large scale. The family church we joined in China was not large-scale, so the family church I developed in Germany was not large-scale, either. It is relaxed, without special forms. We are concerned with spirituality, and the relationship between people and God. So since I came to Germany, I learned and imitated my experiences and ways in the family church in China. My home was not big.

I know people can only be baptized when they pass an exam from Chinese three-self Church. There are too many people in China, the pastors cannot get to know thousands of people. The church is not sure whether you really believe in God, so an exam is set to test people. As I was baptized, there was no such exam.

S: What did you read for your spiritual teaching?

W: The Bible.

S: And?

W: It depends on what kind of books I get. In China there were few books. Now it is different when people are abroad. Now there is Internet. In China the Internet is not very helpful. But here, there are so many sermons online: How to operate a community, different sermons. It is very helpful because of the Internet. We download different hymns and different sermons. It is very helpful because of internet. We download

different hymns and different sermons. In Germany, we read magazines like *Overseas Campus* and *Mission and Horn*. There are many other newspapers. Many books on religion are also available. Now if one wants to know more, he can just search online. In the community, we listen to the sermons of the pastor. Magazines come regularly. *Overseas Campus* comes every two months.

S: How do you improve your theological knowledge?

W: I do not have any theological background. I did not study theology at the university. I rely on the daily communication with God. In China most people do not have a theological study, so they study from God. This is our God, he can do everything. If there is no teacher to teach us, he teaches us himself. God speaks to us through the Bible. The most important is the Bible. With the Bible, you do not need any other book. Only the Bible is flawless. Other books or sermons of pastors, no one dares to say that he is absolutely right. For us, the Bible is our root. The Bible is enough for our theological knowledge.

S: At the beginning, if someone asks you theological questions, how did you answer?

W: I answered according to what I knew. God is marvelous. I didn't know many things that people asked, but I knew them after I answered the questions. This is God. He cannot be explained by reason. I also listen to different sermons from different pastors. So I improve my knowledge. This is the base of my theology. It origins from the Bible.

Ms. W: It depends on how much you understand and absorb the words of God, how much communication between your heart and God. You know God and the truth of the Bible deeply, then you can answer the questions.

It is hard to rationalize the faith. We cannot analyze our faith into some reasons. It is not the case that after the analysis is done then I believe God. For us, it is another case. We experienced God. We cannot explain it in rationalized ways. You see, sometimes I give you some vague answers. It has to be.

S: What kind of change does God do in your life?

W: A lot of changes. In every aspect of my life. My world view, my view of life, of marriage, of money, and my ways of dealing with people. God influences me in all aspects. If he only changes me one or two aspects, he is not the God that worth believing.

Ms. W: For example, you will find a Christian to marry. After believing God, it is his requirement to find someone who shares the same faith.

W: That's right. Because God says that. The Bible is relevant to every aspect of life. The Bible gives us criteria in every aspect. God gives me answer in every question. Like do not lie. If you are a Christian, you will change your life through the Bible.

S: Why did you introduce your religion to the others?

W: Hehe, because after I believe in God, I think belief is so good. It is not a job, it is a voluntary activity. I am willing to introduce God to the others. God's love urges me to do this.

At the beginning of my conversion, I told my friends to believe in God, then they could experience God's love. I told her everyday, what God's work I have read, what kind of God's love I have experienced. I told her my providence. I hope I can experience God with her together, because God is so good and so kind.

S: What did you give the new comers to read?

W: Those who haven't converted yet have no idea of the religion. So we provide them with some basic knowledge about who God is, what God does, from different aspects, e.g. aspects of science and of spirituality. It is better for the beginners. For beginners it is difficult to explain the truth of the Bible and the words of the Bible. They do not understand. Our introduction is about the Gospel.

After that, it depends on whether he wants to know more, whether he is willing to read the Bible, to get to know God through the Bible. He has to experience God's love himself, the eternal love. If he has no idea or experience, the faith remains a religious

belief, like those Buddhists, who are not pious but call themselves Buddhists, they don't have any idea of religion.

S: How did you convert to Christianity?

Ms. W: I visited a community in China in coincidence. They sang hymns that touched me. God revealed to my heart at that moment. I realized that there was a God, who died for me. I realized that when I believed in this God, I could have an eternal life and I could have a place to go after my death. When I was a little child I heard a lot of ghost stories from other religions. I am curious about that. I hope to find a god to rely on. I was afraid of death since I was a child. Because after death I would disappear while the others still live on the earth. Why should I die? So I was so afraid of death. I thought it would be meaningless to live over 50. These two questions confused me until I found God.

I had searched for religion, but never really experienced it from heart. When I was in the church, I felt that this God was so good that he died for me. At that moment, I felt that I was so dirty and guilty. I didn't match the holy God at all. But he died for me, he was willing to give up his life for me. I was so moved and sang a lot of hymns. The lyrics of the hymns moved me deeply, I cried and cried. It was on October 1998. I was so cheered up like a small bird and felt peace in heart. I asked when the next gathering was. For the next gathering I waited for two weeks. It was such a long time!

So I believed in God. After that I read the Bible. God's words revealed to me. I prayed constantly and learned more hymns. I experienced more and more God's love.

S: Did you organize the Bible reading group?

Ms. W: As I came, the Bible reading group already existed. There were 6 persons including me. At that time the atmosphere was very good. It was like a family. We had a good communication with each other. If there were many people, it was not possible. Now in the community, you cannot talk to everyone, or discuss things in detail. Now if you go to the gathering later, you have no time to talk to anyone. Now we go the church on Sunday, otherwise we don't have any communication with the community. Now it

depends on many things.

S: What do you study?

W: Computer science. Now I am still studying.

S: What is your opinion on Pentecostalism?

Ms. W: You know this? You study religions, so you have to learn this, don't you?

W: I didn't study this issue. I don't agree with the opinion of separating Catholics and Protestants, because there was never a so called "Catholic religion". The disciples of Jesus were called godfathers. Catholic religion is a name of a part of Christian history. I don't know, may be there is other research. Maybe you know better than I do. According to the Bible, people are called Christians, not as Catholics. There is only a Christianity, Catholicism doesn't exist. Before Martin Luther's reform, there was not that many conflicts between denominations. Denomination and heresy are Christian definitions. Heresy means the wrong faith.

In the catholic time people were not able to read the Bible because only the priests could read the Bible. It was chaos. After Luther and the publishing of the Bible, the religion changed and came up so many other denominations. Baptism, Reformism, Methodism, etc. This is the denomination issue.

I think none of the denominations are wrong. God recovers some truth through every denomination. God recovered the truth of "by faith alone" through Luther. Martin Luther was a pious man. I have heard a story. He felt he was so guilty that he crawled on a road full of small pieces of glass. He made his redemption by suffering.

Different denominations recover different truths. Because the Bible is so great and God is so great. No one dares to say that he have known God all. Martin Luther had done many mistakes.

Pentecostal was a movement since 1906. Pentecostal movement includes speaking dialects. You know that?

S: Yes. Do you know any Pentecostal community here?

W: We went to a German church. But now it is difficult to differentiate whether it is Pentecostal or not. Pentecostal recovers a part of truth. This is religion. Martin Luther was suppressed by the Catholics. When they are stabilized, they become against the Pentecostals. The former ones are always against the later ones. A lot of people were against the Pentecostal movement at the beginning. After 100 years, people are accepting it gradually.

They are just against each other. Even the Christians have a lot of shortcomings. When a new movement arises, it is for sure that it includes the old problem. They make it better. People always criticize the new movement. Now it becomes more tolerate between denominations. The new ones discover the good traditions in old ones. The old ones discover some truth in Pentecostal movement. They accept each other.

It is not possible to separate them absolutely. For example, we sing some happy songs during the gathering, which are influenced by the Pentecostals. People raise their hands during singing, which is also influenced by the Pentecostal movement. The Pentecostal movement rediscovers some truth in the Bible.. For example, the happy songs, which integrate popular elements. The songs written in Taiwan and Hong Kong are very emotional and popular. It is not like Luther's serious tradition, when everybody has a Bible in his hand. Now the influence of denominations is becoming smaller and smaller. There is no need for conflict. Everyone can insist on what he thinks is right. Denominations are more tolerant to each other

S: What is your opinion on Jehovah's' witnesses, and the Mormons?

W: They are heresies, not denominations. These are things that are wrong in our opinion. Right or wrong has a very basic criterion. For example, we regard only the Bible as absolutely right. But the Mormons say that their Mormon Bible is right and higher than the Bible. We cannot accept this. The Mormon Bible has changed with the time, and their leader has predicted the date of the end of the world, and the date has changed more than five times. Mormons have their advantages and dominance, but they are wrong. There are two wrong beliefs that are officially denied by the Ecumenical councils. One is the Mormons; the other is Jehovah's witnesses, which denies that Jesus

is the savior. They contradict the basic criteria of Christian belief, so they are heresies. Denominations are not wrong faith, they emphasize different directions. Like science, you can do research from this aspect or that aspect. There is nothing wrong, just a different aspect.

S: How did this criterion come?

W: The criterion comes from the Bible. There were many meetings in Christian history. So there are many creeds, like Nicene creed. Then it comes the basic criterion, which contains only hundreds of words. If one disobey these words, then he is wrong. In detail, no one can claim that he is absolute right.

S: Does your belief influence your future plan?

W: I had no plan at all before I converted. Most people don't have plans. In reality, only a few people have concrete goals. Many people come to Germany without planning. They consider that Germany is better than other countries, so they come. Or their parents say go to Germany, so they come. It is just that easy.

I didn't have a plan, either. I was over 20. How could I have a concrete plan? Most people don't have one. After I believe in God, my criterion of life is not money. I feel satisfied and live positively. I believe that the road for me is already prepared. It is a matter of confidence. I believe that God prepares a happy and hopeful way for me. With my effort and the blessing of God, my future will be happy.

S: Do you know what kind of road that God prepares for you?

W: I don't know. But I know it is the road given by God, so I am willing to go. It is the confidence of a Christian. It is belief, like believing in Jesus. You don't see him, but you believe.

Ms. W: You need to believe with your confidence. Belief is really interesting and marvelous, it is hard to explain. We have a song about mother's love is so great that she is busy for her children, mother's love is invisible and intangible, but it exists in the wind. Now with the development of science human still cannot measure love. How do you

measure, how do you test, but you know love is there? It is like the parents know that they love their children, and the children know that too. Between lovers, you don't need to know he loves you only when he buys you something. It is not a measurable thing. So does belief. Our confidence in God cannot be measured, like God gives you one meter love. It is not measurable. After you experience some things, you will know his existence. After a long period, you will find him in different places.

S: So most friends of yours are Christians?

W: In the past there were many other kinds. In college there were different classmates. Once you have a family, life becomes smaller. The pressure in Germany is different; we have to study and to work. Among Christians there is a shared feature: They believe in God. So it is easier to attract each other. Friendship is based on mutual interests. Christians have more things in common. You can study and hang out with your classmates. With Christian friends, besides studying and playing, you can pray and believe together, and it never ends. People change gradually; they become more frank and more sincere. People gather together to share love. Friends share love, too. They know you better, they support you more. You feel that Christian friends care more about you than those non-Christian friends. So you want to gather together. It is just that easy.

S: Tell me something about the camping.

W: There are fewer people in a regular gathering. During a camping there are more people. It is a stronger atmosphere. The whole three days is about thinking about God, so it benefits many people. You can hear the providence of others, which motivates and helps you.

S: What is your gain?

W: I cannot describe in one sentence. You witness God' love and blessing on other people, it strengthens your confidence. It is like love relationship, at the beginning, there is some good feeling, and later with the sharing days, the relationship becomes deeper and deeper. With God is the same, the more days you spend with God together, the more

feel. He helps you here and there.

S: The teachers in camping come from overseas?

W: Yes. In Germany there was no pastor. It is difficult to judge pastors' sermons. If he suits your needs, or your wish, then he is good. The criterion of a pastor's sermon depends on whether he can bring people before God. It is for me very important.

S: Did you attend the community activities when you were back to China this year?

W: Only once. It was different. It is easy to adapt. People are different. In my hometown is an older generation, like my mother. Here in Germany most people are students. I am an elder in this community, I was born in 1979. Now there are people who are born in 1985 and 1986 in the community.

S: Did you two meet in the community?

W: Yes.

S: Is the gathering important for you?

W: Of course. It is for sure. Many people stay only for a short time. A short time means not stable. If they cannot find Christian friends, they have to search for other friends, who cannot talk with them about belief and God. They will go far away from God. So the Bible says Christians cannot stop gathering. If you are with others, you cannot have a pious mood of worship. If there is an official community, and a routine time of a week, it will be better.

S: Do you two need the gathering?

W: Of course. Everyone needs. But we have many limitations, for example our newborn baby. Now we want to reduce our service in the community, because we are the ones who are leaving first. If we leave next year, we hope that people do not leave the community because we are gone; I hope the community develops better even without me. I do not want to be so important that the community cannot develop without me. I

hope that more people join and make efforts. After we leave, the community can run further. So we are reducing our involvement in the community.

I am the one who witnesses all of their conversions, the group leaders. If we are in a Bible reading group, those group leaders who are new in the community dare not to say his opinion, or hope that I will give an answer. If I am in the group, it could harm his authority among the brothers and sisters. They would think their group leader is not competent enough. I do not want to see this situation. I hope they can initiate things themselves. If we go there, they remain still and wait for my speech.

S: Many people are going to graduate.

W: I don't care much about this thing. I believe that God arranges our time, he arranges where we live. I, and the others are going to leave Leipzig sooner or later, we go somewhere, or go back to where we come. I make my best to fulfill the task God gives to me: I help those who are willing to find God. That is enough. They now have found him.

I left the community in China, it doesn't mean that I don't believe God any more or don't read the Bible any more. I help them learn to read the Bible in front of God, to know God and to be able to gather in a new place. This is, I think, enough.

S: Do you have contact with the community in China?

W: The community in China is like family to us. So we keep contact online and through MSN.

S: Are you going to let your son be a Christian?

W: It will be his decision.

W: What do you think of religions?

S: Study of religions has many disciplines. One of them is to be neutral. Every religion has attractive aspects. You and I have different aspects.

W: Do you interest in Christianity?

S: I am interested in different religions. The world is plural.

W: OK.

S: Thank you for your time.

W: Let's pray. Can I make a prayer for you?

S: OK.

(W and Ms. W made a prayer for S. He prayed for S's study and a blessed life.)

Interview with Miss E

Date: 20th August, 2007

Place: Lehmanns Bookshop

E: Miss E

S: Interviewer

S: How did you join this community?

E: At the beginning, there was a person, her name was Y. She's a Taiwanese too. And then the pastor found her by some way. Then she told me this. And then she gave the pastor my telephone number. The pastor invited me, and I went there. And then I've been here for six years. That happened in the third year. Maybe in the second year, I've forgotten. Then I went there, didn't like it at all, and never went there again. And then long after that, I went to the community for the second time. They made a barbeque. And then I got to know the people again at the barbeque. The atmosphere was totally different compared to the atmosphere in the church. And then I liked that. And then I went there again with a totally different attitude. It was good. So I stayed again. I stayed in the community after the second encounter with them.

S: How did you come to this bible reading group?

E: This group was also later divided. After I went there and stayed, the brothers and sisters seemed not dare to talk with me at the beginning. Because I didn't like the community at the first time. But later they found out that this time I liked the community, so they invited me boldly. Once R asked me on the street, would I like to visit their meeting today? Then I thought, I didn't have any other arrangement, and said, ok, I would like to. At that time, R made meetings in Linlin's home, it is the "Joy" group now. After that, I went to the bible reading group in Joy group. Later Joy group was divided because of too many people. So I came to this group. Maybe due to the transport convenience, I was arranged to "Kindness" group.

S: How do you feel?

E: How do I feel, very good.

S: Why did you not like the community the first time?

E: I feel the community and the small group gathering are better than in the church. Because I've been converted a long time in Taiwan, about ten years. I have a fixed community in Taiwan, we are part of the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church is relatively traditional. They do not cry, or shout, or wave their hands, they do not do that at all. So when I just came here, the people had the mainland China language style, and at first it sounded very serious; then they cried and shouted, I felt I couldn't adjust at all. Although I had tried to search for a church, this church had nothing to do with me at all. The language was not comfortable for me. And apart from the language issue, I did not think that I had any reason to come to this Chinese Church. So I did not go again.

S: Are these problem still problems to you?

E: Now they are relatively not any more. Or I am more tolerant. Because I know brothers and sisters deeper. I got to know them in person, and then I could be tolerant. The cry and shouting are their ways of worship.

S: Do you know which denomination you are a part of?

E: I still belong to the Presbyterian Church. The mother church is still in Taiwan.

S: The Leipzig church is not a Presbyterian church, is this not a problem for you?

E: I do not have another choice, because there isn't a Presbyterian church here. And I have joined this community very deeply; it is my second mother church.

S: How would you describe the community here when you back to Taiwan?

E: There is a big difference. Here are almost all students. The people are not easy with

financial support. I will mention the shouting and crying these evangelical things. But there are many people in Taiwan go abroad to the US and get to know different Chinese community there. So they know what I talk about.

S: Why don't you accept the evangelical way of worship? This community is actually keeping distance to the evangelical practice.

E: Actually I do not know what the true evangelicals are like. I only know that the Presbyterian Church is another very conservative one. Maybe the community members are normal Baptists, or the normal churches also do that. But in my history growing up, there were no things like that.

S: What is your growth in this Leipzig community?

E: Right. You're right. People here are very active. In Presbyterian Church they aren't that enthusiastic. It is your own thing. They do not, or less often, talk about beliefs, or ask others to read the Bible, such as "You should come". On the contrary, here with the extra encouragement people grow a lot more. For example, people read the Bible together, and do more spoken prayers. We are all students, have the same timetable, so we have dinner together, and pray together before the dinner. I feel the growth is larger this way. More time is spent on praying and reading the Bible.

S: Did you convert in Taiwan?

E: Yes.

S: Did you have any change after joining this community? The doctrines, etc.

E: No. I think what I thought. For example, the issues of cohabitation and homosexual, I won't change my mind, the liberal ideas.

S: If there are some conservative teachings against homosexuals, will there be tension?

E: No. I will withdraw or be silent. Because I know their doctrines are all right. And maybe my thoughts are not persuasive or reasonable. Since I have many friends who are

homosexual, I can understand them on their standing points

S: Do you pay your church rate to Taiwan or in Leipzig?

E: I still think, my mother church is in Taiwan. Frankly I don't pay any church rate, because I don't have a stable wage.

S: Do you pay in Leipzig?

E: Not now. If I had a stable income, I will pay in Leipzig. But I still think my mother church is in Taiwan. I know the financial situation in Leipzig is very difficult. In Taiwan is different, there are big bosses etc, it is not that difficult in finance. But I still think, if I get married, I hope my Taiwan pastor could hold my wedding ceremony.

S: What attracted you in this community? Why did you have a firm relationship with the small group?

E: Because of the living together with brothers and sisters, they're like friends. It's like having many friends. To take care of a person, to pray together, to experience many things together. Yes, like this. And these people call much attention to the spiritual aspects.

I did not join after the first time, because I had the idea of, "so what, I already have many friends, I speak German well, I do not need to make friends in the community". Now I feel these friends are other friends with spiritual profoundness, that we grow together, and help each other with everything.

S: Can you concrete describe that? Spiritual?

E: For example, if I meet some difficulties, not successful in finding a job, the non-Christian friends will say, don't think too much about that. But Christian friends will take it seriously to help you, to pray for you. After the whole thing, it will become providence. This thing can be a prove, and people can be friends in a spiritual sense.

S: It sounds like friendship.

E: Yes, that's right.

S: Will you discuss the political issues between Taiwan and Mainland China, is there any taboos?

E: No. I think what I thought.

S: Did you discuss about it?

E: We talked about it not seriously. I said something, they said something. If there's no common agreement is also ok.

S: What did you say?

E: I said, Taiwan is an independent country, there's no need to be reunited again. That's nonsense.

Especially that X, we're familiar to each other, so we speak very directly. I said that, and he said, Taiwan belonged to China. Then it is the end of the discussion. We don't talk about it seriously, because I don't have many ideas in this. I just think so.

S: How would God say about this issue?

E: I haven't thought about it.

S: So political discussion is not a problem in the group?

E: No. They let me to have my word, because they also respect me. We respect each other.

S: What did you contribute to the community?

E: Hehe. I do not know. Are you asking about the service? I am in the choir. It's all labor work. Choir, musical service, and otherwise I'm one leader of the small group, a member of the diaconal committee. This can influence the development of the small group. But I think the pastor has his own idea; it's hard to influence him. My contribution is in the small group. I hope I have some impact on the development of the

group. For example, the process of Bible reading, and for example, to decide whether a prayer meeting is needed. For example, the weekly group newspaper is my idea. Because my church in Taiwan makes a weekly newspaper... I am familiar with community works.

S: Making a weekly newspaper, sharing experiences: Are these all your experiences in the Presbyterian Church? And did you bring them here?

E: Yes. It was not that strict here. It was a simple Bible reading group. But I made them do it so that people sing songs before reading. After singing the Bible reading begins. After that there must be a prayer meeting and sharing. Before this program, it was always the situation that one was supposed to read a chapter, but too much talking prevented us from having a detailed reading. After that people said goodbye, and did not have time to share and have private talk. I do not think this is good, since many people came because they had something to share with the others. This is the program I had in the church in Taiwan. First singing, then Bible reading, then sharing and praying. At last the weekly newspaper was distributed.

S: A kind of standardization?

E: Because our group has many people than before. Previously everyone said that it would last too long. But when this program is carried out, it works. We can get back home just in time.

S: How often do your group key members have meeting?

E: Do you mean the small group? It is not fixed, because it was divided just a few months. Just ab April. So there is no formal meeting. We just meet each other, gather for a while, have dinner and talk to each other.

S: What about the development of the small group?

E: At the beginning, we had two meetings. I've forgotten that. It was about the things, I've mentioned. It was the advices for the members, and we constituted something, then

carried out the rules.

S: Does the small group communicate with other groups?

E: They had excursions when I was back home. But in bible reading there were not such communications. Because the group was just divided. Our group is different to other groups.

S: I've talked with D. He said that in the development of groups, they looked up many foreign references?

E: Really? Then we didn't.

S: Ricky Warren?

E: I don't know.

S: If you leave the Leipzig community, what will you think?

E: If I leave now, it will be pity. But after one year or half year, who knows how the church will become. Maybe everybody would get bored, and feel free to go. If there is some pity, it may be the friendship. Because I do feel that the sermon from the pastor is not very worth listening to. What I would regret is losing contact with the people.

S: What about the missionary groups?

E: The priests were good. Priest Zhong was good. He came to the summer camp... I went and took part in summer camping. Many were good. Some should not have come, I feel.

S: Why?

E: Once there were many old aunties. Once a very old teacher came, who did not offer us any actual help. We had to take care of them. But my position is from the outside. Maybe they had had a big influence in other small towns.

S: Because you had ten-year experiences in a church, may have a comparison. You don't feel the same as those who just joined the community.

E: And for the priests, they have their positions.

S: But for you the reason why the community sustains is people?

E: Yes.

S: It will be very unstable.

E: Yes. But these people are not for pure friendship. They read the Bible together, pray and have spiritual pursuits.

S: Before you joined this community, did you attend the German church?

E: I'd been there. I felt I did not really get involved in their community... they report who had childbirth, or who had done something, and then people applauded. But people do not know each other. I felt just so-so, so I did not go there anymore. But the sermon was really good. Their Free Church is not the same as we Presbyterian. It was also introduced by my classmates.

S: It is very difficult to find a church, that is the same as the former one.

E: I don't think it must be like that. That church is like that. And, I think, the German Christians, en, it's hard to say, the German young Christians, if they're the same enthusiastic like the Chinese Christian, they'll seem to be stupid. I don't think they're like the Chinese, who desire to go to church, desire love. They're strange people. (laugh) Those who're not strange, are not religious. I don't why I said this.

S: Maybe in religion studies, it will be called secularization. They have rationality, and science, so they don't need god.

E: That's right. So I don't want to get to know them in the community. But in the Chinese community, it is very very enthusiastic, it is very normal, not stupid at all.

S: They're so kind. Did you ever been to other Chinese organizations? Such as a student's association?

E: I do not attend the Chinese students association. But I attend the Taiwan students association.

S: Is there any kind of difference?

E: We talk about some secular things. And we gossip, talk about money, and eat some good food.

S: Which place do you desire more to go?

E: The community. Yes.

S: Did you make good friends in the students association?

E: It was new established. We just got to know each other. The good friends there are good friends already before we joined the association.

S: How about the students association?

E: It's quite simple relationship. There are some elders, the university teachers. They're very kind, always invite us to visit their home. It was a very good atmosphere.

S: Do you attend the organization of German churches?

E: I just listen to. The friend, who brought me there, she's a singer too. Sometimes she asked me for help about the choir. It is always through her, she's a German classmate. Because I have this specialist technique, it would be used at the proper time.

I think the German church is the same as the church in Taiwan: If you want to stay, then stay. They do not take special care of the newcomers. It's not like in our community, when a new face comes, then great! (Miss E made a quick catching gesture.) I do not say this is better, but this is the difference. Taiwan churches do not think much about the development or increasing the members.

S: This community pays a lot attention to the new comings.

E: Yes. And I feel it's really strange. The Chinese are really easy to accept. The Taiwanese don't need to mission, they don't accept that. Maybe because it is very free in Taiwan, if they want to believe they will believe in Taiwan, they have already heard about that thousand times. But the Chinese didn't ever learn this.

S: I don't know about the situations in Taiwan. But there are Chinese, they have never heard about this.

E: That's why. I found that, pastor said, the missionary work were not accepted at all by the Taiwanese. The main targets are people who come from the mainland China.

S: Did you work hard in the missionary work?

E: No, not at all.

S: Why, the others are very active.

E: Maybe it is better that before. I just talked about my own experience; it's already much for me. I talk no more than this. Then I'll say, if you have time come with me, and no more than this. For example, if there are retorts, I will smile and say you're right. Maybe the others will further argue. Firstly, I'm not good at arguing with the other, I always feel that the others are right. I was always persuaded during the talk. So I give up arguing, I'm afraid to say something wrong.

S: Please talk about your experience. Ten years ago, in Taiwan.

E: That was in the school time. My family members were not Christians. My mother is a pious Buddhist. I took part in a choir. That choir was in a church. When we sang, there were meetings and gathering in the church. They invited us to stay and participate. Because my mother is a Buddhist, I did think there is god. So I talked to god. But I didn't know who the god was. I was a fan of foreign culture, so I might get to know about Christianity by watching TV. From then on, I knew, yeah, Christianity. Then, there was the church. I believed in it at once. I got the connection with him. I talked to

him everyday. This god is that God. It was like this. That's right.

After going there for a while, my character has changed a lot. Because I'm the only child of the family, I was quite spoiled. I didn't have many friends in the class, although I had good marks, but I was very proud. Then I was suddenly much better.

Then it was about the choice of a profession. Because I studied well in everything, and I sang especially well. What did I really want? Many people suggest me not to give up the normal study. I could study medicine, or law, singing can be a hobby. I struggled for a long time. The church also prayed for me, and talked to me, my voice was the gift from god. So I decided to study singing. Till now one step after on step, all are arrangements of god, all are good. If I hadn't studied singing, I weren't been here; I wouldn't have got to know my friends. These are not special examples. There is nothing I could regret. There are the god's will to let me do so.

S: You don't talk your story always with the sentence: "Thanks for the arrangement of god."

E: Oh. Maybe I also talk like this in Taiwan. It's enough to know in your heart. I'm grateful for God in my heart.

S: I feel, that you are not that enthusiastic.

E: That's right.

S: It is because your character, or are the Christians in Taiwan all like this?

E: The Taiwan Christians may be all like this. We're all not that enthusiastic. The pray is also totally different. It's like talk to people. We don't do deep and loud breathing, or cry, but sometimes I think it is boring too. In Taiwan we don't say "God" or "Amen" in the pray. It's very simple, like: What did I do today, we ask for the protection from God. Such like this.

S: Now what do you say when they pray?

E: I say "Yes", etc. You know, I have gotten used to say Amen.

S: Why?

E: It is because of habit.

S: What kind of change do you have?

E: It is hard to distinguish. Is it the change due to the belief, or due to this community? For example, my friend circle has turned to being more Chinese. Sometimes I wonder whether this is good or not. Maybe my German language will regress. But what kind of change? I became more grateful. No matter if I am ill, or have difficulty, I do think God has his reason. Previously I knew too, but I had more complaints. Now I have become more generous. Because I've seen that everybody opens their family to one another, and everyone is ready to help each other, so I became more ready to help others.

S: Are you becoming generous to the community members?

E: No, no, I become generous to everyone.

S: Will you become poor?

E: It is not about money. For example, if there is someone comes to Leipzig, and should be picked up in the train station. I would have thought, the traffic transportation is so convenient; I made it all by myself when I came here. But now I think, it is just half an hour, I don't need to save this little time, why not pick up the person at the train station. I feel also happy when I could be able to help people.

S: What did you find in the church?

E: I found these things by the second time. For example, the friendship. For the first time, I didn't like their forms, and I didn't get near to know them. So I thought they might be all the time like that, they would be very serious to get along with. So I didn't want to know them.

What I did not like the first time was their appeals. They said they were lonely and miserable. When I was there they happened to share the providences. There happened to

be someone there who said he was poor, and that he had only four Euros in his pocket, and who could help him, and he cried, and knelt down. I wasn't poor, I wasn't lonely, I felt very happy in Germany, and this kind of appeal was totally not mine. This does not suit me at all. Now I know there are this kind of people, the church cannot just speak to me. It is not possible.

That time was a summer camping. They needed someone to sing. I did not visit them often, but they still tried to find me. I went. It was in a youth hostel in Leipzig, and lasted for a few days. I went once to sing, but I did not know what they had done before singing. I just saw they were sharing their experience when I went, so I went crazy. So I felt more revolted.

After that I took part in a summer camp, I felt good again. Especially when I got to know them personally, then I knew, but I should not judge from appearances.

S: I will also be afraid, if I see everybody's crying.

E: That's right. Until get to know them.

S: Activities are important.

E: That's right.

S: What kind of influence does Christianity have on the society? What do you think?

E: The effects of Christianity on the society, in Germany, the effect is so great. For example, music.

S: How about the Chinese?

E: I don't know about this. I just live in Taiwan. Christians do some charities, for example, the hospitals and some good TV programs, some serious radios, air class. To upright the culture climate and to help the others, the effects are very huge.

S: But in Taiwan the Buddhism is quite popular.

E: That's right. There are many people doing that.

S: How do you see about the relation between Christianity and Buddhism?

E: I still think that the Christianity is sacred, Buddhism is mythology, they're some spirits, but not God. My mother has a deep study on Buddhism. It is possibly because my mother works in the Buddhism institutes, so I got to know many masters, and wandered around many temples since I was a child. So I felt that is a place, which quite corrupted. So it's not that great, not a desirable religion.

S: Do you think it is dividable between religion and belief? Someone tells me, that theirs is a belief, not religion.

E: Oh? I haven't heard about that. What I believe is religion.

S: Someone thinks that religion is an institution.

E: These names are quite boring for me. I don't study it, I fulfill my formulas always with "Christian" in the blanket of religion.

S: What do you read in theology?

E: It's difficult to say. I wanted to know Jerusalem and the development of Israel, the relations between the states and Jews. I read some books about Jerusalem. Besides that I didn't read other books. I didn't know anything and believed at the beginning. It's very simple to believe.

S: Did you want to study more about this?

E: No. And I think some theologians, I don't want to let the theologian block my way. I don't think everyone can be objective. For example, they talk so much about how many scientists convert themselves after getting to know Christianity. I will think, how does this percentage come out? I think it needs to be measured. I don't read other books except the theological books. I don't read any books generally. So it is not about not reading the theological books, I just don't like reading books.

S: Will you continue to sing?

E: I don't know, I always prayed for that.

S: How do you feel that the god is with you?

E: Always. In any little things.

S: Do you pray for everything?

E: Not really. Sometime I don't pray. Sometimes it is deposits. For example, when I went out and was nearly to be late, a bus happened to come. Then I think it is his arrangement. Such kind of little things. For example, I didn't catch up the bus and was late, and angry about that. But after I came, I found out that you were later than me. I think it is his arrangement, too. These moments, I feel his coexistence. In Every moment.

S: To be grateful to everything. It's a very nice aspect of Christians.

E: Because I know a lot of Buddhists. I think that, they pray everyday, and read the sutras time after time, what kind of effect do these have on their hearts? We are understanding him during understanding different things. Such as pray.

S: Do you think that bible more meaningful for the life?

E: Because there are a lot of guides inside. It can tell you now how to do this, how to do that. I think the Buddhists will repeat the heart sutra once. That's just the peace for heart.

S: Do you talk about the belief with your Buddhist friends?

E: No. We respect each other. Sometimes we talk about the life circle and heaven.

S: What did you say?

E: I said, isn't heaven a better place? Give an end for all. To go to a better place.

S: Someone says, the Christians are active, Buddhists are not active in missionary work. What do you think?

E: It may be, but I am not. I don't want to persuade anybody, I don't think people can be persuaded, how could it be?

S: Did you introduce anybody to convert?

E: I've brought people to the community. They may have converted after a few years. Then they came and told me I was the one who made the first Christian contact with them. But I don't have this kind of experience, to introduce people into the community and make them believe. What I can do is to bring people here, and sing songs.

S: It is enough for today. Thank you. If I have more questions, I will contact you.

E: Thank you too.

Interview with Miss M

Date: 20th April, 2009

Place: Student Dormitory in Leipzig

M: Miss M

S: Interviewer

S: How did you join the community?

M: I was studying at Student College in Leipzig. I knew no one at that time. There were some classmates in the Student College and one of them introduced a girl to me. Since we didn't live far from one another, we got in contact with each other occasionally. She was a member of the community. I stayed in Leipzig almost a year and until May of the next year I had almost no contact with the outside world except my classmates. The girl said to me, she knew that I was an extroverted person and I should get to know more people, so let's go to the community. I was not against that; I regarded it as getting know friends anyway. They organized a barbeque; we went there and had fun. I regarded it as a party. So I went there. At that time, the community was fewer than ten people, very small, since the pastor hadn't come yet. G and L were religious investigators then. We had a lot of fun. G and L told me there were some people from Beijing. We had a good time, so after that I went to the community when they called me. However, they couldn't simply let you have fun, they did missionary work. During the barbeque, we sang songs. We had lyric sheets in hand, but the songs were quite easy to learn. We sang when we were happy, it was really pleasant. Leipzig was not depressing, but was really boring. Suddenly, a group of people appeared and we had a good time, I felt good. So I participated in their activities more.

After one or two months, the pastor came. I was new in the community. I didn't read the Bible. I am not the type who likes to read. They told me that I should read the Bible from the beginning to the end. Were they kidding? I didn't read through the chapter I should have read even once. A part of the Bible is Proverbs. I liked to read this part for a

period of time. There were many big truths in that part. At that time, I felt the warmth of the community. The members were kind to people. I didn't read much of the Bible. They were very kind to me. Maybe at that time there was no personal interest in the relationship, now personal interest is interfering in the relationship. It is all right that people are selfish, but it is like a wolf in sheep's skin.

When I joined the Bible reading for the first time, I sat and listened to the providence of the others. I was the one, who sat beside and did not participate in that. I saw someone was crying, and I was very surprised. According to my experiences, that was absolutely impossible. Why did they need to cry and cry? I felt strange. I cannot understand that till now. They cried so hard! I only cried once.

I was baptized during a camping trip. At the beginning of the camping trip, I did not feel anything touch me. I didn't think that I was a numb person; I thought that the Bible was a thing far away from me.

They regard me as someone who reads little about the Bible and does not have a profound spiritual life. I regard myself as someone who lives with her own principles. They did something that I, as an ordinary person, would not do. So I don't think it is necessary to go back to the community. Now that I am not in the community, I still have many, or several good friends. In the community, there are also some good people, or some who I can accept, and there are some I cannot accept. I have a quality that says if I cannot accept you in life, I will draw a line between you and me.

(M's cell phone rang and interrupted her narrative.)

M: Later something happened in my life. When you are in the bad mood, you want to talk with some good friends, some friends you trust. At that time, there were some community members showing their concerns and told me to visit the community. Sometimes they made me feel that I should rely on God, look up to God and God would help me. I felt depressed. I am an ordinary person; I just wanted to talk to human being. I didn't have a deep spiritual life and I could not communicate with God. I suddenly had some scunner against them.

I got to know my ex-boyfriend in the community. My boyfriend thought them selfish

too, so he didn't go to the community, either. I had to work every week so I didn't go to the community often. Every time I went, I didn't have many feelings in my heart. At that time, I cared so much about my boyfriend. He decided not go to the community, then I stopped.

However, why I didn't go to the community later, I cannot figure out. Later I broke up with my boyfriend, and it was chaos. I wanted to talk to someone, and I found no one in the community. I went to Cologne and found my good friend, and I shared everything with her. We called each other several times everyday. This kind of greeting was really warm while the greeting of some others just bothered me.

As we didn't go to the community, the pastor came to visit us. At that time, we suffered so much because my boyfriend had depression, which affected my life so much, as well as his. I was out of solutions. The pastor knew a little about this because he was familiar with R. R helped us also. Later the pastor came to our house and I had the hope that he might be able to help us. If not materially, at least spiritually. Then the pastor came and we talked about the situation. The pastor's wife asked about my family. At last, I thought, although the pastor was the same age as my parents, we couldn't get any help, which we might get from our parents. There was not a little help at all from the pastor. I didn't understand why he came.

S: What did he say?

M: Nothing. The pastor made me feel that he was helpless too. He said the sickness should be clinically diagnosed. We couldn't do that. As an elder, he could have taught us something. But the pastor did not even reach this level. I was so disappointed. The pastor could repeat a joke in prayer and sermon over and over; he has only one joke in his mind. Suddenly, I felt, I might be the one who didn't read the Bible, but the pastor was the one who could recite the Bible without really understanding the content.

(M's cell phone rang again and interrupted her narrative again.)

M: There was an assignment of work in the community into every small group. The person who's responsible for finance was a jerk. R was an oldest member in the

community and very reliable. He's in charge of the bank card. But that jerk joined the community only for a couple of months and he was assigned an important work. After the assignment, over 20 people, everyone in the room had a work except me! My first reaction was: it's OK, no problem, I could help my boyfriend with the weekly newspaper. It doesn't matter if they didn't know. I participated in the gathering not very often, it was ok that I didn't get the assignment. The wife of the pastor sat besides to me and felt my concern, and she reminded the pastor that he missed me in assignment. I felt so awkward. My boyfriend said that M also helped in designing the weekly newspaper. The pastor assigned me to the newspaper group. I felt so upset. I didn't know why, just felt not right.

The community was good at the beginning. People inside the community didn't have big move. They might do something outside the community, but inside the community was all right. They looked up to God and kindness. But now, I am an observer of the community. In the community, there are still several people, with which I have good relationships. They know I won't tell others and I keep my mouth close, so sometimes they tell me things in the community and complain. There are some elder members in the community who are going to graduate, they only concern about their own development and seek by every means to attain goals. I will never hurt my brothers and sisters in my seek of development. Even as an ordinary person would have never done such kind of thing. But inside the community, they dare to hurt. They always cry and held the Bible in their hands. I don't get it, what are they crying for? Did they confess their sins? They should really confess because they did such things.

The wife of the pastor called me at the beginning when I didn't go to the community. I replied ok. Later when I had bad mood, I didn't even take the call. I thought it was meaningless. Actually, the wife of the pastor is a very kind person. But she is a mother, an elder in life. She asks people to have dinner with her, beside that there was no other emotional or spiritual communication. I couldn't communicate with them. She called me twice and later not any more. Maybe she thought it didn't work.

Now with the former friends in the community, we can have dinner together, but no one will mention that let's go to church. They know my situation: I won't go even when I

am asked to. I'm pretty good now. If I want to play badminton, I have friends to play with. If I want to have dinner, I have enough friends to sit beside the table. We can chat, talk, even day dream. I am an extroverted person. When we get along with each other, I am your guy. We can have a great time. I am in this mood now, I don't want to go back to the community at all.

S: How were you baptized?

M: When I went to the community for the first time, it was 2004, in May, and it was a barbeque. Later the pastor came. He didn't have a residence, so we looked for one for him. I wanted to work and R told me that there was a job in an ice cream shop. So I went and tried, and got the job. I was very grateful for them. Later I worked in the ice cream shop, and went home very late and didn't want to cook. They considered that I didn't have dinner so they called me to join them to eat dinner. They were like brothers. The people around me were one by one converted. They were warm, and nice. When we met, they greeted me and told me tips and tricks for the courses I was taking.

But now, after several years, I have to say, I didn't know a lot of things in the community, of their relationships. I was in the community but at the margin. I felt they were good and nice, and I got help from them.

If other people needed help, I tried my best to help. Later the first group of religious investigators began to convert. I thought that if so many people believed in such a thing, it couldn't be bad.

I read the Bible. The former part, the elder part, is not easy to understand. The latter part, the Proverbs, had some teachings. It was good.

The decision to get baptized was not a result of some great moving moment. I didn't have a big move. But the Pastor kept saying and saying, you've come here for two months, why haven't you decided to believe? So I had pressure. That was the feeling. I thought, it couldn't do any harm if I decide to believe, then I'll do it. Anyway, I didn't feel any influence of the decision. After I did it, I was relieved from the pressure. Maybe it was because of the pastor, he could really push people, put invisible pressure on them. After the decision to believe in God, I felt relaxed a little.

And later I got to know my boyfriend. He taught me computer science, I prayed before the examination. If I passed the test, I was happy.

Getting baptized, my boyfriend thought it was a good idea. Maybe people around you can influence you. Those who joined in the community together with me, were getting baptized. My boyfriend was baptized too. Gradually, I changed my mind. I thought, everyone was getting baptized, fine, baptize was good, then I'll do it.

We went to camping for three days and were baptized at the last day. Before we went there, I did not intend to baptize, and I told my boyfriend, that I did not want to be baptized. At that time, he was not my boyfriend yet, we were good friends, we had a good relationship. I said, I didn't want to be baptized. Firstly, people who have a deep spiritual life and have read over the Bible can be baptized. I was impossible to fulfill this. The Bible is so long. Secondly, I am fully aware, even now, that I didn't believe firmly. He said, don't push yourself. But my name was already on the list of people who were going to be baptized. Then he said: They wouldn't push you. I felt fine.

On the second day, I have forgotten the detail. The pastor was preaching, and he mentioned something. Many people were crying. And I cried, too. I felt strange when they cried, but at last I cried, too. I have forgotten why I cried. After the sermon, I told the wife of the pastor, that I had intended not to be baptized, but today something touched me, so I decided to do it. I said and cried. She held me in arms and patted on me, said, if I didn't want then don't do it. I said: I want to do it. So I was baptized.

After baptizing, I felt that I didn't do good enough. Later the more I know more things in the community, what they did, the more I confirm that I don't need to go to the community. When I am happy, I tell the Germans that I am a Christian. When I am not happy, I say I believe on nothing. Then I feel suddenly relieved. Maybe I really hadn't believed deeply, I hadn't any spirituality. If someone likes to read books, he can enjoy reading. If he doesn't like read and is forced to read, that is painful.

M: If I continued to be a part of the community, it wouldn't have been painful, but I am surely happy when I am outside the community. Inside the community, there are a lot of people. There are few friends of mine who don't force me to participate in the community. We can be friends in private. It is meaningless for me now to be in the

community.

At the beginning, I prayed for my own interest like study. I want God help me to pass the examination. There are some people in the community who didn't study well and copied answers during their tests. People outside the community would say that the community members cheat in tests. I don't think it meaningful to be in the community.

My friends, who are outside the community, tell me things inside the community. I regard myself as a listener, not a member of the community. I cannot stand their deeds. They tell me these things and with a comment: the community members are just so so. I feel upset. It likes that I make a good friend and everybody says he is a bad person. Under the normal condition, I won't support him anymore. How could everyone wrong him?

S: Do you pray before your examinations now?

M: Now? not at all. I don't believe this. That's quite simple. If you don't read and review, you can't not pass the examination, even though God gives you power. If you work hard and fail in the examination, did God empowered you?

Many things and prayers are just coincidences. Therefore, I don't pray any more.

S: How do you understand the things that God gave you?

M: I did my reviews three days before an examination. When I was tired, I prayed. If I passed the examination, I was very happy because God blessed me, and this was providence. If I failed, it was my own fault because I didn't work hard.

Now I think it a kind of self comforting. Now I walk out from the community, now I don't argue with the community members. They will argue with you. I don't like argue. Maybe I am wrong, let me be wrong. I work hard and I have handed out homework every week, I passed five math examinations in one semester. When I was distracted, I failed all the tests. I don't want to slander God, but he has no effect on me.

S: Did you have a phase, that you liked God?

M: At the very beginning, I liked God very much. When I saw rain outside the bus, I

prayed. When I got out of the bus, the rain stopped. When I arrived at home, it began to rain again. It was so marvelous for a beginner in belief. Now when I rethink about it, it was not God's power, it was me, I was so cute and naive. Now before the examinations I tell myself that I can pass if I have worked hard. If I know I cannot pass, then I come to take a look of the examination. Only I know how good I do the review.

I have heard a story. A community member was sick. The community members came to take care of her, but they came very late and disturbed her roommates. They didn't care because they needed to take care of their sisters in the community.

Why do I know so much about the community? Because I don't tell the others. This attitude makes me reliable, and therefore, I know more. They know I am outside the community, I won't tell anyone.

S: What is the difference of the community at the beginning and the community now?

M: It just like that I met you at the first time, you are nice and treat others good. Later we get to know each other better and deeper, I find out that you are selfish and you hurt others for your own interest. I cannot stand that. My principles do not allow that. Then I won't be your friend anymore.

A period time ago, I met a person, who was new in the community and was enthusiastic, he was very willing to do things for the community. I saw him and reminded me on myself four years ago.

There is a group in the community who welcomes the new comers. If you visit the community for the first time, once you come into the door, some people will welcome you warmly, everybody says hello to you. The new comer welcome group will speak to you, and ask, where do you from and what do you study? If you study economics and are freshman in college, they will introduce you several people are about to graduate and are in your consultancy. You suddenly have a bunch of people who are willing to help you. If you want to rent a house, they can tell you who has the information. They have been here for several years, you can find many ways to satisfy you and help you. After a while, you find out that you've been in the community for a period of time, so you should do something for the community. The others will tell you that you are one of

the community, and you should commit yourself to the community. I think they are right. It is like you are joining a circle of friends. Everyone in the community helps and serves you, so you should do the same thing for them. It's ok.

So you get closer to them, get to know what they have done, get to know everyone's personality. At the beginning, you think there are several people who don't do the right thing. However you come to the community for God, not for them. However later, if we admire the same God, why are they able to do such bad things that are not possible for an ordinary person to commit. If they pray, will God still help them? I think God still helps them, even though what they do is evil. Then what is God doing?

Everything should have an explanation, the bad thing, the good thing. Once a pastor said his daughter died due to cancer. He said he was in deep sorrow. Then his wife said to him that their daughter was going to a better place, a happier place. I thought they did have a high spiritual life. Now I think, I want to live in this moment. I will be in deep sorrow if any my good friends or my family member passes away. They are not going to a better place. If they are brought to another place where his or her family and friends are not there, how could he or she be happy? I cannot understand their ideas. However, this is me. I don't have a spiritual life.

M: At the very beginning, we were all simple students. When we were in the college, there were no big conflicts. Between classmates, there was no conflict. Now we go by our own ways, so the relationships are ok. If we compete for a position, there could be an interest conflict. Then the money is involved. The community is a small society. When people's interest is offended, it can trigger big conflict.

At the beginning, it was a big family and everybody was getting along with others. However when I was in desperation, nobody gave me a sincere help. Later when I was upset, nobody cared. There was someone greeted me then said, M, please come and help me, this or that.

I am an extroverted person, I know a lot of people outside the community. If you know Y, he comes directly to the theme and invites you to visit the church. However, when I was in the community, I never did missionary work on my friends. I said to them, if they

were interested in this, I could bring them to the community. I didn't chase them for the missionary work. Whether I believe in God or not doesn't affect my friends.

So I have a lot of friends outside the community. It is easy to compare and judge. Every group has its good and bad sides. Outside the community, it is more relaxed, more comfortable. I can just be myself. If you are in the community, you have to say hello to everyone, no matter you are happy or not. If you are at home, you can say it out that you are not happy. Therefore, the community is very fake to me. Now, I want to be an ordinary person.

S: Do you still relate to the God, who you met before?

M: No. Now I think that he cannot help me. They always said, when I needed help, when I prayed, what God gave me, no matter good or bad, was a growth given by God. Now I think, if I don't study, I can't pass the examination even with the God's blessing. I don't have anything to rely on God. The good big family has vanished about 70%. I think it is meaningless to go there again. Those who are my friends, stay as my friends.

S: Do you think there should be a higher standard for the community?

M: Right. I always discuss this with my friend. These are basic rules. I don't talk with people about big theories. The Buddhism makes people behave kindly. Christianity has an explanation for everything. If you ask God for something and you haven't got it, it would be explained as a chance given by God to conquer a difficulty. Doesn't it sound like fooling?

M: I did experience a long period of desperation. At that time, nobody could help me. I felt the members of the community were not willing to help. On the contrast, my friends outside the community asked me to have dinner with them, because they didn't let me be alone at home. They invited me to drink beer, and I got drunk, then went home and slept. Those who were brothers and sisters in the community, they called me and said: Pray. I thought, go to hell. Y asked me whether I was upset, if I had time I could go to the church and pray. I was so upset. I just wanted to talk to some human being.

I went to a German Church. I had a Mongolian friend. He asked me to come with him

every week. Once he called as I was in bad mood and didn't want to go out. He said that I should go to the church and pray. I was suddenly very angry and said to him to leave me alone. I also said, if I wanted to go to the church I would go, I knew there was activity on Saturday. I knew I shouldn't have said that and hurt him.

At the beginning I thought that I didn't have a deep spiritual life. The others could pray when they are in trouble. I talked to my good friend. Sometimes I closed windows and doors at home, shouted and shouted, then cried, let all desperation out. However in the community it was so depressive. I was always told "you should do this, you should do that". It was ok. But why the others could be not adhering to these rules. Why should I oblige and be depressive, while the others could do whatever they want?

I donated money to the community at the beginning. It was not 10 percent because 10 percent was too much for me. I donated 10 Euros and transferred the money every month. Later I am out of the community, so I didn't donate again. I could use the 10 Euros for many other things.

S: Was the donation meaningful?

M: Yes. At that time I thought, I didn't do anything meaningful, my donation was little, but if we accumulate all donations, the community could be bigger and stronger. At that time, there were about 10 people in the community. Later the community did become bigger. Different people came to the community for different purposes. I could accept that because the community is a place that helps people. Some people

M: I didn't have friends in Leipzig. I had many friends in Berlin and other cities. I just enlarged my circle of friends of the community members. After I stayed in Leipzig for a period, I got to know quite a few people. I also sold a ShangWuTongYi¹¹². By selling the electronic dictionary, I got to know many people. When we met again, we said hello to each other. If we found things in common, we might be friends later. I made friends in the university. Friends have new friends, they would also become my friends.

¹¹² ShangWuTongYi, an electronic Chinese-German dictionary.

In the community, it was depressive. People needed to pray before dinner. When they tell stories, they always say “Thank God”. It was not a relaxed dinner. I just wanted ordinary friends.

I didn’t participate in activities of a photograph group¹¹³. I was afraid that if they knew I was a community member, they would regard me as a person who cannot get along with others. Now I am out of the community, I can participate in their activities. Sometimes they still mock me.

S: Did you call someone and said you never go to the community again?

M: No. It would be a bigger problem if I did so. I didn’t dare to do that. They would have especially nicely asked me, whether I want to have a talk with them. They would think that God could change me because I’ve baptized. They would think that I may leave the community for a while and will go back again. If I say I will never go back again. They would regard it as exaggerated, and everyone would talk to me. I can’t stand that. Now I live in peace. I don’t need to claim anything to anybody. I don’t need to emphasize to anyone whether I am a Christian or not. I just want to live my life. Whether I am a Christian, has nothing to do with others.

S: Do you still read the Bible?

M: Never again. I still feel the God is a powerful god, but I don’t read the Bible anymore. I have two or three Bibles at home. I wanted to throw them away but didn’t dare to do that. Now I am happy, I live my life. If I live happily, my parents live happily too. If I don’t live happily, my parents will worry about me.

The community is like a wall, and I am a small ball that knocked on the wall and bounces back. How much the ball knocks on the wall depends on the ball’s flexibility and power. Now I still hear a lot of things about the community, as a listener.

S: Do you know the teaching and the domination of the community?

¹¹³ Photograph group, a self organized group of Chinese whose hobby is photographing.

M: I think the teaching of the community is to be good, to help others or something like that. If those who are educated by the teaching cannot be adhering to the teaching, then I don't need to believe it, it is like a monk who kills. At the beginning I had doubts, there were things that God is not able to do. He has his great power, but this great power cannot save the society.

S: How do you regard your relationship with Jesus now?

M: Now, he has no relationship with me at all. And I am not able to be related with him now. I thought he was the savior, who I could pray to, and he would help me to achieve some goals that not very difficult. It was like an ordinary person helping ordinary person. He could help me with his own way, but I needed to try my best and pray for things that were not beyond my ability. It was like there was a small ditch before you, and you were afraid to go over it. He pushed you a bit, then you just got through. He could help you on things that you have the actual ability to do. Now I think, everything depends on my effort.

S: What is your comment on the pastor?

M: The pastor. If I may comment a little harshly, it would be that the pastor hasn't a high quality. He can recite the whole Bible, but he is a human being with a human body. He is not bad. But as a missionary worker, he hasn't experienced the things of real society. It has nothing to do with education. I thought he could help us as elder, but he had no solution. He only said: Let's pray.

S: What did you expect?

M: I hoped the pastor could tell me the lessons of life. I thought he had the quality, which our parents all have. Like if I did something wrong, he could tell me why and where I was wrong. However, he came and said: Let's pray. I was so disappointed, so disappointed. It was not what I expected at all. Even my parent or any parent on the world could tell me more than he did. The pastor couldn't do it. He did read on book thousand times, but he read none of the other.

S: How was your recovering process?

M: I adjusted myself to the situation. I stayed at home for three or four days. And my friends, who mostly are not the community members, and my friends in China help me. As my boyfriend left, these friends always asked me to have dinner with them. They are very generous; they don't think that I disturb them. At that time, I was often not at home and drank with friends. I got drunk and went to sleep. Later I got better. Time will cure. It was hard, lasted for a year.

During the year, I am totally outside the community. I leave the God's permitted land, which makes me relief.

I don't go to the church even on Sunday. People called me and asked whether I'm sick and why I didn't go to the church. The community sometimes gives invisible pressure. Now I hope to have a relaxed life.

S: Do you have any German good friends?

M: Yes. I don't have especially good German friends. There is someone who can talk to, like classmates. The German people that I know, don't believe in religion. At the beginning, I discussed as a Christian with them. I asked why he didn't believe in God. He asked me back, why I believed in God. I said that it made people become good people and I didn't persuade him. I have a German neighbor, she says that I'm living a good life now. Her father is a Catholic and her mother is a Protestant. As they went together, both communities were against the marriage and tried to jeopardize the relationship. So they didn't get an official certificate of marriage and received many curses. Now the family lives well.

I don't force people to do anything. The community members always take it for granted, that if they believe, so should their friends do. It is a free choice, why should it be an oblige?

Now I am happy. I am happy when I am on the phone, otherwise I'm cheating my parents. The aim of everything you do is to make you happy, to make people around you happy.

S: Did you ever participate in the Sunday school?

M: Never. During the Bible reading, they always argued and argued about certain questions. It is not like one plus one equals two. It is meaningless for one thought to try to persuade another thought. The Bible reading lasted for one hour and they argued for two hours. It was meaningless to stay there.

I went there a long time ago. At that time, there were groups who were arguing. One group thought this was what the Bible says; another group thought that was what the Bible says. I was always listening. At last, the Bible remains the same. Arguing is a waste of time. It is like reading a book; everyone has his own understanding.

M: I'm hungry, shall we eat?

S: OK. Thank you for your time and let's have dinner.

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Zusammenfassung

Die Dissertation widmet sich der Erforschung der Formation und Diversität einer Chinesischen christlichen Gemeinde in Deutschland. Die Beziehung zwischen transnationaler Mission und dem Leben der Migranten und Migrantinnen wird im Fokus der Arbeit stehen. Im Rahmen der Theorie des Transnationalismus werden die chinesischen Migranten und Migrantinnen von der transnationalen Mission in verschiebender Art und Weise beeinflusst.

Die Chinesische christliche Gemeinde in Leipzig ist der Forschungsgegenstand. Am Anfang war es eine kleine Gruppierung mit weniger als zehn Mitgliedern. Im Jahr 2004 wurde ein Taiwanesischer Pastor von missionarischen Institutionen in Nordamerika nach Deutschland geschickt, um Chinesen in Deutschland zu missionieren. Die Entsendung hatte ferner das Ziel, durch die in Deutschland Bekehrten die China Mission voranzutreiben; sie sollen nach ihrer Rückkehr das Evangelium verbreiten. Nachdem der Pastor nach Leipzig gekommen ist, entwickelte sich die Chinesische christliche Gemeinde in kurzer Zeit zu einer Gruppe von über 100 Mitgliedern.

Die Dissertation untersucht sowohl die missionarischen Strategien des Pastors als auch die Reaktionen der Gemeindemitglieder. Durch Teilnehmende Beobachtung und Interviews wurden in Feldforschungsaufenthalten Daten erhoben und Materialien gesammelt. Die Objektive Hermeneutik und die Dokumentarische Methode werden als Rekonstruktive Methoden in der Auswertung der Interviews verwendet, um die latenten Sinnstrukturen der Gemeindemitglieder zu rekonstruieren.

Die Strategien des Pastors werden anhand folgender Fragen analysiert: Wie setzt der Pastor die transnationalen Ressourcen ein, um seine missionarische Arbeit voranzutreiben? Wie können die Konsequenzen seiner Strategien in der Formation und der Entwicklung der Gemeinde nachgewiesen werden?

Eine Typologie der Gemeindemitglieder wird durch die Rekonstruktive Methode etabliert. Die Typologie weist darauf hin, wie die schnelle Entwicklung der Gemeinde möglich war und die Diversität der Gemeinde generiert wurde.

Die Typologie stellt die folgenden Typen der Gemeindemitglieder dar: der Leiter-Typ, der reproduktive Leiter-Typ, der Anhänger-Typ mit christlichem Hintergrund, der Anhänger-Typ ohne christlichen Hintergrund, der konkurrenzfähige Leiter-Typ, der selektiv-integrierte Typ und den Aussteiger-Typ.

Als Leiter-Typ setzt der Pastor seine missionarischen Strategien ein, um interessierte Chinesen an die Gemeinde zu binden und sie dadurch zu missionieren. Seine Strategien haben verschiedene Wirkungen auf die unterschiedlichen Typen, demzufolge hinterlassen die Typen unterschiedliche Entwicklungsspuren (trajectories) im transnationalen religiösen Feld.

Das Anpassungsverhältnis zwischen dem Pastor und den Mitgliedern gestaltet sich folgendermaßen: Der reproduktive Leiter-Typ tritt in die Gemeinde ein und lässt sich von dem Leiter-Typ beeinflussen. Der reproduktive Leiter-Typ hat eine profunde Einbettung in der Gemeinde und wirkt aktiv in der missionarischen Arbeit mit. Er ermöglicht die Kontinuität der transnationalen Mission und kann die „China Mission“ verwicklichen.

Der Anhänger-Typ mit christlichem Hintergrund tritt in die Gemeinde ein, um deren Angebote wahrzunehmen. Dieser Typ genießt die transnationalen Ressourcen der Gemeinde, aber ist nicht aktiv in der missionarischen Arbeit.

Der Anhänger-Typ ohne christlichen Hintergrund hat fast die gleiche Entwicklung wie der Anhänger-Typ mit christlichem Hintergrund. Aber der Anhänger-Typ ohne christlichen Hintergrund wird versuchen in China innerhalb seiner Familie zu missionieren.

Der konkurrenzfähige Leiter-Typ tritt in die Gemeinde ein, um Religion zu praktizieren nach seiner Art und Weise. Die Beziehung zwischen dem Leiter-Typ und dem konkurrenzfähigen Leiter-Typ kann Spannungen in der Gemeinde verursachen und sogar zu Konflikten führen. Der konkurrenzfähige Leiter-Typ könnte der transnationalen Mission helfen, diese aber auch behindern. Die Ergebnisse hängen sehr von der Beziehung zwischen ihm und dem Leiter-Typ ab. Die „China Mission“ kann vom konkurrenzfähigen Leiter-Typ verwicklicht werden, unabhängig von der transnationalen Mission des Pastors.

Der selektiv-integrierte Typ lässt sich wenig von dem Leiter-Typ beeinflussen. Er tritt in die Gemeinde ein, um seine Wünsche gezielt zu erfüllen. Dieser Typ hat eine eigene Strategie, mit der Gemeinde umzugehen.

Der Aussteiger-Typ lässt sich nach dem Ausstieg nicht mehr von dem Leiter-Typ beeinflussen. Die „China Mission“ kann von diesem Typ nicht verwicklicht werden.

Die Typologie zeigt die Heterogenität der Entscheidungen der Mitglieder, der Gemeinde beizutreten. Die Diversität der Funktionen verschiedener Akteure in der transnationalen Mission müssen berücksichtigt werden. Die Formation und die Diversität der transnationalen Gemeinde lassen sich durch die entwickelte Typologie erklären. Die Typologie ergänzt die bisherigen Theorien über transnationale Migration und Religionen, die bislang wenig Rücksicht auf die subjektiven Wahrnehmung der Akteure nahmen. Die Dissertation ist ein Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis des Verhältnisses von Migration und Religionen.

