

TRANSNATIONAL FAITH: A HONG KONG CHURCH IN RICHMOND, BRITISH
COLUMBIA

by

JUSTIN KIN-HUNG TSE

B.A. (Hons.) University of British Columbia, 2007

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Geography)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

September 2009

© Justin Kin-Hung Tse, 2009

Abstract

This thesis examines the geographical imaginations of transnational Hongkonger Christians who are parishioners of a Chinese church known in this thesis as St. Matthew's Church, in the Chinese ethnoburb, Richmond, British Columbia, in Metro Vancouver. Seeking to complement current arguments that immigrant religious congregations in North America serve as spaces of social services and identity formation, this study contextualizes St. Matthew's Church at four scales in an effort to understand its geographical positioning at the personal, congregational, metropolitan, and transnational Hong Kong-Vancouver levels. The research question this thesis asks is: *what global and local sites constitute the geographical imaginations of the parishioners who attend St. Matthew's Church in Metro Vancouver?* This research was conducted over 9 months between April and December 2008 at St. Matthew's Church; its methodology included participant observation at religious services as well as 38 semi-structured interviews with 40 people. Based on this research, this thesis argues that transnational Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church see Christian spaces as spaces of peace, an imagination developed in Hong Kong through British colonialism, Christian schools, and religious family practices. The mission of such Hongkonger Christians is to bring a territoriality of sacred peace through social conservatism to their trans-Pacific Hong Kong-Vancouver lifeworlds. Such a territoriality is challenged, however, by their own children growing up in a multicultural English-speaking Canadian society as well as by mainland Chinese migrants who are geopolitically different from Hongkongers. This thesis demonstrates that the Hongkonger imagined political and cultural geography is intertwined with its religious geography and that such a geography of religion pushes scholars of transnational Hongkongers and of sacred territorialities to understand the intersections between sacred space and political territory.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Preface and Acknowledgements	ix
Glossary	xii
Chapter 1	
Introduction:	
A Hong Kong Church in Richmond, British Columbia.....	1
Chapter 2	
Scaling Faith:	
Embodied Religious Imaginations and Transnational Religious Territorialities	10
Re-scaling Religion: From Macro Spatial Science to the Micro Politics and Poetics of Religious Experience	14
The Personal Scale: The Micro-Scale of the Religious Body.....	18
The Transnational Scale: Macro Religious Networks and Political Geographies	26
The Congregational Scale: Service Hubs, Identity Formation, and Geographical Context.....	32
Transnational Religion at Metropolitan and Transnational Scales: Bubbles, Geopolitics, and Personal Imaginations	38
Revisiting the Personal Scale: Geographical Imaginations and the Geography of Religion	42
Conclusion: Scaling the Geography of Religion at St. Matthew’s Church	46
Chapter 3	
Personal Geographies at St. Matthew’s:	
Positionality, Hermeneutics, and Global Ethnography.....	49
Geographical Positionality: A Second-Generation Chinese Christian’s Insider Ethnography...	51
Geographical Hermeneutics: From Insider-Outsider to Dialogical Interpretation	60

Geographical Significance: Scaling the Personal Imagined Geographies of Parishioners at St. Matthew’s Church	64
Geographical Methodology: A Global Ethnography of St. Matthew’s Church	71
Conclusion: From Personal Positionality to Public Geography	80
Chapter 4:	
Hong Kong Christians:	
Transnational, Metropolitan, and Congregational Contexts.....	84
Defining Hongkongers: A Slippery Business	89
Hongkonger Political and Cultural Geography: From Anglo-China to Civilized Urbanites	96
Christianity in Hong Kong: A Political Geography of Religion.....	101
Hongkongers in Vancouver: Quantitative Estimations from Place of Birth and Mother Tongue	106
Hongkongers as Vancouver’s New <i>Homo Economicus</i> : Economic Geography as Emotional Political Geography.....	110
Hongkonger Christians in Vancouver: A Quantitative Profile of a Geography of Religion....	119
St. Matthew’s Hongkongers: Geopolitically Profiling a Congregation	128
Conclusion: Transnational Hongkonger Christians in Geographical Context.....	131
Chapter 5:	
Cantonese Home, Christian Bubble:	
Territorializing Hongkonger Christianity from the Home to Transnational Space.....	134
Hongkonger Christian Imaginations: Education, Family, and Christian Space	136
Encountering Peace: Emotions and Spirituality in Christian Education and Colonial Space ..	139
Familial Peace: Conversion and Christian Territoriality in the Home.....	148
Geopolitical Peace: The Stable West as a Space for (Religious) Reflection.....	155
Congregational Peace: Church as the Father’s House.....	164
Linguistic Peace: A Cantonese Christian Home Away from Home	169

Transnational Urban Peace: Social Conservatism, Sexual Purity, and the Extension of Christian Territorialities to the Cit(ies)	172
Conclusion: Spiritual Peace, Linguistic Home, and Transnational Urban Politics.....	183
Chapter 6:	
The Bubble Is Bursting:	
Challenges to the Hongkonger Christian Territoriality in Multicultural Canada	187
The Second Generation: An Immediate Challenge.....	188
Mainland Chinese Migrants: The Real Challenge	200
Social Capital in the Congregation: Hongkongers and Mainlanders Together?.....	209
Conclusion: Re-working a Cantonese Christian Home Amidst Multicultural Challenge.....	213
Chapter 7:	
Conclusion:	
Transnational Faith Between Hong Kong and Vancouver	216
St. Matthew’s Church: A Transnational Geography of Religion.....	216
Moving Between Scales of Faith: Micro-Geographies of Religion with Macro-Geographical Implications.....	221
Religion and Transnational Hongkongers: A <i>Homo Religiosus</i> Side of <i>Homo Economicus</i> ...	223
Sinophonic Christian Geographies: Religious Networks in the New Christendom	224
Simply Jesus: A Geographer of Religion in the Geography of Religion	227
Bibliography	232
Appendix 1: Behavioural Research Ethics Board Approval Certificate.....	246
Appendix 2: Interview Questionnaire.....	248

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Self-Proclaimed Cultural Identity of Interviewees in Hong Kong, 1996-2006 (%)	90
Table 4.2: Hong Kong Population, Numbers of Catholics and Protestants, 1950-2000	104
Table 4.3: Distribution of Religious Groups in Hong Kong in 1988 and 1995 (%)	105
Table. 4.4: Hongkonger Immigrants to Vancouver in Comparison to Other Migrants by Place of Origin, 2006	108

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Richmond, BC, 1996, by Visible Minority.....	1
Figure 1.2: Richmond, BC, 2006, by Visible Minority.....	2
Figure 1.3: The Growth of St. Matthew's Church, 1996-2008	3
Figure 1.4: Metro Vancouver, Concentration of Visible Minorities by Census Tracts	5
Figure 2.1: The Interplay of Four Scales in the Geography of St. Matthew's Church.....	47
Figure 3.1: Chinese Churches in Metro Vancouver, 2007	65
Figure 3.2: St. Matthew's Parishioners, December 1996.....	68
Figure 3.3: St. Matthew's Parishioners, 2008	69
Figure 3.4: Interview Subjects: Length of Time Attending St. Matthew's Church.....	73
Figure 3.5: Interview Subjects: Age Brackets by Decades.....	74
Figure 4.1: Chinese Population by Mother Tongue, Metro Vancouver.....	109
Figure 4.2: Major Religions in Vancouver, 2001: A Comparative Perspective Among Visible Minorities.....	119
Figure 4.3: Christians in Vancouver, 2001, by Visible Minority	121
Figure 4.4: Religion in Vancouver's Chinese Population, 2001	122
Figure 4.5: Chinese Churches in Vancouver, 2007, by Denomination.....	124
Figure 4.6: Chinese Congregations in Vancouver, 2007, by Primary Language Used in Congregational Worship and Organization	126
Figure 4.7: Interview Subjects: Geopolitics by Self-Identification	128
Figure 4.8: Interview Subjects: Dates of Arrival in Canada.....	129
Figure 5.1: The Global and Local Sites in the Geographical Imaginations of Transnational Hongkonger Christian Parishioners at St. Matthew's Church.....	136
Figure 5.2: Ushers at Wedlock Day Dressed as Maids of Honour	174

Figure 5.3: A Poster for Wedlock Day..... 175

Preface and Acknowledgements

When I reached the end of the first draft of this master's thesis, I stumbled upon another master's thesis, done in a very different university in a very different department on a very different topic. It was Flannery O'Connor's master's thesis, a set of short stories written for the Department of Writing at the University of Iowa in 1947. It is titled *The Geranium: A Collection of Short Stories*. Much of its imaginative focus is on the power of memory, the prevalence of racial inequality, and the proclivity of human foible in the Deep South in the mid-twentieth century. The six stories in this collection—six chapters, one might say—remind me that as different as the story I tell is, my story is, like O'Connor's thesis, a story about humans in place, a human geography. Like O'Connor, I wrestle in this thesis with questions of race and ethnicity, memory and imagination, human agency and emotional geographies. O'Connor's thesis reminded me that the Master of Arts is not merely a stepping stone to a doctoral degree. It is an exploration in and of itself of what it means to be human; it is permission to tell a story—and to tell it right.

David Ley was the first to give me permission to tell this story about a Chinese church in Vancouver. Being supervised by David Ley has been a spiritual experience full of epiphanies personal and intellectual. I recall three such epiphany moments. The first happened over coffee: I remarked snidely that many Chinese Christians were the biblical equivalent of the “scribes and Pharisees” who persecuted Christ to save their own social conservatism; he gently reminded me that as Christian scholars, we are called not merely to lay down judgments but to study with compassion. The second was when I came into his office remarking how the geography of religion had taken a post-structural turn with geographers talking about how religion disciplines youth; remarking on how such a turn removes agency from our study subjects, he said to me gently, “Young man, you want to tell a story that lasts longer than two weeks.” The third was when I had submitted a draft of an article that had slightly critiqued his views on ethnic churches; without taking offence, he gently reminded me that there is a difference between opposition and complementarity—that my view might be better seen as complementary to his view, not diametrically opposed to it. I am always struck by David's gentleness with such a hothead young scholar-in-training, and I thank him for his patience. I hope he has seen growth through this master's project.

Indeed, as David has shown me, the life of the scholar who studies human subjects is a life that gives to one's subjects, a life that does not merely theorize from an armchair but is constantly in the trenches of human existence. What else can one say but that one's work is service when interviewees consistently comment on the interviews as times when they have finally felt understood, when they felt like they were at last free to converse from the heart? I have learned that service in a busy, transnational geographical bubble is more often than not simply to listen with open ears. Deep listening is indeed important for geographical scholarship as one seeks to engage with subjects. But deep listening is also an act of service to participants of a geography project, human subjects who are not treated merely as *subjects* in an interview but *humans* to be listened to. In this sense, the church that I have studied—a church that will remain anonymised as St. Matthew's Church—has also been a great source of support during this project, and the pastoral staff as well as the laity are to be thanked for their patience, gentleness, and well-timed jokes. The only person I can thank by name is my Irish Protestant spiritual director, Jim. Jim

has shown me that education is not the only thing that makes a healthy human being; it is the hilarity of relationship and the (w)holiness of spirituality that makes a human being fully alive, which, as the second-century theologian St. Irenaeus reminds all Christians regardless of geography, is the glory of God (*Adversus Haereses* IV.xx.7). I thank them for their help in this project, and while I must be honest about parts of their geographical imaginations that are exclusionary and imperialist, I sincerely hope that this thesis will be a step in perfecting a transnational religious bubble that can have unpleasant moments but is nevertheless turning into a beautiful bride.

Christian colleagues both within and without the department have lovingly inquired how it was possible (if it even was) to retain a Christian ethic of humility throughout this project. The thought was that because I was studying my own home church, the critical way in which I treat fellow Christians would cause me to see myself on an intellectual, perhaps even spiritual, level higher than them. I confess that many times I have not been as humble as I probably should have been. So despite (and perhaps because of) these times, I thank my colleagues who happen also to be brothers and sisters in the Body—especially Elaine Ho, Karen Lai, Laurie Dickmeyer, Andrew Nelson, Ruth Hicks, Gord Carkner, and Katie Calloway—for keeping on my case all the time and for providing good humour that puts us all in our place.

The collegial atmosphere at the University of British Columbia has been stimulating training ground for me. My committee, David Ley, Dan Hiebert, and David Edgington, has been a constant wellspring of ideas as I have wrestled with why to write about Hongkonger Christians in the first place. I thank especially David Edgington, who agreed at the last minute to be the second reader for this thesis and whose critical suggestions sharpened the focus of this thesis and have pushed me to think further about how a geography of religion might be read by geographers and other scholars who do not study religion. The professors who taught my classes—David Ley, Dan Hiebert, Trevor Barnes, Jim Glassman, Jennifer Chun, and Tsering Shakya—have given me blunt comments on my work and have caused me to grow through this master’s project into hopefully a much better critical thinker than when I started out. My research assistant, Anthony Leung, provided much-needed maps and good humour for this project. My master’s degree cohort—Sarah Brown, Laurie Dickmeyer, Wes Attewell, and Rosemary Collard—have been constant in their support both academically and personally: we struggled through this time emotionally, and we have emerged stronger, I hope. I also want to thank the many other graduate students (both physical and human) in the department with whom conversation has continually stimulated me and who have critiqued and fine-tuned this thesis; I think especially of Lawrence Santiago, Oliver Belcher, Noah Quastel, Nick Lynch, Markus Moos, Amy Nicoll, Eileen Jones, Melissa Ewan, Joshua Caulkins, Yolande Pottie-Sherman, Lachlan Barber, Andrew Nelson, Pablo Mendez, Howard Stewart, Joanna Reid, Tammy Elliot, Luna Vives, Tom Woodsworth, Jessi Lehman, Tommy Thomson, Ben Thorpe, and everyone else I may have omitted. We may not have always agreed, but that is the point of collegial interaction in the first place. As David said in his speech when he became head of the department, we must make an even stronger effort for the “practice of the collectivity.” I am happy to be able to say that this thesis is a product of the collectivity.

Another collectivity that I have rediscovered through this project is the collectivity of my childhood. When I finished writing a very rough draft, I took a retreat at the Holy Cross Center

in Berkeley, CA, a house of studies at the Graduate Theological Union and the University of California, Berkeley, run by my high-school creative writing mentor, playwright-in-residence Fr. Harry Cronin. The Holy Cross fathers who lived at the house provided continual stimulating conversation on the vocation of a Christian scholar and helped me to see the viability of the Christian tradition for storytelling in social science. They also provided readings by authors as diverse as Gerard Manley Hopkins, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Teresa of Avila, and Flannery O'Connor. The Holy Cross Center was also a base from where I was able to attend two of the churches of my childhood, Chinese for Christ, Church of Hayward, and Tree of Life Christian Center, as well as to meet childhood friends who heard many of the ideas in this thesis and gave me much-needed emotional support for the final push. Through these friends (who are too many to name individually), I have rediscovered the ecclesial, educational, and emotional collectivities of my childhood and adolescence in the San Francisco Bay Area, a discovery that has been crucial for my personal positionality *via-a-vis* this thesis as well as for my emotional well being for a longer time than this thesis will be read. Thank you for your Eucharistic hospitality and warm hilarity.

My family has also suffered through this project with me. My father is a pastor himself, though he has recently moved into hospital work full-time, and many of the struggles identified in this thesis have resonated with his own joys and sufferings in ministry. I thank him for putting up with me even when my conclusions about what it means to be a Chinese Christian have differed from his. My mother has also endured persistent questioning about her life as a Hongkonger and as a Christian. I am surprised that she hardly gets annoyed at my constant badgering. Thank you. My sister as well has watched her brother struggle and change from a mere hothead to a hopefully more considerate hothead; I thank her for her patience and long-suffering. My friend, Stephanie, who started out as a church friend, eventually became a potential research assistant (who then referred me to her friend Anthony), and now has blossomed into someone with whom I share a bit more than a friendship with, has been a great listener and has helped me to see that the people I have studied are “unique,” even as the two of us are unique. To all of you, many thanks for your gentle patience and loving endurance as I struggled through this project. It is to you that I dedicate this thesis.

And as always, to the Lord Jesus Christ, I give thanks not out of an uncritical, slavish devotion but out of a genuine gratitude for involving me in something so sublime as Trinitarian communion. It is out of the eternal joy that is shared among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that I find my vocation as a Christian scholar. As a Christian, I am convicted that this thesis is about one aspect of the Bride of Christ, warts and all. But as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I am convinced that despite her many flaws, the church of Jesus Christ is beautiful and can still be more beautiful yet. It is with the conviction that the church is beautiful that I stand now in solidarity with the Hongkonger Christians I have described in this thesis—not because we are all the same or that we completely agree on the nature of Christian territoriality but because there is beauty in our diversity when we are together in communion with our Father. Together we lift up our hearts and give thanks to the Lord our God, for it is right to give our thanks and praise.

Justin Tse
Vancouver, BC
September 2009

Glossary

1.5 generation: a migrant who arrived in the host country at a young age and would not self-identify as the first generation but was not born in the host country.

ABC: American-born Chinese, often a designation for the second-generation Chinese in America.

Ah Chan: a country bumpkin stereotype of Mainland Chinese people.

Astronaut: Typically a male (though sometimes female) who shuttles between Western countries for home and family and East Asia for work. They are called “astronauts” or “spacemen” (Cantonese, *taihongyan*; Mandarin, *taikongren*) because they are always in the sky (often in a plane).

CBC: Canadian-born Chinese, often a designation for the second-generation Chinese in Canada.

Charismatic: literally in the New Testament, a manifestation of grace. This term is used in Christian circles to discuss mystical and ecstatic phenomena such as speaking in tongues.

Dailokyan: Cantonese, literally, “big land human,” interchangeable with Mainlander and Mainland Chinese person. Mandarin: *daluren*. This designation for Chinese nationals is often derogatory.

Heunggongyan: Cantonese, literally, “Hong Kong human,” interchangeable with Hongkonger, Hongkongese, and Hong Kong people. Mandarin: *xianggangren*.

PK: a pastor’s kid (not to be confused with the Cantonese vulgar PK “*pok kai*” that is equivalent to *f---* in the English language)

Silent Exodus: a phenomenon noted first by Carjaval (1994) that the second generation of many ethnic churches in North America was quietly disappearing from the ethnic church.

Sze lai: Cantonese, literally, “master’s breast.” A derogatory Cantonese slang term usually used to designate women who do not need employment because they are well-supported by their husbands and spend their days gossiping and grocery shopping. There is no Mandarin equivalent.

Yee nai: a concubine (Cantonese, literally, “second breast”). Mandarin: *ernai*.

Zhongguokyan: Cantonese, literally, “Chinese human,” but politically used to designate a Chinese national. Mandarin: *zhongguoren*.

Chapter 1: Introduction: A Hong Kong Church in Richmond, British Columbia

In September 2008, the church that I am studying, St. Matthew's Church,¹ celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its priest's ordination. Standing in front of the large cake, the priest recounted the origins of the church. In 1996, he said, the Bishop of New Westminster held a meeting with several Anglican priests in which he proposed the start of a new multicultural church in the (at the time) 45% Asian (33% ethnic Chinese) populated ethnoburb, Richmond, British Columbia, in Metro Vancouver (see Figure 1.1). Most of the priests, presumably of non-Chinese backgrounds, expressed excitement that at last there would be a multicultural church in multicultural Richmond. But our pastor² disagreed with those priests. "Bishop," he said, "my heart is very heavy. I know that it is a good thing to start a multicultural church in Richmond. But in my opinion, that would only give you a piece of the cake. If I could start an all-Chinese speaking church, I could give you the whole cake." Two weeks later, the bishop called him back: "I want the whole cake."

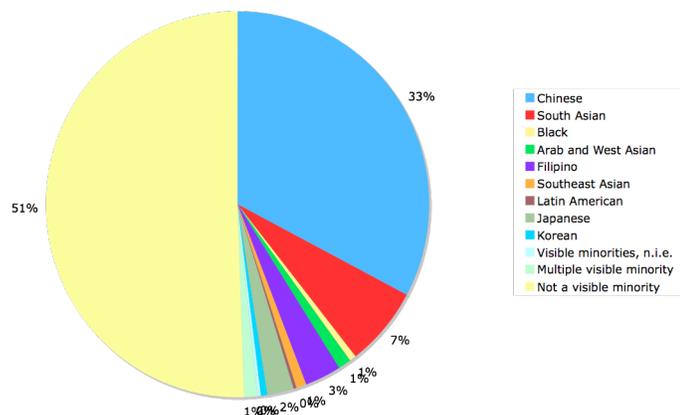


Figure 1.1: Richmond, BC, 1996, by Visible Minority (Source: Statistics Canada, 1997)

¹ To protect confidentiality, the church name here is a pseudonym.

² In the Anglican tradition, the titles "pastor" (in the exception of the recent development of "lay pastors"), "priest," "rector," and "presbyter" all refer to an ordained, licenced minister recognized by the global Anglican Communion.

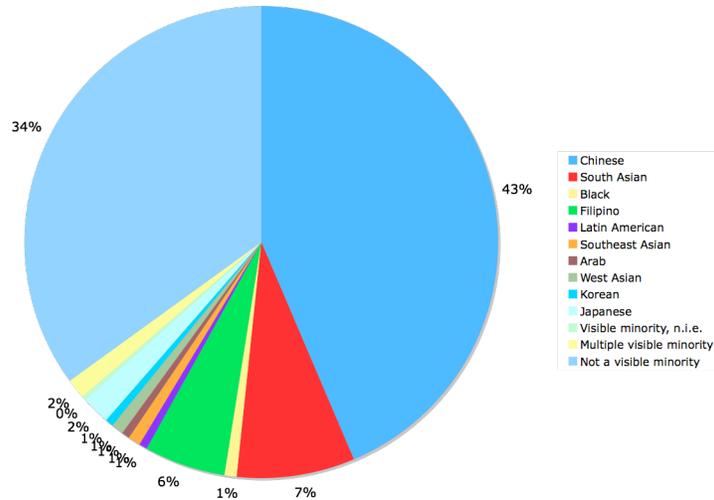


Figure 1.2: Richmond, BC, 2006, by Visible Minority (Source: Statistics Canada, 2007c)

This thesis unpacks the geographical imaginations that constitute that “whole cake.” At first glance, this is a simple task: “the whole cake” is simply a Chinese-speaking Anglican church that would reach out to the whole Chinese population in Richmond, if not Metro Vancouver. St. Matthew’s Church was planted in 1996 with 90 people to be a Chinese mission in the heart of ethnoburban Richmond (Li, 1998; Edgington, Goldberg, and Hutton, 2006), the third Chinese Anglican church in the Metro Vancouver area. By 2006, the number of Asians³ in Richmond had risen to 62% (and the Chinese population to 43%), dwarfing the 34% non-visible minority population (see Figure 1.2). Indeed, as Figure 1.2 shows, by 2006, the Chinese population dominated the visible minority population in Richmond. The church itself had grown from 90 people to 400 people. Its peak, in fact, had been in 2004 with 500 people until an unfortunate crisis of leadership⁴ in 2005 precipitated the departure of many parishioners to other Chinese congregations in Metro Vancouver. Even so, the church by 2008 had resumed a steady

³ By “Asians” in this thesis, I amalgamate the census categories of “Chinese,” “Filipino,” “South Asian,” “Korean,” and “Japanese.” I have not included West Asians and Arabs (3%).

⁴ This crisis involved a theological controversy over charismatic phenomena and the role of ecstatic practices such as speaking in tongues, exorcisms, and being “slain in the Spirit”—that is, falling backward in ecstasy at the laying on of hands—that positioned the pastor and the lay leadership at opposite sides of the debate. Many parishioners left in the aftermath of the fall-out, but as the chart in Figure 1.3 shows, the congregation had more or less numerically recovered from this crisis by 2008.

400-person Sunday attendance, still a 400% increase from its beginnings a little over a decade ago (see Figure 1.3).

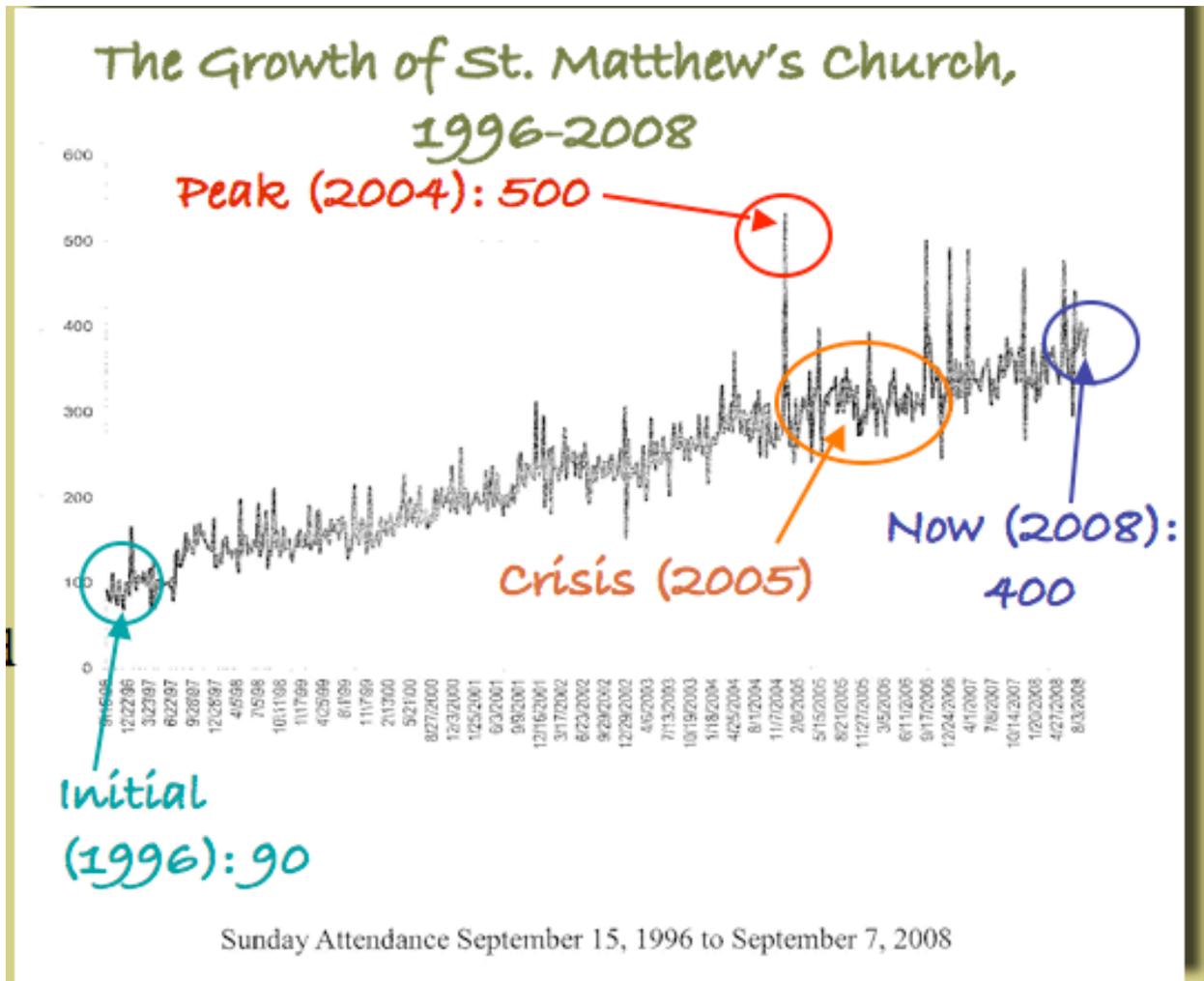


Figure 1.3: The Growth of St. Matthew's Church, 1996-2008 (Source: St. Matthew's Church, 2008 Annual Report)⁵

In 2008 (the year I studied the church), there were pressures to change the church to a more multicultural church with the rise of a presumably English-speaking second generation, a growing diversity among Asians themselves in Richmond, and an influx of Mainland Chinese migrants to Metro Vancouver (see chapter 7). But in the face of such demands, an influential

⁵ Because "St. Matthew's Church" is a pseudonym, I have not included its annual report or its telephone directories in my reference list because their titles would give away the actual name of the church. This chart is a photographic reproduction from the 2008 annual report. The annotations are my own.

member of the church, Jamie,⁶ corroborated the pastor's "whole cake" Chinese mission philosophy in her interview: the church exists

...so that people who do not have the English language can worship and be pastored. They need pastoral care for the Chinese-speaking. Because these people come to a new land, they may have a lot of difficulties and they may have a lot of emotional problems, they may have encountered things that they have never encountered before, and even they lost their faith, so they need pastoral care in Chinese.⁷

With this philosophy in mind, St. Matthew's Church held only a Cantonese service in the mornings until a small English service was opened for what was supposed to be the English-speaking second generation in September 2007, just under eleven years after its founding. But even the second generation had become used to the Chinese service, if they had not already whole-heartedly embraced it. When asked why she did not attend the English-speaking service designed for Canadian-born Chinese (CBC) Christians, Julia, a second-generation university student born in Canada but who associates herself with being Chinese, quipped: **"I was never resentful [at having to go to a Chinese service] because I thought Chinese must of course go to a Chinese congregation, why all of a sudden go to an English congregation?"** As the pastor, Jamie, and Julia seemed to agree, what constitutes the geographical imaginations of a Chinese Christian at St. Matthew's Church seems very simple: one is born Chinese, one is raised in a Chinese family, one speaks Chinese, one is spiritually formed in a Chinese Christian church, and one reaches out to fellow "brothers and sisters" who need pastoral care in Chinese. In this sense, both "Chineseness" and "Christianity" can be taken for granted at St. Matthew's Church.

⁶ As with the church name, all interviewees in this thesis have also been given pseudonyms.

⁷ While there is no official format for quotations from interview transcripts, I have presented all interview data in boldface to distinguish them from quotes from secondary literature as this thesis is largely concerned with the interview data in its grounded study of a Hong Kong church in Richmond, BC. This practice is not new in theses in human geography.

But neither “Chineseness” nor “Christianity” are simple. Both terms presume a geography, the first a transnational East Asian ethnic and political geography, the second a geography of religion. Instead of taking these terms for granted, the research question I ask begs for specificity as place is discussed in an effort to read St. Matthew’s Church with geographical sensitivity: *what global and local places constitute the imagined geographies of parishioners at St. Matthew’s Church, a Chinese church in Metro Vancouver?*

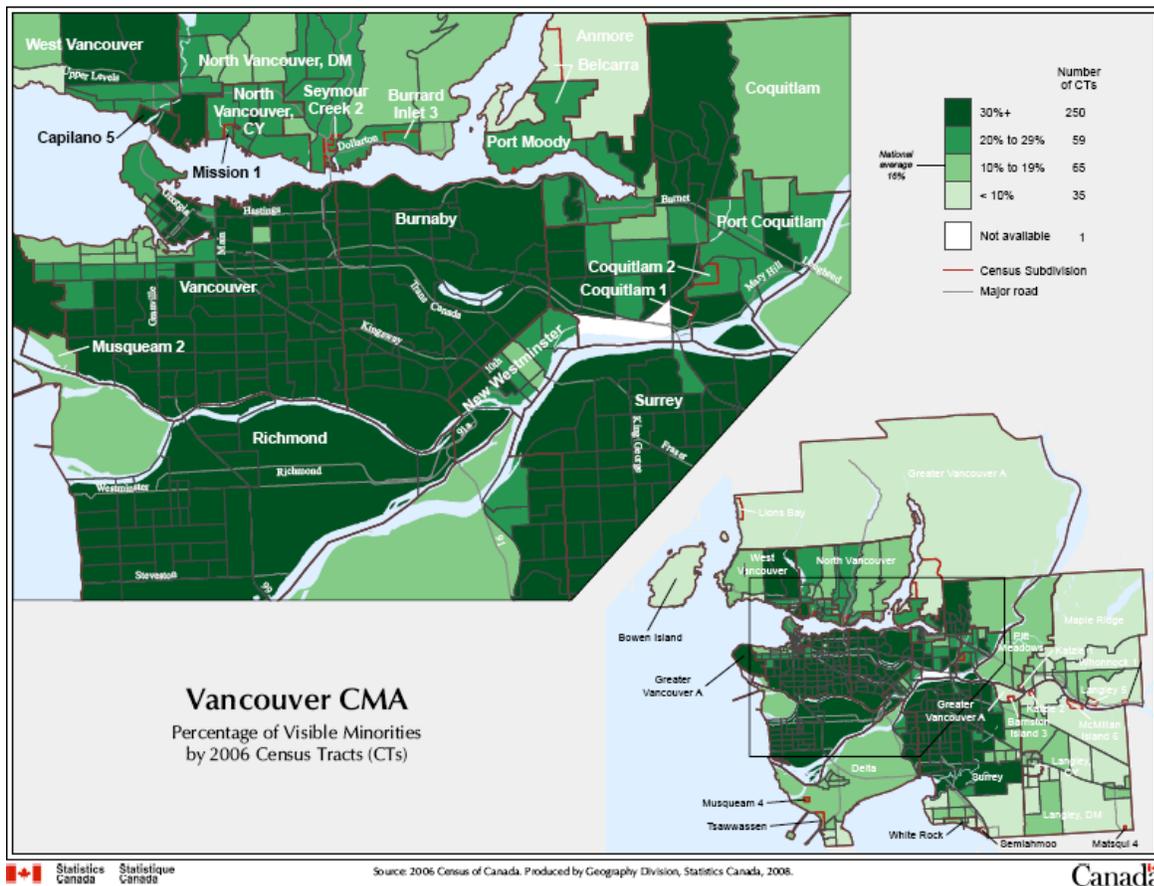


Figure 1.4: Metro Vancouver, Concentration of Visible Minorities by Census Tracts (Source: Statistics Canada, 2008)

The question focuses on Metro Vancouver because the social fields of the parishioners who attend this Chinese church in Richmond are not bound by the city limits; rather, like the many other visible minorities who live in Metro Vancouver (see Figure 1.4), their lifeworlds are mobile through access to public and private transportation, the spread of their social networks,

and the geographical distribution of educational and employment institutions throughout the area. Still, the research question I have asked might sound parochial: what may be true for St. Matthew's Church may not be for the 105 others listed in the Vancouver Chinese Ministerial Fellowship's directory in 2007. But read more carefully, the question is not solely about St. Matthew's Church. It is about the *imagined geographies* of people who currently attend St. Matthew's Church, some of whom have been there from its inception in 1996 and some of whom had been attending for less than a year when I interviewed them. Questions about imagined geographies, while concerned about the material consequences to the congregation that meets at St. Matthew's, are questions about memory, the meanings of Chineseness, experiences of transnational migration, personal geopolitics, language, media preferences, and religious territorialities. Answers to such questions revealed often that life in "Asia" referred to life in *Hong Kong*, speaking "Chinese" meant speaking *Cantonese*, and being a "Christian" was part of a larger effort to find and maintain a *peaceful Christian territoriality* in two busy transnational urban hubs, Hong Kong and Vancouver. Such questions transcend the field site, allowing us to see St. Matthew's Church at four scales: the *personal* scale of memory where parishioners reflect on places in which they grew up and were educated, the *congregational* scale of weekly religious gatherings at St. Matthew's Church, the *metropolitan* scale of interchurch relations among Chinese congregations in Metro Vancouver (see chapter 3), and the *transnational* scale of an imagined Christian territoriality that exists between Hong Kong and Vancouver. Ethnographic field work at St. Matthew's Church that explored these questions at these four scales took place for nine months between April and December 2008. This ethnography involved participant observation at mostly Cantonese public services⁸ (including several special events when

⁸ There are unfortunately no hard numbers for how many people prefer Cantonese or Mandarin, although it was the preferred Chinese dialect for 39 out of my 40 interviewees (the one exception was a Singaporean). This said, there

transnational speakers from Hong Kong were flown in to Metro Vancouver) and 38 semi-structured interviews with 40 people.

This thesis casts these Hong Kong Chinese parishioners at St. Matthew's Church as what comparative religion scholar Mircea Eliade (1961) has termed *homo religiosus*. Eliade argued in his monumental work *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* that humans can be typified as *homo religiosus* (religious human) and *homo symbolicus* (symbolic human), beings who need myth and story to make sense of their lives. While it is dangerous to typecast humans into ideal types, I argue that a *homo religiosus* typology reveals one dimension of humans who are multidimensional, transnational Hongkongers who have often been thought of by the Canadian state as *homo economicus* (Ley, 2003; Mitchell, 2004) but some of whom also practice Christian spirituality as *homo religiosus*. I also show, *pace* geographer of religion Lily Kong's (2001a) call to go beyond officially sacred sites in the geography of religion, that the geographical imaginations of a *homo religiosus* at St. Matthew's Church go beyond experiences of church and bleed into experiences of childhood, education, family, employment, and Hong Kong.

This thesis explicates based on these findings the geographical imaginations of a *homo religiosus* who is called in this thesis a *transnational Hongkonger Christian* at St. Matthew's Church. Such religious folk are not simply *Chinese*; they are *transnational Hongkongers*, specifically a Cantonese-speaking Chinese subject with imagined urban, linguistic, and political geographies that differentiate them from Mainland Chinese migrants. They are not simply *Christian*; they are *Hongkonger Christians*, religious adherents for whom religious, educational,

are ways other than statistical data to highlight St. Matthew's Church as a predominantly Cantonese-speaking church. The two morning services at St. Matthew's Church are run in Cantonese. There is a Mandarin Bible study group that has about 20 people. There are also about 25 regular attendees at the afternoon English service. Such numbers demonstrate that Cantonese is the language that dominates congregational life at St. Matthew's Church.

and “Western” spaces are—as I shall show later—part of the search for and maintenance of a Christian space of peace amidst their busy transnational urban lives and geopolitically-based insecurities. This territoriality of peace is not simply a spatialized politics of *pacifism*; indeed, as I shall show in later chapters, the socially conservative and sexually straitlaced activism that accompanies this search suggest that this peace is expressed in the form of *social conservatism*, a peace that is not confined to St. Matthew’s Church but is extended to the family, the schools, and the city, primarily through an emphasis on Christian conversion. St. Matthew’s Church is not simply a *Chinese church*; it is *a congregation of Hongkonger Christians involved in a larger transnational religious “bubble” between Hong Kong and Vancouver* whose intention is to maintain this Christian territoriality (a “bubble,” so to speak) that is often superimposed on existing political and cultural geographies in Hong Kong and Vancouver. To answer the research question, this thesis argues that the imagined geographies of parishioners at St. Matthew’s Church are constituted by a transnational Hongkonger Christian search for and maintenance of a peaceful Christian “home away from home” (Ley, 2008: 2063) in the midst of what parishioners perceive as *two* socially unstable urban environments—Hong Kong and Vancouver—that are interlinked through the parishioners’ own transnational imaginations and migratory practices.

This thesis unfolds this argument first by establishing theoretical underpinnings through which Hongkonger Christians and their geography of religion can be studied and then by demonstrating empirically the geographical implications of their Christian territoriality. The second chapter that follows this introduction reviews the recent literature on the geography of religion and its related field, the sociology of religion. Such literature, I argue, is becoming increasingly coherent through its interest in the micro-geographies of religious embodiments in

religious subjects from which macro-geographical religious territorialities are extended. This chapter positions the geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christians as an intervention into what Kong (2001a) has called *the unofficially sacred*, sacred spaces that do not look sacred to an outsider. The third chapter explores my own positionality *vis-à-vis* St. Matthew's Church; such an exploration is not an exercise in auto-ethnography but establishes a geographical hermeneutic for an insider to study Hongkonger Christians in Richmond at the four geographical scales that contextualize St. Matthew's Church: the personal, congregational, metropolitan, and transnational Hong Kong-Vancouver scales. The fourth chapter contextualizes the urban, linguistic, and political geographies of Hongkonger Christians through quantitative profiles and historical overviews of Hongkonger political, economic, cultural, and religious geographies in Hong Kong and in Vancouver. The fifth chapter details my own qualitative findings. It begins at the personal scale of religious memories from Hong Kong, the desire to personally extend Christian faith to one's own family, and a "quality of life" migration logic through which many Hongkongers rationalized their migration from Hong Kong to Vancouver. It extends these findings first to the congregational and ultimately to the transnational scales. The sixth chapter elucidates challenges to the peace provided by this geographical imagination from transnational Hongkonger Christian encounters in multicultural Canada, especially with their own Canadian-educated second generation and with an in-flowing Mainland Chinese migrant population. The thesis concludes with a seventh chapter that calls for further geographical research in Chinese Christian circles—both by geographers of transnational Hongkonger migration and by geographers of religion—for the sake of painting a more multidimensional portrait of transnational migrants who often migrate in search of peace in a land that they can finally call home.

Chapter 2:
Scaling Faith:
Embodied Religious Imaginations and Transnational Religious Territorialities

Scale is perhaps one of the more important concepts in geography, not to mention in the recent literature on the geography of religion that this chapter reviews. The pastor at St. Matthew's Church seemed to agree.⁹ In the summer of 2008, he preached a series of sermons from Jesus' parables about the kingdom of God in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. As he sought to draw relevant application to Hongkonger Christians from stories about a farmer sowing seeds to variously-conditioned soils in his field, the growth of the mustard seed into a tree, and the preciousness of the kingdom compared to a pearl, he told us that these sermons would make up a crucial part of his argument for his dissertation for a Doctor of Ministry programme he was pursuing at the Southern Californian neo-evangelical bastion, Fuller Theological Seminary. The concept he introduced in these sermons was what he termed *micromacro*, a key part of his thesis. "If you do what Jesus tells you to do at the micro level," he preached, "then you will see results at the macro level." He went on to explain that *micro* referred to the cultivation of one's spiritual growth through prayer, personal Scripture reading, spiritual journaling, and Christian fellowship. If one practiced these *micro* Christian disciplines, one could expect to see God working at the *macro* level in what he called *kingdom growth*. Kingdom growth, he explained, was a play on the neo-evangelical term *church growth* where individual congregations have sought to expand their attendance numbers by preaching relevant messages to spiritual "seekers." He told us that his days of wishing for church growth were over: he was now more concerned about the growth

⁹ As a point of clarification, when I refer to the pastor at St. Matthew's Church, I am *not* referring to my father. My father works part-time on the pastoral staff at St. Matthew's Church, but aside from rotating preaching at the English service, supervising second-generation events, and running a small Mandarin-speaking small group, he conducts most of his duties as an Anglican priest as a chaplain in several hospitals in Metro Vancouver. He also works as a pastoral counselling therapist and has clients from various churches. For an extended discussion of my own positionality, see chapter 3.

of the *kingdom*, an increase in the number of Christians regardless of which congregation they attended, especially now that he had been appointed by his denomination to oversee the planting of “Asian” (read: “East Asian”; read further: “Chinese”; read even further: “Hongkonger”) churches in North America. *Micro* personal Christian spirituality, he argued, would bring about *macro* kingdom growth, especially among Asians in North America. Needless to say, for the pastor of St. Matthew’s Church, scale was important.

This chapter takes this pastor’s geographical reading of St. Matthew’s Church seriously by examining the scales used in the recent literature on the geography of religion. Paralleling the pastor at St. Matthew’s Church, I argue that the geographical imaginations of individual parishioners at St. Matthew’s Church—imagination that are often framed by their understanding and practice of Christian spirituality—constitute the core of a geography of religion that links Hongkonger Christian congregations at urban and transnational scales. This argument is not new to the literature on the geography of religion. Geographers of religion have begun to theorize *embodiment*, the notion that religious territoriality begins in the body of *homo religiosus*. The most basic scale is the personal, individual scale of the body. This individual scale is then extended into space at larger scales in what Stump (2008) has termed *religious territorialities*.

As Stump explains,

The most explicit forms of territoriality involve the assertion of political or economic control over space, but the social ordering of space involves the deployment of a complex network of implicit expressions of control rooted in family responsibilities, the pressure of peer groups, social norms and expectations, and a wide variety of other cultural influences. Territoriality in sum represents an intrinsic product of the spatiality of human activity. (Stump, 2008: 222).

With explicit reference to how religious territorialities expand from the body outward, he continues,

Perhaps the primary scale of religious territoriality in secular space is that of the local community of adherents, but from that level expressions of territoriality extend to the more local scales of body and home as well as to the wider scales of the imagined community of all believers, the state, and the world. (Stump, 2008: 223-224).

As Stump would have it, religious adherence may begin in the body of a religious adherent who is part of a religious community, but because humans live in space, religious beliefs often become territorialized in religious spaces that usually intersect with political, economic, and social spaces that have discursively thought to be secular. This chapter examines these claims about territoriality, scale, and religious adherence throughout the literature on the geography of religion, a literature that has recently focused more on the local scales of embodiment and community but has hinted at larger territorialities that are more transnational in scope.

More explicitly, this chapter unfolds *scale* in the geography of religion. I examine here the interplay of what I call *micro-geographical scales* (at levels where sacred space seems contained in the body or in the community) and *macro-geographical scales* (at levels where sacred space affects urban, national, and transnational political geographies through urban and transnational religious networks). The first part of this chapter brings Kong's (2001a) insights to bear on the incorrect assumption that the geography of religion has been a moribund sub-discipline by demonstrating, *pace* Kong, that the geography of religion has been studied in the 1990s by examining the micro-geographical politics and poetics of both officially and unofficially sacred spaces. Indeed, I show in this section that the misguided presumptions that have surrounded "the death" of the geography of religion are premised on a critique of *macro-geographies* of religion that have failed to take seriously the *micro-geographies* at which religion is experienced. I demonstrate that in the recent literature, such micro-geographies have been more fully emphasized. The second part examines what I call the *personal scale*, a scale of the geography of religion at which religion is placed in the body of *homo religiosus*. I argue that this

personal scale has been how the recent literature has answered Kong's (2001a) call to transcend officially sacred sites in the study of the geography of religion. I then broaden this personal scale to a macro-geography: the *transnational scale*. Personal imagined geographies put into such a macro-geographical scale are closely scrutinized by the literature as they are revealed to be *political* geographies, especially in the recent twenty-first century interest in Islamic religious migrants, often migrants who feel out of place in Western societies that have been more traditionally Christian and are now said to be secular in outlook by contemporary discourse. From the transnational scale, the chapter moves back to an intermediate scale, examining gatherings of religious subjects at the *congregational scale*. This section reviews the field of immigrant congregational studies, a field that began in the sociology of religion but has often been picked up by geographers of religion to examine the politics and poetics of immigrant religious life by arguing that immigrant congregations function as social service providers and sites for identity formation in the new land. I show that what constitutes the geography of religion at this congregational scale is in fact the personal scale, that Kong's (2001a) insights into the unofficially sacred need to be brought to bear on immigrant congregational studies as religious subjects' *imagined geographies* and *geopolitics* also need to be analyzed. This emphasis on the personal scale transitions the chapter from the macro-geographies of transnational religious "bubbles" and geopolitics to the concept of *geographical imaginations*, a concept taken from Harvey (1973) and post-colonial studies and applied to this thesis on transnational Hongkonger Christians in Metro Vancouver. Indeed, the chapter ends by showing how these imagined geographies can specifically be used to scale embodied religious experience and imagination at St. Matthew's Church. Throughout this chapter, I affirm that the recent discussion on the imagined geographies embodied in *homo religiosus* has rightly demonstrated

that the geography of religion must be understood at the *micro* scale of individual, personal geographical imaginations that are materialized into transnational religious networks at more *macro*-geographical scales.

Re-scaling Religion: From Macro Spatial Science to the Micro Politics and Poetics of Religious Experience

Literary theorist Stanley Fish has remarked on the comeback of religion to the secular academy. “Are we ready?” he asks.

We had better be, because that is where the action is. When Jacques Derrida died I was called by a reporter who wanted to know what would succeed high theory and the triumvirate of race, gender, and class as the center of intellectual energy in the academy. I answered like a shot: religion. (Fish, 2005: C1)

Fish is not the first to realize that religion is relevant to the academy. As Pacione (2001) argues, moral beliefs produced by religious communities are “relevant” because they may help the world move toward a more socially-concerned, just society (118). But as much as religiously-based ethics may provide moral fibre, religion has also been viewed nervously in liberal multicultural societies. In the face of such anxiousness, Levitt (2003, 2006) has called for us to begin to understand the world in a way that is organized both in interpersonal and in institutional ways around religion in transnational fields, a world in which, to put it in Levitt’s terms, God needs no passports. Understanding the world in such a way, Levitt suggests, may help us to overcome our fear of religion by entering into more constructive dialogues with religious adherents. Such insights call for a rejuvenation of study in the geography of religion because it calls to mind a fundamental conviction of geography’s disciplinary tradition: place matters, and religion in place is mattering more now than ever.

Unfortunately, over the last three decades, the geography of religion has often been unfairly sidelined as a moribund subdiscipline. Citing the complaints of Tuan (1976) on the incohesiveness of religion in the humanistic geography movement that resisted the quantitative revolution, as well as Sopher's (1981) remarks on the lack of progress in the geography of religion since his definitive work in the early 1960s, Kong (2001a) mourns the lack of optimism about the field after the passage of two decades. Indeed, Sinha (1995), Raivo (1997), Livingstone (1994), and Park (1994) have each assessed the current scholarship on the geography of religion as incohesive as they attempted to regenerate such study in the 1990s. Buttimer (2006) provides her reasons for dissociating with the sub-discipline in the 1960s and 1970s:

In those days the geography of religion involved primarily the study of global patterns of world religions, their spatial diffusion, boundaries, and imprints on the cultural landscape [...] There was research, too, on ways in which religion dictated certain taboos with respect to livelihood and food and influenced political and economic life. The dominant methods bore the stamp of the so-called spatial tradition, which had by then assumed pride of place with American geographers. (Buttimer, 2006: 197).

What Buttimer reacted to was the geographical orthodoxy of the 1960s and 1970s, the time of the quantitative revolution.¹⁰ Buttimer goes on to position herself as a humanistic geographer, one who is interested in the inner tensions among religious adherents and positionality issues for researchers of religion. Spatial science for Buttimer killed all interest she had in the geography of religion, as it did for many of the humanistic geographers who protested the quantitative revolution in the 1970s (Ley and Samuels, 1978).

¹⁰ I do not mean to imply that quantitative work on religion is no longer being produced, nor that it is not valuable to our understanding the larger picture of geographies of religion. Recent examples of such quantitative work include Peach (2003) on the ethnic diversity of Muslim migrants to London based on census statistics, Brimicombe (2007) on the shifting nature of London's residential enclaves calculated with the help of a "decision tree," and Warf and Vincent (2007) on religious diversity in the larger countries on the globe calculated with the use of Dorling cartograms.

I argue that the issue in the spatial interpretation of religious space at this time was at its core an issue of *scale*. What mattered—and only mattered—during the spatial turn was a macro-geographical interpretation accessible only through quantitative data. A key figure in this spatial scientific practice of the geography of religion was Wilbur Zelinsky. Zelinsky (1961) examined the landscape of American religion in the late 1950s by surveying the membership of Americans in three broad religious categories (British colonial groups, immigrant European religious groups, and native American groups) and then placing them on a national map. Based on this survey, Zelinsky argued for seven major religious regions in the United States (the Catholic and Congregationalist New England, the Methodist Midlands, the Lutheran Upper Midwest, the Baptist South, the Mormon Region, the Spanish Catholic Southwest, and the religiously ambiguous Western region). As I shall show in chapter 4, such research is indeed valuable for providing a quantitative context for qualitative research on the geography of religion. But Zelinsky's assertions, while providing a quantitative overview, were unable to capture the nature of the human experience of religion in all of these regions. His impressionistic macro-map of American religion could not capture the *micro*-geographies of religion where religion was embodied and expressed in space. With the rise of humanistic geography that emphasized the more micro-geographical scales and then the new cultural geography that emphasized human experience and social theory, a Zelinksian style of the geography of religion was shown to be inadequate for capturing a human geography of religion. A new way of mapping the geography of religion that emphasized human experience had to be unfolded, and yet with the constant negative criticism of the geography of religion as a moribund field, this new cohesiveness had been unable to emerge.

However, for Kong (2001a), critiques that cast the geography of religion in a negative light, especially in the 1990s, neglect the micro-geographical studies that have been produced since Tuan (1976) and Sopher (1981). Micro-geographies, she suggests, have in fact been emphasized. Even as geographers were complaining about the lack of insight into religion from the discipline, Kong proposes that the 1990s set the stage for a qualitative discussion on what she calls the *politics and poetics of religion*, often in ethnographic studies of the micro-geographies of religion. By the *politics of religion*, Kong refers to the often-contested nature of sacred space, that religious territoriality is enmeshed in a web of power relations. Three sets of ethnographies from the 1990s are key for Kong: accounts of the officially sacred (such as religious buildings), majority-minority relations in which it is most easy for the majority to exert its power, and religious schools. For Kong, the 1990s was a fruitful time for ethnographically exploring the political interplay between the sacred and secular within the context of the multiplicities of religious inclinations (such as how a white Christian neighbourhood reacted to a Hindu temple in its midst). Multiplicity, after all, tends to be the norm in the pluralistic context of modernity. *The poetics of religion*, by contrast, explored the human search for the immanent and transcendent (though it is sometimes not found) by theoretically unfolding the nature of sacred spaces and processes by which sites are sacralized by the religious imagination, as well as ways that geographical landscapes are created to reproduce sacred worlds. Such work in the 1990s often bled into work on the *poetics of religious communities*, ethnographies that showed that religious places are often seen as social networks in which communities are constructed, even through technological means. The *poetics of community*, however, set up a new politics where geographers of religion have explored the boundaries of religious communities and identities, a norm noted to stem from modernity's intolerance of difference based on the ideals of such

communities. For Kong, such rich exploration of the politics and poetics of religion in the 1990s—indeed, micro-geographical ethnographic explorations in the geography of religion—suggests that those who claim that the geography of religion is moribund do so contrary to the evidence. The geography of religion is *not* a dead field after the new cultural geography revolution that superseded spatial science. It has succeeded in exploring the human experience of religion through its explorations of micro-geographies, a task that Zelinsky and his macro-scale maps could not carry out. Indeed, all these small-scale studies need to do is to make explicit the significance of religious space in a world dominated by the secular assumptions of modern ideologies.

The Personal Scale: The Micro-Scale of the Religious Body

To expand these micro-geographies of religion, Kong (2001a) calls for the study of *unofficially sacred* sites, sites that are not merely gathering spaces for religious congregations—indeed, sites that Zelinsky (1961) would have been unable to count—but sites where religious life bleeds into spaces that one would not immediately consider sacred. Kong herself has set us good examples in her work on the interaction between Muslim *madrasahs* and the Singaporean state's standards of education for nation-building (Kong, 2005) as well as the friction between an evangelical church located in a Singaporean residential neighbourhood that has been forced by the state to relocate into a properly zoned area (Kong, 2002). What Kong is rightly interested in is not only how sacred space is created or how much religious spatiality a nation contains but what the interplay between sacred and secular spaces qualitatively looks like. For the geography of religion to matter, it must matter not only to religious adherents because religion touches everyone in social and political ways when it is grounded in geographical territories.

A more precise way of mapping these micro-geographies of religion has paid more attention to sacred space as present through the bodies of religious adherents, bodies that have agency to create sacred space.¹¹ The individual religious body, I argue, represents the smallest, most *personal scale* in the geography of religion. In 2002, Holloway and Valins edited a special issue of *Social and Cultural Geography* on the geographies of these small-scale religious embodiments, attempting to place religion and spirituality in the discipline of geography through an examination of embodied religious and spiritual practices, practices that they noted are an important part of many humans' lives and worthy of study in human geography (Holloway and Valins, 2002). Their special issue studied the embodiment of religion in bodies and places as diverse as the hierarchical politics embedded in the architecture of a Scottish Presbyterian church building that influences the practice of Christian worship (MacDonald, 2002), a pastoral English ethic that became intertwined with Christian thought in the romantic *oeuvre* of nineteenth-century British writer H. J. Massingham (Palmer, 2002), postwar religious territorialities in the Finnish Orthodox Church (Raivo, 2002), and the employment of similarity and difference in the religious identity politics invoked when South London's Fazl mosque was being erected (Naylor and Ryan, 2002). In each of these studies, religious spaces are not taken at face value. Instead, the focus is on the agency of religious humans—in this thesis, a *homo religiosus*—who imagine and practice a form of religion at the micro-scale of the body. Versions of such a *homo religiosus* can be as diverse as a Scottish Presbyterian minister who is seated in a prominent place in the church building, a rural romantic Englishman who writes books detailing an environmental ethic he claims to be Christian but has more explicit resonance with nineteenth-

¹¹ Whatever Agambenian overtones such an approach may have, I note that Agamben's (2004) state of exception has neither been cited nor openly acknowledged in this literature—and for good reason, because these religious embodiments are *not* the same as Agamben's *homo sacer*. For Agamben, *homo sacer* is one who has been set apart by the state in a state of exception to be killed at will. The sacralized *homo religiosus* in this literature set themselves apart religiously as inhabitants both of geopolitical spaces and religious territorialities.

century English romantic literature, Finnish Orthodox Christians who are faced with the task of religious and political reconstruction after the ravages of World War II, and Muslims in South London who must play a form of identity politics to erect a place of worship in a land where they are seen as religious and ethnic others. Imagination and practice take place through the bodies of such religious people. These bodies operate in space, however micro-geographical these spaces are, spreading their sense of sacred space through church buildings, religious books, and political territorialities. What must be studied, then, are not simply the spaces that are created but how the religious imaginations and practices that are embodied by people who would identify as *homo religiosus* make their impact on space at micro-geographical scales.

Such a micro-geographical emphasis on religious embodiment is not new to either Holloway or Valins. Holloway (2000, 2003) himself has done extensive work on the geographies of the New Age movement. For Holloway, spirituality is embedded in the micro-geographical scale of the body: wherever the New Age practitioner goes, there goes the network. Indeed, Holloway (2003) argues that there are no formal religious structures in the New Age movement. He places the focus on what he calls *spiritual geographies*, a sense of place guided not by physical or political institutions but through religious adherents' sense of spirituality. Because of the lack of temptation to focus on institutional sacred spaces as they are (because there are no such spaces in the New Age movement), he focuses on the bodies of New Age practitioners, bodies that themselves institutionalize a macro-scale New Age sacred territoriality without political or physical structures. Religion is first practiced at the scale of the body (the micro-scale) and then inscribed onto the spaces of New Age networks (at a more macro-scale). Valins has also written on the difficulties of maintaining Orthodox Judaism in the postmodern United Kingdom. He first writes on the spatial practices institutionalized in the Talmud (a

textual and embodied micro-scale) and the difficulties of enshrining these practices in contemporary Manchester when trying to convince authorities to grant a permit to construct a Jewish *eruv* that would sacralize a space with the help of poles and wires for the sake of Sabbath-keeping (a sacred macro-scale in urban space) (Valins, 2000). Again, the body of *homo religiosus* comes first: one is first educated by sacred texts at the micro-scale to imagine a space of Sabbath-keeping before being politically motivated at a more macro-scale to construct a sacred space that will ensure the keeping of this religious practice. These political motivations come with political difficulties, difficulties that have spread within the Jewish community as well. In his piece on Jewish education in London, Valins (2003) shows that while Orthodox Jewish rabbis try to use Jewish schooling to discipline young children into the practices of being Jewish, parents often circumvent the system by treating their children's education as merely a chance for their children to receive better academic and moral education. In Valins's Jewish schools, there are two competing religious embodiments at the micro-scale with different religious and political geographies—the one by the Orthodox rabbis, the other by the parents—that affect how the school is run at the scale of the community. Such conflicts of interest demonstrate that tensions within religious communities are often micro-scale tensions around what it means to embody religion and practice it in space. Religious politics often become spatial politics because they are rooted in the micro-politics of embodiment.

Religious embodiment is not particular to the work of Holloway and Valins in the twenty-first century: religious embodiment can also be used to theorize historical geographies of religion. Harvey (2002) argues based on the hagiography of one St. Samson (a textual micro-scale) that an ecclesial territoriality was produced to distinguish between what the church thought was sacred (ordered, domesticated space) and profane (wild, untamed nature) and to

show that ordering the universe was doing the work of God. The living body of St. Samson enshrined in a holy text was used by the medieval English church in Cornwall as an example for what a *homo religiosus* should emulate in terms of his or her own macro-scale spatial practices, practiced at the scale of the body. While Harvey's original work focused on medieval Cornwall, he has also teamed up with Brace and Bailey to show that Methodism in *modern* nineteenth-century Cornwall was also a propaganda-producing movement that inscribed their prohibitionist theology onto the bodies of young people who were disciplined not to drink (Brace, Bailey, and Harvey, 2006, 2007). In both medieval and modern Cornwall, Harvey, Brace, and Bailey demonstrate that the geography of religion has often been maintained at the micro-scale of religious texts that are inscribed upon disciplined religious subjects who in turn create sacred space at more macro scales. While this post-structural argument perhaps goes too far to remove agency from religious Cornwallians, their basic premise corroborates that such a focus on the micro-geographies of embodiment in the geography of religion is nothing new to the twenty-first century. If researchers want to research the geography of religion in the past, the same use of scale holds.

What has been productive, then, in the first decade of the twenty-first century is a more conscious effort in the geography of religion to map religious phenomena from the ground up—or from the body out, so to speak—or to speak in terms of scale, from the micro to the macro. Indeed, as Ley (2002) notes, while the geography of religion began as a descriptive exercise, more sophistication has come into play as geographers have begun to re-map the landscape of religions conscious of the cultural and social values that are inherent in the religious experience of particular religious groups, values that can only be discovered through qualitative studies of the micro-geographies of religious experience. In other words, Zelinsky's maps of religious

regions are being re-drawn with sensitivity to qualitative religious experience. Such sophistication became even more pronounced in a forum in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (AAG) hosted by the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems specialty group. Chairing the forum, Proctor (2006a) noted that contrary to narratives of secularization, religion has become a very important force in the world with the rise, for example, of competing fundamentalisms. Human geographers ignore the geography of religion to their peril, Proctor suggests. Following Proctor in the forum were two theoretical pieces theorizing a geographical study of religion. The first was Ivakhiv's (2006) argument that while "religion" is an unstable signifier capable of meaning many things at the same time, geographers can study religion by understanding *particular* religious groups' *particular* way of sacralizing space—yet another call to study the micro-geographies of religion. This was followed by Ferber's (2006) usage of critical realist theory to break down the insider/outsider divide because according to a critical realist ontology, spiritual reality in the world exists outside of geographers' believing it or not; what is important in the geography of religion is the mapping and the analysis of the mechanisms of spiritual *experience* as reported in qualitative studies, not if those experiences are actually true. These theoretical pieces were followed by two empirical demonstrations at the macro-scale that take seriously religious embodiment at the micro-scale: Holloway (2006) assessed with a critical realist eye the emotional "affects" of nineteenth-century séances embodied by participants and Proctor (2006b) demonstrated with a quantitative macro-scale exploration of religion in America as "trust in authority," arguing that Americans tend to embody both a theologically-focused religion with faith in God for spiritual realities and a scientifically-focused religion with faith in science for facts about nature. Buttimer (2006) rounded out the forum by calling for closer attention to how physical environments (*e.g.* wind,

fire, rain, and trees) affect religious practices and the constitution of religious imaginations at the micro-scale that can be materialized at the macro-scale. What was important to the 2006 AAG forum is what might be called a geography of religion *from the ground up*, that religious experience and phenomena can only be mapped if one qualitatively understands particular religious communities' sense of sacred space and religious territory. Religious categories can be empty signifiers without a qualitative understanding of actual human experience. This human experience can only be understood through (as I argue) hermeneutical encounters with religious subjects that take seriously the micro-scale of religious embodiment.

This push toward a more sophisticated understanding of religious and sacred space in turn calls for a continual examination of the overlapping boundaries of sacred and secular worlds. Indeed, interests in micro-scale embodiment and ethnographies of unofficially sacred sites intertwine with what Stump (2008) has called *religious territoriality*, the part of religion that superimposes spiritual boundaries on an already defined political landscape bound by the political geographies of the nation-state. But what is becoming increasingly important is that these sacred territorialities overlap with secular political boundaries in a *transnational* way (a macro-scale) so that the geography of religion must take into account the transnational nature of religion, or rather, the uncanny ability of religious movements to defy political categorizations. Levitt (2006) argues that religion is a reality in our twenty-first century world that often defies the boundaries that we intend to impose on it, reshaping (in her case study) the American landscape so that even Protestant Christians in America cannot be taken for granted as white, male oriented religious adherents. Her Protestant Christians are from Brazil, mine from Hong Kong. Rather, as Levitt argues, the transnational implications of religion must be taken into account and its nuances fleshed out. Olson and Silvey (2006) note as well that as transnational

subjects live in a world of accelerating exchanges, they are often also constrained by development, migration, and religious institutions, all of which need to be more carefully studied before one makes fast-and-loose claims about the speed of globalization. Kong (2001b, 2006) herself notes that transnational processes and linkages through media and migration (Appadurai, 1996) have transformed religious practice, for example, in the case of Singaporean Muslims, who can have transnational Islamic media streamed into their homes so that they do not need to follow the teachings of their local *imams, per se*, nor do women have to be excluded from male-dominant prayer sessions. But whether transnational processes restrict or enable the movements of religious subjects, what is becoming increasingly apparent is the propensity for such religious territorialities to defy political boundaries set up by both secular and sacred institutions. Not only does the micro-scale of the body materialize into the macro-scale of transnational networks, but the macro-scale also contextualizes and affects religious practices at the micro-scale of the body.

What is central to these studies of religious territoriality is religious embodiment. While studies of religious territoriality focus on the sacralized places that transcend geopolitical boundaries, these places and territories are not inherently sacred. They have to be *imagined* to be sacred at the micro-geographical level. It is religious people who do this imagining, this sacralizing, at scales that are micro-geographical. The religious geographies that are imagined and then materialized into macro-geographies are first embodied as religious subjectivities in religious people. Geographers of religion in the twenty-first century have not only proven that the geography of religion is no longer a moribund sub-discipline. They have demonstrated the significance of these micro-scale embodied religious subjectivities. This embodiment translates into sacred spaces that are not neatly insulated from the secular. Rather, they are often imposed

on top of spaces that were thought to be secular, social and political boundaries that were thought to be non-religious. To understand such geographies, geographers of religion cannot afford to merely take Zelinsky's macro-scale approach that is merely impressionistic. Instead, they must rigorously seek to understand the imaginations at the micro-scale that constitute these religious subjectivities. They must understand the religious *micro*-geographies that are territorialized into religious *macro*-geographies. Indeed, if these geographical imaginations are transnational at the micro-scale of the body of *homo religiosus*, then they will certainly materialize into transnational religious networks at the macro scale.

The Transnational Scale: Macro Religious Networks and Political Geographies

As macro-geographies of religion affect the micro-geographies of religion, the study of macro-scale transnational religious movements indeed are a way forward in the study of the overlapping boundaries of the sacred and secular, a poetics of religion by which the politics of space are becoming increasingly blurred. But transnationalism, as Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc (1992) originally argued, is a phenomenon that has its own human subjects who live their lives at the micro-scale: *transmigrants*, migrants who maintain continual ties to their homeland. To study macro-scale transnational religious movements means to study the micro-geographies of the migrants who are embedded in transnational religious networks. These networks are not a new phenomenon. For Foner (2005), transnationalism itself is nothing new: Italian, Irish, and Russian migrants to New York from the mid-nineteenth century maintained social and religious ties with their homeland. Indeed, historical migrations to North America bear out the religiousness of migrant communities of various stripes. Such migrations include the Puritans in New England, the founding of the Episcopal Church separate from the Church of

England, the formation of Russian and Pennsylvania Dutch Mennonite communities in Ontario, Irish and Italian Catholic landings on Ellis Island, and a folk Buddhism pervasive in stories of Chinatown. These examples (and many others) demonstrate that North America is a land of religious pluralism because migrants bring their religions with them. The material and political spaces that such religious migrants created began with religious practices at the scale of the body that at once became materialized into two kinds of spaces at the macro-scale: the superimposition of their religious space on local territories *and* the maintenance of transnational linkages with places where their religious practice originated. Levitt's (2006) claim that God needs no passports should not come as a surprise. Religion going transnational is as old as people—indeed, people who have a side of *homo religiosus*—moving. The micro-scale migration of religious communities often materializes into the macro-scales of transnational religious networks.

In one sense, then, all religions are transnational religions. As Levitt (2003: 870) puts it, “the relationship between religion and migration has a long history. Abraham began a journey, guided by his faith, that millions have followed. The intensification of life across borders will only increase the numbers for whom social, political, and religious membership is decoupled from residence.” Transnational religious networks are not new, then, although the increasing speed of migration and media has certainly intensified the importance of this macro-geography of religion (Appadurai, 1996). However, as Levitt (2006) bluntly assesses it, the plurality of religion that comes with the overlapping of these religious networks in contested spaces has been grossly misunderstood. What is meant by religion in the United States (in Boston), she contends, is in fact white Protestantism. Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism in America have been sidelined, as have transnational Asian and Latino versions of Christianity, all of which have changed the

North American religious landscape in a way parallel to the changing face of the North American population due to migration. Indeed, the rest of Levitt's article as well as her book calls for *religion* to be put front and centre as a category of analysis, to make sense of the world (at a macro-scale interpretation) in terms of not only civic, ethnic, or national identities but also to see "a world that is primarily organized around Islamic, Hindu, or Baptist identities" (Levitt, 2003: 869). Levitt (2003: 850) indeed proposes *five scales* at which transnational religions should be studied: 1) individual religious practices, 2) religious organizational contexts, 3) the links between such organizations and local, regional, and international counterparts in both the home and the host countries, 4) the role of states, and 5) the role of global culture and institutions. For Levitt, transnational religion at both their micro- and macro-geographical scales must be understood as it bears on the West—in her case, America—to maintain amicable dialogue between secular liberalism and adherents to these transnational religious fields.

What has caused trouble about these immigrant religions in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is when their religious geographies seem to conflict with the political geographies of supposedly tolerant, liberal multicultural host societies. These existing political geographies are mapped at the macro-geographical scale. Joppke (2004) points out the problem: liberal multicultural societies founded their religious tolerance on forms of Christianity, not a pan-religious equality. But based on those liberal ideals, multicultural societies in the West need to make space for religious migrants, even for non-European religions such as Islam. In other words, multicultural national geographies at the macro-geographical scale need to be re-configured to accommodate religious pluralism. Does this mean that we have entered an age of "post-multicultural" governance? Ley (2005) asks. He argues no: with the advent of even more ethnic and racial pluralism in such places as his (as well as my) urban geographical context,

Vancouver, the task of multicultural governance is an even higher call. Indeed, the goal of multicultural nation-states—at a macro-geographical scale—is to maintain tolerance among all of its diverse residents. But as I shall show in this thesis, the political agendas and geographies of migrant religious groups are often different from those of the host society. What multicultural societies have to do increasingly now, Levitt (2006) rightly argues, is to take religion seriously because with religious change comes demographic change. Macro-geographies of religion often affect macro-geographies as well.

What becomes apparent in the macro-geographical study of transnational migrant religions is that so often, religion and ethnicity *at the micro-geographical level* become intertwined as migrants attempt to maintain their minority cultural and political geographies in the West. These migrants' embodied micro-geographies of religion, ethnicity, and politics affect political space at the macro-geographical scale. Transnational religious embodiments may be intertwined with many things, as Hopkins (2007) calls geographers to do consciously as he himself cross-fertilizes literatures from the geography of religion with youth and masculine geographies in his own work on young Muslim men in Scotland. What Hopkins (2006) notes is that young Muslim men in the context of their familial and social micro-geographies are complex characters, framed by their family contexts in which they behave as family-oriented, patriarchal Muslim men. But they are not confined to their families. Many also seek autonomy in alternate forms of masculinity to the Islamic one, as one Muslim young man does when he rides the bus with his white girlfriend, a girlfriend who would meet with disapproval in the Muslim community both because of her religion and her ethnicity. Familial micro-geographies are not the only frame of reference for a complex *homo religiosus* living in transnational space. The way to do such geographies is not merely to study *religion* as an isolated category from other

social factors that shape such human subjects. Geographers of religion must learn to integrate religious dimensions with social factors such as race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, sexuality, and political geography, often at the micro-geographical scale but always with an eye to how these micro-geographies affect macro political geographies. To do otherwise is to produce accounts of ideal types that do not capture the multidimensionality of such human subjects.

Often, this interrelation between religion and ethnicity is also explored in the macro-geographical effects of transnational Muslims living in Western, purportedly multicultural societies because it is in this context that the difference of religious territoriality and political geography is often most stark. Dunn (2004) has been active in championing the cause of mosque builders in Sydney. Charging racism to Sydneysiders who oppose the building of mosques because they say that it will disturb the urban landscape, he argues that in a multicultural society like Australia, such hidden local politics of exclusion are inappropriate. But upon examination of both liberal and conservative versions of Australian multiculturalism, Dunn (2005) argues that it is a latent racism in Australian society that continues to exclude Muslims from establishing their own built form on the urban landscape. Dunn stresses not merely the micro-geographies of family and social life but how macro Muslim territorialities that tend to have both local and transnational scalar elements intersect with macro Australian political geographies at the urban scale. More interest in transnational Muslims has also come as a result of the 2001 urban disturbances in Yorkshire towns and the July 2005 bombings on the London subway as British geographers strove to answer the complaint in the British press that transnational Muslims lived “parallel lives” with British citizens. Phillips (2006) challenges this “parallel worlds” thesis as she interviews Muslim families in Bradford, a Yorkshire town, who tell her that all they want is to live in a neighbourhood where their children can grow up safely and succeed socially.

Arguing at the micro-geographical level, Muslim families, Phillips shows, want what every British family wants too: safety and success. Such an argument begins at the micro-geographies of transnational religious embodiment and family life but is placed in the context of the macro political geography of amalgamated British family life at urban (Bradford), regional (Yorkshire), and national (British) scales. Indeed, geographers pursuing the study of transnational Muslim geographies frequently position themselves as advocates for racial justice for a religious minority in the West by researching religious micro-geographies to tell counter-stories of religious embodiment and transnational religious networks to the macro political geographies of the cities and nation-states that they research. Smaller, personal scales in the geography of religion affect the larger scales of city, nation, and transnational movements not only religiously but also—more importantly—*politically*.

Such studies of the micro-geographies of religion that affect macro-geographies of religion *and* politics are indeed attempts to respond to Kong's (2001a) call to go beyond the officially sacred, to cross-fertilize the study of religion with other social fields to paint a more multidimensional portrait of *homo religiosus*. Indeed, despite this emphasis on transnational Muslim geographies, there has also been recent interest in showing the intersections of religion with other social and political fields. For example, Olson (2006) distinguishes between the social capital of Roman Catholic and health-and-wealth Pentecostals in development aid in Cusco, Peru. For Olson, denominational affiliation within Christianity makes a difference on whom locals trust to help them in economic development. Again, both the categorical (denominational) and qualitative (storied) micro-geographies of religion make a difference on the ground *vis-à-vis* unofficially sacred politics at the macro-geographical scale. The geography of transnational religion that begins at the micro-scale but is materialized at the urban, national,

and transnational macro-scales is consistently engaged with such intersections of religious territories and political space. Such studies, I have argued, are couched in an examination of the local politics of religious embodiment and experience that materialize into transnational religious territorialities. These territories, however, are best seen in gatherings of religious people, gatherings at which geographers can study a *homo religiousus* from the body of the individual to a congregational body. It is to congregational studies that we must turn, then, to assess the impact of the geography of religion on public space.

The Congregational Scale: Service Hubs, Identity Formation, and Geographical Context

For sociologist of religion R. Stephen Warner, studying congregations—gatherings of religious adherents—is the most effective way to study immigrant and transnational religion. Put geographically, the scale at which Warner advocates the study of religion is at the *congregational* scale, the scale of the religious gathering, a midpoint between the micro-geographical personal scale of religious embodiment and the macro-geographical scales of urban political geographies and transnational religious networks. He gives three reasons for his emphasis on the congregation: 1) religions are not texts but living communities, 2) the taking on of religious expression is an ongoing task, and 3) studies of religious gatherings focus on what communities do for themselves, not on what is being done to them by the society around them (Warner, 1998: 9-10). A book that collects studies framed by Warner's scalar agenda (Warner and Wittner, 1998) features chapters dealing with issues in religious congregations including the negotiation of Indian American identities by becoming Hindu (Kurien, 1998), the social adaptations of Iranian Jews in Los Angeles (Feher, 1998), Maya religion and culture in Los Angeles (Wellmeier, 1998), transnational Haitian Catholicism in New York (McAlister, 1998),

“born again” spaces in Christian congregations in Los Angeles (Leon, 1998), the church-building politics of fundamentalist Rastafarians in New York (Hepner, 1998), the structural adaptations of a New York Muslim congregation (Abusharaf, 1998), gendered space in an Indian immigrant church (George, 1998), competition for the second generation in a Korean church (Chai, 1998), and internal differentiation in a Chinese Christian church in Washington, D.C. (Yang, 1998a).

This emphasis on the scale of the gathering, though, is not an isolated interest for Warner; rather, this congregational scale is contextualized at the national scale with what Warner (2005) calls a *new paradigm of American religion*. Citing an older paradigm of the sociology of religion practiced by the likes of Peter Berger (1967) that espoused a “sacred canopy” view that society was once enveloped by religious institutions, Warner (1993) argues that American religion functions in terms of a “new voluntarism,” a church membership not required by the sacred canopy of medieval and post-medieval European society but rather consumed by voluntary attendees whose historical frame of reference is not the medieval canopy but tent revival meetings of the nineteenth-century Second Great Awakening in America. Based on the work of Will Herberg who argued that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in America developed new community associations through religious affiliation, Warner has argued that other like-minded sociologists of religion such as Rodney Stark have themselves hopped onto his “new paradigm” bandwagon. Indeed, such an argument is reminiscent as well of Smith’s (1978) seminal argument that migration is a *theologizing experience*, that while migration is an act of uprooting, religious affiliation is a way of construing diaspora from one’s homeland as the basis for a meaningful spirituality. The new paradigm features a *de facto* congregationalism, institutions democratically controlled by the religious volunteers themselves, echoing the democratic foundations of American society. Religion in America for Warner is best studied

through these congregations because religious congregations in America practice their religions collectively in a localized way. Such studies avoid essentializing religions and focus on what religions actually do on the ground, not on what armchair scholars think about religion.

Geographically-speaking, Warner's approach contextualizes the congregational scale with the *national* scale (America) to better understand migrants to America and the religions they bring with them to a new national context.

Such emphasis on congregations has generated a literature that has studied religion at the congregational scale contextualized by the national scale (America) and has argued that congregations function as service hubs for new migrants to America. Yang (1998b) has argued, *pace* Smith (1978), that Christian congregations provide a sense of spiritual stability for mainland Chinese migrants who have had to endure the Cultural Revolution and other forms of political and social instability on the Chinese Mainland. The church, Yang (1999) argues, guides such migrants through a process of *selected assimilation* as they selectively negotiate among being Chinese, American, and Christian and how much of each to keep, discard, or change. What happens at the congregational level is contextualized by national (and transnational, in the case of staying Chinese) concerns. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000) take a comparative approach by contextualizing their congregational scale with an urban scale in Houston, Texas, and find that ethnic congregations there from a variety of religions and ethnic groups perform a multiplicity of functions, some of which include empowering women, maintaining ethnicity, and raising the second generation within an ethno-religious tradition. Religious congregations, such literature argues, function as immigrant service hubs (Ley, 2008), places where migrants can be more easily integrated into the mainstream of the host nation-state—on the migrant community's terms. Religious congregations are entryways into North American society. Such a function is a

complement to Warner's (1998) assertion that a focus on congregations emphasizes what congregations do for themselves, not what other forces do for the congregation. Congregations may serve as service hubs for their congregation members, but the service they provide is contextualized by the urban and national geographies of North America.

What becomes apparent in the provision of services by these ethnic congregations is that the main service is *identity formation* in North America, a continent with two host countries, America and Canada, that operate with different political and cultural geographies from migrants' home countries. In an edited volume on Korean Christians and Buddhists in America, studies ranging from demographic surveys of religious affiliation among Koreans, theological reflections on being diasporic religious Koreans, ethnographic field work among the second generation in English-speaking ministries in Korean American congregations, and the transformations of Korean Buddhism in America demonstrate that Korean religion is as much about maintaining Koreanness as it is about being religious (Kwon, Kim, and Warner, 2002; see also Chong, 1998). The personal scale of Korean Christian embodiment and the congregational scale of Korean Christianity and Buddhism are placed in the geographical context of the national scale: American identity formation. Another edited volume argues for more attention to be paid to the interplay between religion and Asian American identities and provides overviews of Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese, Hindu, and second-generation pan-Asian churches to get a sense of how these communities wrestle with issues of race, transnationalism, historical legacy, gender, income disparity, social service, and generational transmission of ethno-religious traditions (Min and Kim, 2001). Again, the concern in this volume focuses on the intersection of personal ethnic and religious embodiments with an American political and cultural geography. Similarly, in the discipline of geography and in the Canadian context, Beattie and Ley (2003)

find that German churches in Vancouver were once social service providers to German migrants to Vancouver in the 1950s and 1960s and are now in decline because their second generation maintains neither the German language nor the social needs of first-generation immigrants. A shift from transnational ethnic and religious embodiments between the two generations created tension at the congregational scale, but the generational shift happened because of a change of *geographical* context at the *national* scale (from Germany to Canada). Ley (2008) later found in a comparative study that Korean and Chinese churches in twenty-first century Vancouver face the same issues as the German church in Vancouver a generation earlier. Jeung (2005) discovered that what the second generation had to do in the San Francisco Bay Area was to form congregations of their own to assert their own Asian American identities, whether this meant starting a liberal church campaigning for racial justice or a conservative evangelical church with an emphasis on second-generation identity issues. Chen (2006) found in Taiwanese Christian and Buddhist congregations in southern California that it was by becoming religious by which Taiwanese migrants became American, that while one may have been nominally religious in Taiwan, one became more rigorously religious in America—and in so doing, became American. Indeed, a common demonstration among all these studies was Smith's (1976) thesis that migration is a theologizing experience: while religion may have been important in the past, it is so much more important after migration. Shifts in national contexts through migration affect religious practice at the congregational scale.

Indeed, this literature demonstrates the importance of the national and transnational scales that contextualize the congregational scale. As *transnational* networks become more apparent, studies of religious congregations in North America have had to place these congregations in the context of transnational networks of which they are a part. Ebaugh and

Chafetz (2002) argue for a network analysis that connects migrant congregations to their home countries as they redo their research on the Houston churches. Congregations, they realize, do not only exist in the national context of America but in the transnational contexts that come with the ethnicity and religion that they practice at the congregational level. Studies of ethnic congregations as service providers and sites of identity formation have indeed usually provided extensive background information on the home country for readers to get a sense of emotional transnational linkages (Kwon, Kim, and Warner, 2002; Beattie and Ley, 2003; Chen, 2006). Such transnational network analyses of congregations focus on how the *congregations* maintain transnational religious linkages. These congregations, as Kong (2001a) would have it, are officially sacred sites linked to other officially sacred sites in other places. What is important in such studies, then, is the micro-geography of the religious *congregation* in the context of its transnational religious networks.

Nevertheless, as Levitt (2003) shows, transnational networks of congregations are but one scale in the study of transnational religion; indeed, they are a larger micro-geography than the micro-geographies we have already discussed: the personal scale of embodiment. God may need no passports, but religious communities are made of religious practitioners who operate not only at the congregational scale but at the individual scale of religious and ethnic embodiment. These adherents certainly affect the demographic makeup of societies that may or may not be religious themselves. What Levitt (2003, 2006) implies, then, is that this literature on ethnic congregations needs to take a more explicit look at the scales at which it looks at transnational religion. Transnational religious congregations are not isolated from “non-religious” society. Religious territorialities are constantly in friction with other cultural and political geographies because micro-geographies of transnational religious embodiment often rub against the existing

macro-geographies of city and nation. The geography of religion matters because of its constant interplay with political, economic, and cultural geographies.

Transnational Religion at Metropolitan and Transnational Scales: Bubbles, Geopolitics, and Personal Imaginations

The geography of religion, as I have suggested, often intersects with urban geographies at what I call the *metropolitan scale*, a scale of geographical analysis that underscores not only the urban but urban and suburban geographies. As Beattie and Ley (2003) and Ley (2008) have shown in their studies of ethnic churches in Vancouver, congregational studies fit as comfortably in the geography of religion as in the sociology of religion. But positioned within the geography of religion, congregational spaces are considered *officially religious sites* (Kong, 2001a), sites that may be interesting for study as sacred places but run the danger of tempting geographers to overly focus on sacred space to the neglect of how the sacred interacts with the non-sacred. However, what is unique about Beattie and Ley (2003) and Ley (2008) is that while they focus on officially sacred sites, they do so *in the context of* migration to Vancouver. German, Korean, and Chinese migrant communities in Vancouver —communities that have officially *and* unofficially sacred sites—geographically *contextualize* the congregations that they study at the *metropolitan scale* (because these communities are spread across not only *urban* but urban-suburban areas, such as Richmond in Metro Vancouver). These studies have yielded fruitful comparative studies as they have shown that religious groups across these migrant communities provide similar immigrant services, participate in similar ways of identity formation, and face similar issues in transmitting their traditions to the second generation. Such metropolitan contexts are not new even to the sociology of religion: new paradigm scholar Rodney Stark

(1996) notes, for example, in his work on what he calls the *hellfire thesis* that in small towns in the southern Bible Belt, one is more inclined to be morally motivated by a belief in hell than in more secular areas on the West Coast because the community that contextualizes religious congregations affects the strength of religious belief and the spiritual power of religious congregations. While Stark contextualizes the hellfire thesis with regional geography, I argue that metropolitan geography—a geographical unit that is specific about both region and urban geography—is a scale that takes seriously this urban and/or suburban contextualization for the transnational religious congregation and opens the analysis to both the context of existing urban politics or the context of the migrant community itself.

But the metropolitan scale is not the only scale that contextualizes transnational religious congregations; because these religions are practiced in transnational space (especially in the migrant community), there is also a *transnational scale* of geographical analysis. As towns may contextualize belief in hellfire, transnational migrant communities contextualize immigrant religious congregations, and these contexts in turn affect the power of religious belief in these congregations. Ways forward in the geography of transnational religion that take seriously *both* immigrant congregations *and* unofficially sacred sites focus on such geographical contextualizations. I note two recent ways: an examination of transnational religious “bubbles” with their official and unofficial sacred sites and a more rigorous analysis of the geopolitical implications of religious movements in the world today. Common to both ways forward is their serious consideration of transnational geographical imaginations as key to understanding macro-geographies of religion.

To look at how religion works in transnational migrant communities, studies of transnational religious “bubbles” may illumine linguistic and cultural geographies that

contextualize local congregations. I call these religious networks *bubbles* because access to them is often restricted to the transnational migrant community, although, as I show in this thesis, the geographical implications of these bubbles are not confined to the migrant community because of their social and political activities at the metropolitan scale. Indeed, as Massey (1994) has argued for a “global sense of place,” places whose boundaries are porous and not isolated from global connection, one must take a global sense of ethnic congregations because they are involved in transnational networks (Ebaugh and Chafetz, 2002). However, this involvement in transnational networks does not merely refer to transnational *congregational* networks but more importantly to transnational *religious* networks, networks of religious transmigrants whether or not they are part of a congregation (Holloway’s New Age practitioners, for example, will never be part of a congregation). Goh (2003) speaks of a global Anglophonic evangelical “bubble” in which English-speaking Christians around the world may be involved, including Singaporeans educated in English in religious schools and who have migrated to Anglophonic countries. As Kong (2006) has also demonstrated, such bubbles operate in the present through mediated practices often disseminated through internet websites as well as in the past through memories of religious education. Cyberspace and spaces of the memory, while used by these congregations, are at once extensions of the officially sacred space of the congregation as well as unofficially sacred sites where religion is practiced by religious adherents and technologically transformed. Congregational networks need to be placed in a larger set of transnational religious relations that involve cyberspace, educational spaces, familial networks, and migrant imaginaries of home and host countries. Indeed, these transnational religious bubbles reveal much about how religions can be imagined and *re*-imagined through linguistic and cultural lenses.

A second way forward takes seriously the intersection of religion and geopolitics. Sturm (2006) laments the lack of consideration of how religion factors into geopolitical imaginations in the geographical literature. In his work on an evangelical eschatological preacher Mark Hitchcock, Sturm demonstrates that forms of Christian eschatology provide ways for Christians to imagine the end of the world and live according to that framework. Such eschatological imaginations, he argues, are in fact *geopolitical* imaginations, imaginations that demarcate political boundaries in an effort to distinguish between the roles of different groups in a Christian conception of the end times. In a further article, Sturm (2008) argues that more critical attention must be paid to Christian eschatology in the geopolitical analysis of the Christian right. Indeed, Han (forthcoming) takes a similar line in her work on Korean missionaries who see their role to convert the nations in what is called the 10/40 window of unreached people groups to precipitate the end of the world.¹² As with Sturm, Han's Korean Christians' political geographies are motivated by eschatological concerns. Similar to Olson's (2006) work on Catholic and Pentecostal groups in Peruvian development, such work places geopolitical imaginations and political theology at the forefront of the geography of religion, showing that religion is important in the study of political geographies. Such work also heeds Kong's (2001a) call to study the unofficially sacred: the material consequences of religious geopolitics do not only affect sacred space but extend their sacred territorialities into the realm of what was once thought to be secular. These sacred territorialities do not merely affect *micro*-geographies, although most certainly begin at micro-geographical scales. As Sturm (2006, 2008) and Han (forthcoming)

¹² As Han (2008) also explains in a comic-book distillation of her dissertation, the 10/40 window is a geographical designation between 10 and 40 degrees latitude where there are the fewest evangelical Christians in the world. Discursively, this is known as the place with the most "unreached people groups," groups that have not been reached by evangelical Christianity. It is thought within many evangelical circles that when every person on earth has heard the Christian Gospel, Jesus will return and bring about the end of the world.

demonstrate, micro-geopolitical imaginations at the scale of individuals having eschatological convictions have macro-geopolitical consequences.

Both of these ways forward in the geography of religion call for a closer look at what constitutes the *geographical imaginations* of migrant religions, even if one chooses an officially sacred site for an ethnographic, micro-geographical starting point. Indeed, both transnational religious bubbles and religious geopolitics involve religious adherents in what might be called, *pace* Anderson (2006), an imagined community, not at the national scale but at the *transnational* scale. Mediated religious communication, whether religious books, internet websites, or audiovisual media, link such religious communities in imagined communities that exist transnationally. Such transnational imagined communities demand to be studied at multiple scales, from the way one *homo religiosus* imagines the world to the way that transnational religious networks enact such imagined geographies.

Revisiting the Personal Scale: Geographical Imaginations and the Geography of Religion

The exploration of *geographical imaginations* at the scale of personal religious embodiment takes seriously how social theory informs the practice of everyday lives, including everyday religious lives. The academic study of geographical imaginations was first introduced by Harvey (1973) when he recognized the need to understand what he called *geographical imaginations vis-à-vis* what C. Wright Mills (1959) had previously termed *the sociological imagination*. Where Wright wanted individuals to understand how social processes informed personal biographies, Harvey saw that the geographical imagination

enables...individual[s] to recognize the role of space and place in their own biograph[ies], to relate to the spaces [they] see around [them], and to recognize how transactions between individuals and between organizations are affected by the space that separates them...to judge the relevance of events in other places...to fashion and use

space creatively, and to appreciate the meaning of the spatial forms created by others. (Harvey, 1973: 24).

For Harvey, studying geographical imaginations means that scholars take seriously the contingencies of place in people's everyday lives and life histories. Such scholars are then able to educate the ordinary person to be able to intelligently use spatial reasoning for social change. As Harvey recognized, personal geographical imaginations at the micro-scale carry macro-scale implications for political and social geographies at urban levels.

But the term has not been limited to its use in Harvey's Marxist endeavour for ordinary people to understand the economic and political geographical processes in which they are embedded; it has also been useful in post-colonial discussions. Appadurai (1996) notes in his own experience that his personal imagination of the West as a modern space *vis-à-vis* his imagination of his native India as a backward space led him to a western education. It is this personal realization that has led him now to argue that these transnational social imaginaries that are continually transformed by migration and media produce material effects that have contributed to global modernization. Indeed, as Appadurai suggests from his own experience, his own personal geographical imagination had a direct effect not only on his intellectual life but on the lives of many people who shared his geographical privileging of the West and who formed transnational lifeworlds around that imagination. Said (2003: 54) uses a similar term *imaginative geographies* to describe "the universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs': and critiques it as "a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary." Imaginative geographies operationalize space and place to form imaginary boundaries between self and other, often in post-colonial work between the Occident (the self) and the Orient (the other). Indeed, in a tone much more pessimistic than Appadurai's, Said argues that imaginative

geographies are not tucked away in the books of Orientalist scholarship; they are active geographical imaginations that have material consequences in the Western colonization of the East. Indeed, Gregory (1994: 203-205) points out that these imaginative geographies are themselves geographical imaginations because where these imaginative geographies are formed are themselves contingent on space and place. Gregory, for example, notes that the imaginative geography that led him to not take geography courses on the non-West was formed by a Western geographical imagination that made him think that the non-West was not worth his study. Imaginative geographies are performative: they “produce the effect that it names” (Gregory, 2004: 18). What drive these performances are geographical imaginations that have been formed in place. These geographical imaginations at the micro-geographies of the personal and individual scale do not stay individual but are spatialized and materialized into macro-geographical networks, bubbles, and actions such as colonization, migration, and transnational networks.

But geographical imaginations are *not* entirely arbitrary; what Said and Gregory do not explicitly point out is that geographical imaginations tend to also be *religious* imaginations. Said’s (2003) genealogy of Orientalism traces the origins of the us-them divide between the Occident and the Orient to Western European Christendom insulating itself against sixth-century Islamic invasions. Likewise, Gregory’s (2004) account of the performance of American imaginative geographies in the War on Terror is a military performance of a right-wing form of American Christianity in conflict with the imagined geographies of Muslim fundamentalists in the Middle East. Huntington’s (1993) (in)famous right-wing thesis on the “clash of civilizations” pits the Muslim world against the post-Christian capitalistic West in an apocalyptic conflict similar to what Barber (1995) has termed *jihad* versus McWorld. For geographical

imaginings to have power, powerful undercurrents must drive them. Indeed, while Huntington and Barber ostensibly portray their geopolitical analyses as secular, the examples they cite suggest that what drives a geographical imagination that pits “us” against “them” needs to command a spiritual allegiance that has emotional resonance. Imagined geographies of religion command these faith-based loyalties. These imaginings begin personally in the body of *homo religiosus*, but they do not stay there; they have active geopolitical consequences.

It is to get at such spiritual allegiance that I use the concept of *geographical imaginings* to intervene simultaneously in the geography of religion and in the literature on Hong Kong-Vancouver transnational linkages. The religious geographies in this particular bubble tend to be subtle, if not sometimes secularized. Anderson (2006: 12-19) argues indeed that nation-building media that cause citizens to see their nation as “imagined communities” are in part secularized forms of religious faithfulness. Such spiritual geographies command emotional responses, citizenships that are constituted by the emotions, as Ho (2008) has shown in the case of Singaporean transmigrants in London who still retain emotional attachments to Singapore as homeland. Paralleling Said, the Hongkonger geographical imagination is also an emotion-evoking imaginative geography that pits “us” (Hongkonger Christians) versus “them” (an amalgamation of others that includes but is not limited to liberal Canadians and Chinese mainlanders), a geographical imagination that I argue is maintained to preserve a sense of peace, stability, and home in Hong Kong and in Canada with religious space. Certainly, a discussion of Hongkongers in this thesis needs to take into account the questions of who is a Hongkonger, who is not, and how such a boundary is imagined. But unlike Said and Gregory, I broaden this discussion of geographical imaginings beyond the agendas of post-colonial critique because the Hongkonger geographical imagination has not manifested in the military violence that Said and

Gregory have observed in the Middle East. As Said himself notes, “Theory has to be grasped in the place and time out of which it emerges” (Said, 1984: 241-42), and the forceful protest of post-colonial critique against colonial violence seems unjustified in a significantly tamer late twentieth and early twenty-first century with a transnational Hong Kong-Vancouver network. The place and time are different, the colonialism more benign, the violence more subdued (see chapter 4). Instead, I use *geographical imaginations* as a heuristic to map Hong Kong Christianity transnationally and to understand the strong gravitational pull for people from Hong Kong to maintain their Hongkonger self-imaginings in their religious home communities in Vancouver. I take seriously especially the *personal scale* of these imaginings because these personal imaginings enable networks and bubbles to be formed, as I shall show in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Conclusion: Scaling the Geography of Religion at St. Matthew’s Church

This extended discussion on the geography of religion and the interplay of the micro-geographies of personal religious imagination and the macro-geographies of transnational religious networks *vis-à-vis* existing political geographies applies to St. Matthew’s Church by confirming that a study of the religious geographical imaginings of only one congregation applies at multiple scales. Far from being a moribund field, the geography of religion’s recent forays into theories of embodiment in *homo religiosus* and its push into the unofficially sacred and geopolitics has illumined an approach to St. Matthew’s Church that does not confine itself to the congregational scale. Religious imaginings are embodied by people who have a dimension of *homo religiosus*, the Hongkonger Christians who attend St. Matthew’s Church. These people enact these imaginings at the transnational scale, often pushing up against the political

geographies of multicultural North America. Indeed, it is the political and cultural geography of North America that often contextualize the congregations that they start.

The following diagram (Figure 2.1) illustrates how the micro-macro scales that this chapter has emphasized play out at St. Matthew's Church:

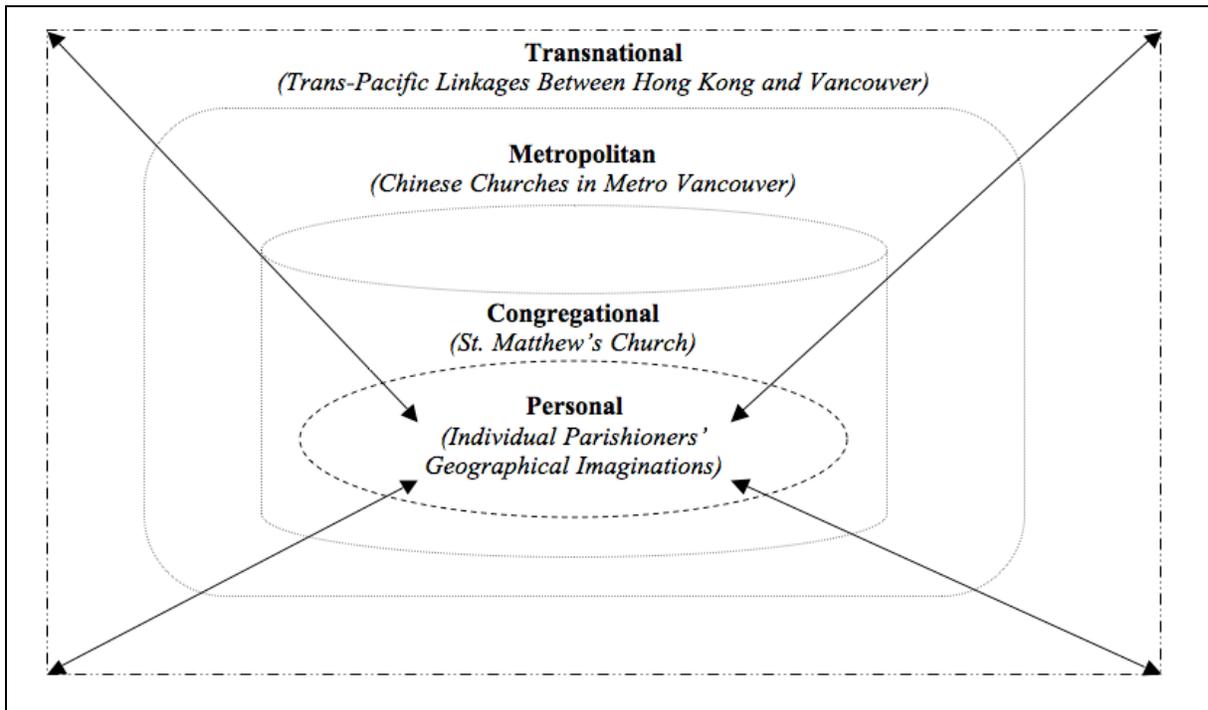


Figure 2.1: The Interplay of Four Scales in the Geography of St. Matthew's Church

As Figure 2.1 shows, the micro-geographies of religious embodiment in personal geographical imaginations and religious gatherings at the congregational scale enable St. Matthew's Church to form networks with other Chinese churches at the metropolitan scale and maintain a transnational bubble between Hong Kong and Vancouver—networks and bubbles that affect congregational life and geographical imaginations. The figure also omits the very significant component that this chapter has also made explicit: these bubbles and networks often rub against already-existing political geographies at the metropolitan and transnational scales. But what this figure emphasizes is the importance of the micro-geographical, *personal* scale: while these Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church are what R. Stephen Warner has called a

religious congregation, a gathering of like-minded religious adherents, such Hongkonger Christians do not only practice their religion in congregations. It is not merely reading the *congregation* with an ethnographic eye that matters; rather, it is the geographical imaginations of the Hongkonger Christian parishioners at St. Matthew's Church that matter as St. Matthew's Church is read with geographical sensitivity. Their sacred territorialities in fact create networks and bubbles of common geographical imaginations that extend to unofficially sacred sites and have implications for ostensibly non-religious politics in public space. As I shall show in later chapters, such sites include their memory of their upbringing in Hong Kong, their imaginations of education in the West, their geopolitical distinctions of being Hongkonger, and their push for sexual and social conservatism in urban space. Religion intersects both with their own geopolitics as well as with the political geography of multicultural Canada to which they have migrated. The task of this thesis is to understand what part religion plays in the geographical imaginations of such religious folk, to interpret the mixture of Hongkonger geopolitics, Christian faith, and transnational life in multicultural Canada as experienced by transnational Hongkongers. The work is done at the scale of the individual *homo religiosus*, exploring their geographical imaginations by hearing their individual stories. These religious folk come from one congregation, St. Matthew's Church, but because they imagine and embody what it means for them to be sacred—a sacralized Hongkonger—it is their geographical imaginations that ultimately constitute the transnational religious networks between Hong Kong and Vancouver. The micro scale of religious embodiment materializes into the macro scale of a religious territoriality that challenges the liberal, ostensibly secular transnational political, economic, and cultural geographies in which they find themselves between Hong Kong and Vancouver.

Chapter 3: Personal Geographies at St. Matthew's: Positionality, Hermeneutics, and Global Ethnography

Having discussed scale, this third chapter moves to consider what effects my positionality has on a study that emphasizes the personal scale at St. Matthew's Church and to construct a hermeneutical methodology in light of this positionality. My personal positionality was apparent in many of my interviews. As we concluded our interview, Nona, a mother in her late forties, began to compliment me for my efforts in the adolescent youth ministry at St. Matthew's Church. **"First,"** she said,

You're using young people to lead a bunch of these kids, this is good. But you need these young people to do it. If you get someone like me, they will feel very bored—like, oh, my mom has come, right? So you can use these middlemen to lead them, to be closer to them, because you are so close to them, your programs and your activities are close to them, so it's easier for them to accept. For non-believers or new believers—children, I mean—fun is most important to them. So how you can lead them from non-believers to believers—this process needs a lot of thinking and effort. So I think you do this very well.

Nona was not alone in these sentiments. Mei Ling, a family-values-supporting volunteer for the Conservative Party of Canada, asked me to translate talks given at St. Matthew's Church by a prominent Hong Kong Christian evangelist, Paul Ng, on sexual purity for the second generation at St. Matthew's: **"Justin, since you're so young, maybe you have a class of people that you're discipling—the young people—you can talk about what Paul Ng talked about in his talk. Just repeat what he shared."** Still other parishioners expressed support for the idea that I would become a Christian pastor at a young age. Such statements reveal my own political and spiritual stakes at St. Matthew's Church. They show that I am no "objective" ethnographer, no proverbial "fly on the wall." I am an insider, and as I did interviews researching geographical imaginations, parishioners at St. Matthew's Church often saw themselves as supporters to an

English-speaking young pastoral apprentice who would propagate their understanding of religious social peace to the next generation of Hongkonger Christians.

This third chapter unpacks this positionality at St. Matthew's Church (and at a larger scale, in the geography of Chinese Christianity) and discusses the effect it has on my hermeneutical approach *vis-à-vis* the study of this particular geography of religion. I first explore my own positionality at St. Matthew's Church as a Chinese Christian working as a ministry intern in second-generation English-speaking ministries at St. Matthew's. This exploration—instead of turning into a navel-gazing auto-ethnography—broadens into an explanation of a geographical hermeneutic that transcends the insider-outsider binary. Following this explanation is an exposition of four scales at which St. Matthew's Church can be contextualized (the personal, the congregational, the metropolitan, and the transnational). These scales form the basis for a methodology to research St. Matthew's Church. My methodology follows Burawoy's (2001) call for a *global ethnography*, a form of immersive research that looks for global processes and linkages as they are played out on the ground. This methodology, I argue, is a geographical methodology that rigorously examines the spatialities of the *homo religiosus* side of these transnational Hongkongers by taking into account the specific networks of which individual parishioners imagine themselves to be part to best expound on the interrelation of their Christian practice and their Hongkonger geopolitics. This chapter foregrounds the importance of the *personal* scale as the geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church are materialized at the broader scales. Indeed, this chapter argues that while I approach transnational Hongkonger Christians as an insider to the community, such a positionality gives me access to the trans-Pacific scale (between Hong Kong and Vancouver) that contextualizes St. Matthew's Church using interviews with mostly

Hongkonger parishioners and that places the geographical imaginations of St. Matthew's parishioners in a broader discussion of religion and Chineseness because these networks are maintained at the transnational scale by personal religious subjects.

Geographical Positionality: A Second-Generation Chinese Christian's Insider

Ethnography

As a son of an ethnic Chinese pastor born in Hong Kong who was first ordained in an African-American Progressive Baptist denomination in Oakland, California before becoming a Chinese Anglican priest in Richmond,¹³ I could be described as what some might call a second-generation Chinese Christian. I am indeed what has been called in Christian circles a PK, a pastor's kid. As it is, I am an ideal candidate to answer Warner's (2000) call to research the second generation of immigrant churches in North America:

I would like to see the study of second-generation religion become a research frontier, as is true of the study of the "new second generation" in general [...] but that is unlikely to happen until immigrant religion begins to be studied by immigrant communities themselves (especially by members of their own second generation), rather than being monopolized by white anthropologists or expatriate scholars, who are more inclined to focus on "difference." (Warner, 2000: 245).

I intended to fulfill this call. Indeed, an earlier research question for this project had a slightly different focus: *what global and local sites constitute the imagined geographies of the first and second generations at St. Matthew's Church?* This question attempted to study in more detail what has been called "the silent exodus" of the second generation from the ethnic church as the sons and daughters of first-generation immigrant Christians have been known to disappear from the immigrant church since the late 1980s (Carvajal, 1994; Chai, 1998; Cha, 2002), ostensibly to North American secularizing forces but sometimes to start second-generation pan-Asian

¹³ Again, my father is *not* the main pastor at St. Matthew's Church.

American congregations to theologize their own experiences as the next generation of religious immigrants (Jeung, 2005).

But in this thesis, aside from a section about how the second generation in multicultural Canada challenges the transnational Hongkonger Christian imaginations at St. Matthew's Church (see chapter 6), Warner's call has gone largely unanswered. It is not because it is a bad call. I credit my inability to answer it rather to my heavy involvement in ministering to the second generation. I began work as a ministry intern in second-generation ministries at St. Matthew's Church in September 2007 by running an English-speaking high-school ministry and by preaching regularly at the English-speaking service. The second-generation ministry focused primarily on a small number of adolescents who were unwilling to let what they saw as sensitive personal information disclosed (however confidentially) in my thesis—or in what they would have perceived as a piece of public knowledge that their youth ministry intern was writing with their private information. Indeed, one vivid scene that sticks out is when I was taking notes during a worship service one Sunday morning: an adolescent girl from the youth group whispered to her friends, "Don't say anything, or Justin is going to write it down." This mentality carried over to their responses to my invitations for interviews. I mailed out about six interview invitations to members of the second-generation teenage group along with Behavioural Ethics Board-approved parent consent and minor assent forms. None of them responded. Those with whom I discussed my project later on were fascinated by work I was doing on the first generation, but when I informally asked if they had considered being interviewed themselves, they replied that they were uncomfortable with their family issues and imaginations of religion—both of which were recurring themes in the high school ministry—disclosed in my thesis. For

their emotional security, what work I did in youth ministry needed to stay confidential; things became tense when they suspected that I was using them for “homework.”

Although initially panic-stricken at this (at the time) unhappy turn in the research, I began to use my own second-generation positionality to study the people I have labeled since I was a child *the first generation*, my “uncles and aunties.”¹⁴ My lengthy experience as a PK had conditioned me to speak with church people older than me, and though English is my preferred language, I found that I could function quite well in both Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese in conversation. The first interview set the tone for what has become this project. Jack, a transnational construction contractor born in Hong Kong but working between South China and Vancouver, expressed a bit of disappointment at the end of our interview when I failed to ask what he thought was the most pertinent issue: **“I seriously am getting interested,”** he said. **“You didn’t ask me any questions about my belief in my...loyalty to which country or identification. You didn’t ask that kind of thing.”** So I asked him. He answered that he was Chinese, but only because he thought that the Chinese Communist Party’s days in power were numbered. Married to a woman from Guangzhou, he sought to expose prejudices about migrants from Mainland China in the church, but he admitted that he was a Hongkonger at heart because he was born there and would like to retire in Hong Kong.¹⁵ Jack’s insistence that I ask him his *Chinese* geopolitical views became prominent in the rest of the 38 interviews that I conducted. **“Would you consider yourself a Hongkonger?”** I would ask. **“What does it mean for you to be a Hongkonger? What do you think of people from Mainland China?”** (see the

¹⁴ Within Chinese communities, men and women of one’s parents’ generation are referred to as “uncles and aunties.” I have found this to be broadly true of most Chinese communities, regardless of them being Hongkonger, Taiwanese, Malaysian, or mainland.

¹⁵ Given Ley and Kobayashi’s (2005: 121) findings that highlighted “Hong Kong for making money, Vancouver for quality of life” as well as my own findings on religious reflection as part of the Vancouver “quality of life, Jack’s retirement plans in Hong Kong are certainly unusual.

Appendix). What began as disappointment that I could not conduct an inter-generational study because of my positionality suddenly became a blessing in disguise as I discovered geopolitical distinctions between Chinese groups that I had monolithically lumped together as my “uncles and aunties,” whether they were from Hong Kong, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), or Taiwan.¹⁶

Indeed, the more I explored transnational Hongkonger Christian geographical imaginations, the more I realized that I had not grown up in a transnational Hongkonger Canadian community in a Vancouver ethnoburb. Though my parents are from Hong Kong, I was raised in a Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese Christian community in ethnoburbs in the San Francisco Bay Area in America. The “uncles and aunties” I had grown up around were a mix of Hongkonger and Taiwanese Christians, all of whom could speak some form of Mandarin Chinese. I grew up in English-speaking Christian children’s programs such as Sunday school, AWANA (a Christian variation of Boy and Girl Scouts with an acronym motto “Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed” from 2 Timothy 2.15), and Vacation Bible School. But I was also part of a Mandarin-speaking church-run Chinese school for five years taught by Taiwanese “uncles and aunties.” They had their own geopolitical imaginations; one auntie I remember from the Chinese school flew into a rage when she discovered that the textbook was teaching us to call ourselves “overseas Chinese nationals” (*wo shi haiwai zhongguoren*) because Taiwan, she insisted, was not part of the PRC. Being a Chinese American in the Bay Area was also different from being a Hongkonger Canadian in Vancouver: many ethnic Chinese immigrants in my church community were not Hongkongers holding multiple passports as they fled the handover

¹⁶ Many of my interviewees were from Hong Kong and in what the literature often defines as the “first generation.” However, as chapter 4 shows, not all of these Hongkongers can be considered “the first generation.” 3 were explicitly Canadian-born second generation, and 6 others migrated to Vancouver in their childhood or adolescence (making them what is often considered 1.5 generation).

of Hong Kong to China in 1997 but were Taiwanese and Hongkonger international students who had earned their degrees at prestigious American universities and had settled in the Bay Area to start families and careers. As the second generation, we were encouraged to learn to speak Chinese (preferably Mandarin) but, more importantly, to assimilate into socio-economic success in American society (Yang, 1999; Brubaker, 2000). Mythologies such as “the model minority” that emerged in 1980s political and popular discourse in the United States resonated with me (Takaki, 1998): my Chinese American friends and I spent our high-school days at times living out and at other times trying to resist the stereotypes of practicing at least two musical instruments for two hours a day, perfecting our SAT I college psychometric scores, and studying for multiple Advanced Placement classes to be able to submit competitive college applications to Ivy League and University of California schools.¹⁷ Granted, Ong (2003) rightly points out that this is only *one side* of Asian America in the San Francisco Bay Area: there is another side, as she shows in her ethnography of transnational Cambodian refugees on the East Bay, that looks much more economically bleak. But on my “model minority” side of Asian America, this predominantly Chinese American community was a far cry from the often-cited transnational Hongkongers in Vancouver with their political flight from Hong Kong (Ong, 1999), transnational “astronaut” families (Waters, 2002), trans-Pacific circuit migration (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Ley, forthcoming), and strategies of international education for better cultural capital in East Asian workplaces (Waters, 2006). My friends and I tended to be more content as

¹⁷ One may say that I tended to fall more within the Chinese American “model minority” stereotype. I practiced two musical instruments for two hours every day, piano for an hour and trumpet for the other hour, and I was involved in the local youth symphony and brass choir. I did not take SAT I classes, although many of my friends did, and I got away with a more than decent score. In high school, I took six Advanced Placement classes and aced five of them. I was accepted in every single University of California school to which I applied (Berkeley, Irvine, Riverside, and San Diego). But I chose UBC because of its lower tuition costs for Canadian citizens and because I wanted to experience my father’s *alma mater*. My family moving with me was unplanned and unexpected. A well-crafted but disturbing film that illustrates this stereotype quite well is Asato and Lin’s (2003) *Better Luck Tomorrow*.

Chinese Americans assimilating into American society, speaking English, and starting careers in North America.

St. Matthew's Church is the third transnational Hongkonger church I have attended since I began to live in Richmond when I began my undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2004. The first church I attended was the church at which my father was hired on as a pastor at the same time I was accepted to UBC. It was what is called in Christian circles a "free church," a church whose worship style is not bound up with formal liturgy and whose organizational structure was locally-focused and congregationally-governed (as opposed to more "catholic" churches whose focus is more global and whose governance is more episcopal such as the Anglican Communion or the Roman Catholic Church). It was also largely populated by Cantonese-speaking transnational Hongkongers. When I decided to leave that church after two years, I became a ministry practicum student at a Chinese Anglican Church also populated by transnational Hongkongers for some biblical studies training I was pursuing alongside my undergraduate studies in history. After a year of work there, I decided to attend St. Matthew's Church, which is another Hongkonger Anglican church but in the ethnoburb I was living in, Richmond. As I attended, the pastor offered me a job as a ministry intern for English-speaking second-generation ministries in exchange for a stipend to pursue part-time theological training at Regent College concurrent with my geographical training. I originally intended to study other Chinese churches in Vancouver for my geography studies because I did not want to have to wrestle so closely with positionality issues, but the more that I worked and interacted with people at St. Matthew's Church and the more that I realized that my time was limited (ethnographic work on Christian churches usually happens on Sunday morning—and one can only be in one place at a time!), the more I was drawn to research this church that I have come to love as my

home church, even though I have only been here for two years—and in the transnational Hongkonger Christian community in Vancouver for five.

In a sense, then, I am a Chinese American outsider to the transnational Hongkonger Christian bubble in Vancouver; in another, I am involved deeply in the inner circle of the Hongkonger churches of which I have been a part in Vancouver. These positionality issues are not new in studies of immigrant religious congregations. Warner's (2000) call itself is a call for second-generation insiders to study their own congregations, although he makes it ambiguous (likely to his favour) whether such insider researchers have to have grown up in those churches. Karen Chai (1998, 2002) is one researcher who, like me, did not grow up in the church she studied for her sociology doctorate at Harvard. Her ethnography of second-generation ministries at Paxton Korean Church in a Boston suburb, began quite reluctantly when her parents placed implicit pressure on her to find a Korean Christian community when she began her undergraduate degree. But as with my case, with more academic study came an increased capacity to reflect on historical, geographical, and sociological processes in the immigrant church, and Chai's study—like my study—eventually plunged her deeply into second-generation issues in the church where she did not grow up but learned to call home all the same. Her ethnography, far from hiding elements that paint the church in a less flattering light, reveals the often ineffectiveness of first-generation ministers to compete with non-church groups for the second generation's attention (Chai, 1998). Chai's study highlights the reality that studies for which Warner (2000) has called are most advantageously conducted by insiders to the community, insiders who are both capable of academic reflection and privy to the politics of "home."

Indeed, such an insider positionality in terms of language and religion has given me unique advantages as an ethnographer. As I was confirmed into the Anglican Communion at St. Matthew's Church and as Chai learned to appreciate the Korean church at her site, sociologist Fenggang Yang (1999) was baptized at the Mainland Chinese church in Washington, D.C. that he studied. Like Chai as well as myself, he found it easier to access information as an insider because church members felt no need to proselytize him:

In comparison, as a Christian myself, I had smoother entries. During my 1993-94 study, I interviewed a Chinese pastor who had been living in the Washington area for twelve years. Before the interview, he asked me whether I was a Christian. I could honestly say yes. Toward the end of the nearly five hours of a very informative interview, he said, "If you were not a Christian, I would have not told you all the conflicts in these Chinese churches, because you would misinterpret them. And if you were not a Chinese scholar, I would have not explained to you the historical and social connections between these churches here and Christian movements in China, because you would not be able to understand whatsoever." (Yang, 1999: 12)

As I shall show in chapter 5, such an emphasis on proselytization and conversion is not unique to Yang's case. As I also found, my interviewees felt more open about sharing their personal imaginations and religious lives with me because I was known to be a Christian. Being an insider ethnographer at immigrant churches is ultimately about gaining access. Indeed, being a member of the ethnic religious community enables the researcher to be privy to internal conflicts often hidden from the outside world because they can potentially reflect unfavourably on the religious community. As a transnational Hongkonger in his thirties who migrated in his late teens, Robert, put it, St. Matthew's Church is like a family, and in a family, one entrusts family matters to what he emphasized was "**one's own people**" (Cantonese, *zigeiyan*). To be an insider is to be a *zigeiyan*, to have access to "**family matters**" (Cantonese, *gah sze*). Like Yang and Chai, my research is bolstered by being privy to insider politics, especially the politics of the geographical imaginations enacted by the predominantly Hongkonger population.

Such insider ethnography highlights the geographical contingencies of places we call home. Criticizing the “*hierarchy of purity* of field sites” with the top-ranking ethnographic sites as far-away, “exotic” places, anthropologists Gupta and Ferguson (1997: 13) call for ethnographers to consider “home” also as a site of difference. While they do not advocate exclusively performing ethnographies of home (indeed, they are opposed to it), their argument that this hierarchy of field sites needs to be deconstructed rightly takes into account that even though ethnographers are themselves “embodied carriers of cultural practices” (Yeoh and Willis, 2005), these cultural practices are specific to place. Pointing out the place-specificities of our own homes is as valuable as pointing out the place-specificities of distant places others call home. Indeed, studying these place-specificities, as Burawoy (1991) points out, is actually about studying how everyday lives are contextualized by political, economic, and (as I would argue) religious networks on transnational scales. Ley (2004) argues as well that these everyday lives themselves are important because while theories of globalization may contextualize field sites, they contextualize lives that are fraught with local emotional vulnerability *vis-à-vis* the transnational contexts. As Ley quotes Wolfe’s (1987) *Bonfire of the Vanities*, people working in international trade through transnationally-mediated means such as the protagonist Sherman McCoy are not emotionally immune to temptations to extra-marital affairs or feelings of personal loneliness in the big city, much as Hongkonger “astronaut wives”¹⁸ whose families have embraced transnational family strategies are known to feel emotional loneliness, globe-trotting elites often find themselves embracing the same ethnic enclaves for emotional support, and (in the case of this thesis) religious migrants find themselves in religious networks to protect their

¹⁸ As chapter four shows, many transnational Hongkongers in Vancouver embraced a transnational strategy called the “astronaut family,” in which families would move the children and often the wife to Vancouver and the male heads would return to East Asia for work, shuttling back and forth as “astronauts” (because they are always in the air in their frequent air travel) between work and family.

spaces of peace by advocating political strategies of social and sexual conservatism. An ethnography of my home church can neither simply be a sentimental descriptive exercise nor a violent critique exposing my own PK angst but must be rigorously grounded in the geographical contexts in which the church's members imagine themselves to be.

Such musings on where I stand as an insider in the ethnography demonstrates that as a geographer of religion, I am positioned between the world of Hongkonger Christians and the world of the geographical academy.¹⁹ While some might argue that my positionality compromises the objectivity of this study, I argue that I am practicing in the fullest sense what Malinowski (2001) called “participant observation,” for I am both a participant in the religious community at St. Matthew's Church as well as a critical observer of what goes on both locally as well as trans-locally in the transnational bubble that surrounds the congregation. Highlighting this positionality corroborates Polanyi's (2003) insight that all knowledge—and for Polanyi, this is *scientific* knowledge—is personal because a scientist (whether physical or social) never stands outside of the universe that he or she studies but is always somehow embedded in the study. As I have shown, being as intensely personal as I have been is the *norm* rather than the exception in recent studies of immigrant religion. Identifying my own position as an insider in the field sets me up to begin a constructive dialogue in an effort to interpret St. Matthew's Church with geographical sensitivity.

Geographical Hermeneutics: From Insider-Outsider to Dialogical Interpretation

As much as I elaborate on positionality, though, some may argue that my position as a second-generation insider to Chinese Christianity will colour my approach to an ethnography of St. Matthew's Church. The research is not objective, one might say, and its intentions might

¹⁹ I am indebted to Sarah Brown, a fellow M.A. student at UBC Geography, for this insight.

themselves be dubious. A functionalistic approach advanced by Geertz (1973) may suggest that I have fallen into such a hegemonic trap. For Geertz, religion is

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz, 1973: 90).

Such a system leaves little room to explore religious imaginations as a religious insider. A researcher must be an *outsider* to a religious community to demonstrate that the religion being practiced by a community as a cultural system is in fact a hegemonic mythology imposed on a group of people for political control. To be an insider, Geertz implies, is to have bought into this cultural system that is in fact an irrational mood that subjects me to a dubious hegemony. As Geertz sees it, this hegemonic trap would colour my approach to religious subjects because it would deprive me of an objectivity needed to observe a community at work.

Fortunately, there are alternatives to Geertz's approach. Within the sub-discipline of the geography of religion, for example, Ferber (2006) advocates a critical realist ontology that is premised on objects being independent from our believing that they exist. Critical realism, Ferber suggests, is a way of seeing the world that frees a researcher from the insider-outsider dichotomy because whether he or she is an insider or an outsider, he or she is free to be surprised by cause-effect mechanisms that manifest themselves in observable phenomena in the world. At the same time, critical realism helps a researcher to avoid the trap of falling into a post-modern despair over the incoherence of the world because the world exists outside of a researcher's discursive presuppositions. Ferber deconstructs objectivity by showing that the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity actually has three variations. Subjectivity might be seen as *value-laden* whereas objectivity is *value-neutral*; subjectivity is *opinionated* whereas objectivity is *true and practically adequate*; subjectivity is *pertaining to subjects* while objectivity is

pertaining to objects. While the first two forms of subjectivity may indeed compromise research integrity, research on human *subjects* necessitates that the research *pertains to subjects*. Taking a critical realist ontology, Ferber argues that these subjects and the world that they inhabit exist outside of our knowing them and that whether we are insiders or outsiders, as researchers, our job is to get to know the various mechanisms in the world that make the world work.²⁰ Critical realism is indeed a self-critical scientific approach to human geography. Within the geography of religion, geographers can seek to understand religious mechanisms as they are—pertaining to religious subjects—and these mechanisms can be analyzed regardless of whether one is an insider or an outsider.

Instead of analyzing mechanisms with a critical realist framework, I employ a geographical hermeneutical approach to religious imaginations. Indeed, I have identified my position at such great length in order to participate in a hermeneutical dialogue with parishioners at St. Matthew's Church. Like Ferber, I also see the need to transcend the insider-outsider binary without giving way to postmodern paralysis. A hermeneutical approach, Ley and Duncan (1993) show, avoids the trap of a postmodern abandonment of truth, a temptation to despair that tantalizes geographers who rightly realize that geographical representations in human geography can never be truly exact. *Pace* Gadamer's (2004) advocacy for a dialogue between interpreter and text, Ley and Duncan advocate a hermeneutical approach to human geography, a methodological premise in which the cultural geographer is in constant dialogue about meaning with his or her research subjects: "What is seen as avoidable bias by the positivist is acknowledged by the hermeneutician as an inescapable part in the formation of knowledge. Rather than attempting to banish the historically situated observer, hermeneutics acknowledges

²⁰ Critical realism is an *alternative* to the hermeneutics I advocate in this chapter. Unlike a critical realist emphasis on scientific mechanisms, a hermeneutical approach takes a rigorous approach to the social historical and geographical contexts in which humans are embedded.

the collision between the data and the interpreter” (Ley and Duncan, 1993: 8). Such a collision, as I have shown in my case, occurs whether one is an insider or an outsider to a field site. We are never neatly insiders or outsiders, but we can acknowledge that whatever degree we are of both, we are always certainly in dialogical collision with our research subjects as we encounter each other as fellow human beings. Orsi (2001) has shown such an approach to be appropriate especially in extreme religious research with an unusual community: in the case of a snake-handling community that self-identifies as Christian in a small town in the American South, Orsi demonstrates that a hermeneutical dialogue helps ethnographers who are shocked by this phenomenon to carry out their research. One does not have to be concerned about *how* it can be that snake-handling is part of this religious cult; one does not even have to evaluate its functional hegemony. Instead, ethnographers can concentrate on the religious imaginations of such snake-handlers, to understand what it is about snake-handling that has such a spiritual pull. To this end, Orsi goes as far as to advocate for a *polytheistic classroom*, spaces in the academy where members of different religions can have meaningful dialogues with each other’s religious imaginations not for the sake of demonstrating that some religions are more true than others nor to convert one’s classmates but to come to a mutual understanding and tolerance of other religious imaginations.

Such an approach lends itself to a geographical hermeneutic in the geography of religion. What geographers of religion are interested in—whether they are insiders or outsiders to the field site—is how the religion in question is territorialized in the imagination, in everyday practice, and in its interaction with existing political and cultural geographies (Stump, 2008). Although I am an insider at St. Matthew’s Church, I am not interested in using this thesis as a platform to demonstrate the truth of the Christianity espoused by the Hongkongers at St. Matthew’s Church.

Instead, I am interested in a hermeneutical approach that engages the personal geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church so that my readers will come to a fuller understanding of a Hongkonger Christian religious imagination through my dialogical interpretation of this expression of *homo religiosus*. In answer to positivistic accusations, I argue that the question is *not*: can a religious insider study his or her own religious community without compromising the research with religious concerns? The question is rather: *why does it matter that religious insiders study their own religious communities?*

Geographical Significance: Scaling the Personal Imagined Geographies of Parishioners at St. Matthew's Church

St. Matthew's Church matters enough to apply a geographical hermeneutical study to it because it operates at four scales: the personal, the congregational, the metropolitan, and the transnational. We return to the same diagram (Figure 2.1) at the end of the previous chapter.

The most basic scale in the geography of religion, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, is the personal scale, the scale at which religious subjectivities are embodied in a *homo religiosus*. The material consequences of such an embodied religious geography can first be found in the congregation, a gathering of *homo religiosus* at St. Matthew's Church to practice Hongkonger Christianity together. It is at the congregational level that most congregational ethnographies, such as Chai's (1998) and Yang's (1999) as well as Warner's (2000) call, begin because it is at this level that religious phenomena can be observed in practice by a religious community (see chapter 2).

But congregations of religious people are not isolated sites of religious practice. As

Figure 3.1 shows, there are 106 Chinese Christian congregations in Metro Vancouver.

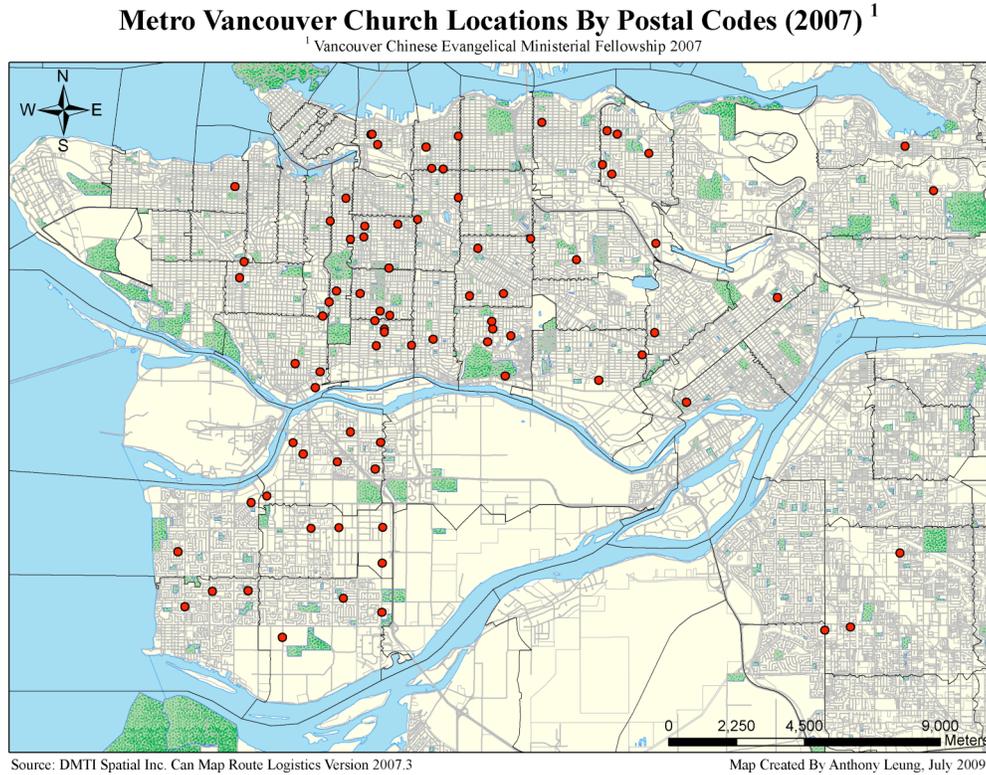


Figure 3.1: Chinese Churches in Metro Vancouver, 2007²¹ (Source: Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship Directory, 2007)

Many of these congregations originated as denominational plants in various cities in Metro Vancouver: for example, the Christian Missionary Alliance has three Chinese churches in Richmond, two in Vancouver, and at least one in every city in Metro Vancouver; there is at least one Pacific Grace Mennonite Brethren Church that attempts to proselytize Chinese migrants for each city in Metro Vancouver; there are three Chinese Anglican churches in Metro Vancouver, of which St. Matthew's Church is the newest²² (Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial

²¹ I am grateful to my research assistant Anthony Leung for creating this map based on the postal codes listed in the Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship's (2007) telephone directory.

²² The two older Chinese Anglican churches are in the city of Vancouver, the oldest one over 100 years old. As I found in my interview data, many parishioners at St. Matthew's Church (especially the ones with Anglican origins

Fellowship, 2007). Members of these churches are not limited in their relationships to only Chinese Christians in their own congregations. Because many of these plants involved parishioners who were attending one congregation and then departed to start new congregations in other geographical areas (such as St. Matthew's Church), parishioners at St. Matthew's Church often remarked on the interpersonal relationships that were retained, some of which remain warm and friendly while others carry tinges of bitterness from negative experiences. Sherman, a Hongkonger who migrated to Canada in early adolescence, recounts his negative experience at another Chinese church in Richmond:

I don't want to bash any church, but every chance I get, I actually tell this story. I mean, I'm eleven years old, ten, eleven years old, something around there. Go to church for the first time ever in that church, they separate you so that kids go up for Sunday school, parents go to church, not much different from what I was used to in Hong Kong. So you sit down and kinda do your Sunday school thing, blah blah blah, sing a few songs and ummm...the offertory piece comes on. And I'm ten, eleven years old. Really, I have no concept of what money is, but I knew enough about it that when the offering plate comes around, you throw in a couple of quarters, that kind of stuff, right? But for one thing, the kids made a point about how much money they were going to offer up into the offering plate. OK? That actually didn't really strike me as strange; it just struck me as odd because in Hong Kong, you just threw in there whatever your parents gave you, really no big deal. But on our way out of service, that exact same day, I don't know if it's coincidence or not, they actually publish each person by name on a sheet of paper somewhere in the church before you leave the door, so you know exactly, you know, John Smith²³ donated 10,000, Suzie donated 2 bucks, and people were giving them a hard time about it. Now that was my first exposure to a Chinese Canadian church in Vancouver. And I'm ten, eleven years old. And I knew enough that that is complete bs. That is total bs. I knew enough that, yeah, I have no concept of what the value of money is, but I know that is not something that you do inherently. So really turned me off, actually. So I've never been back to that place since, and quite frankly, anybody that I've met who was from that church, I do look at them differently, just knowing my own experience of the culture and the people who are from that place. It's probably wrong, but I do have a kind of pre-conception of who they are and the type of persons they are.

in Hong Kong) were originally from those two churches, but to protect the identities of all the churches, I will leave all three churches unnamed.

²³ This pseudonym was taken verbatim from the interview. Sherman used an American surname while discussing members of a Chinese Christian congregation.

While Sherman's negative experience at this church colours his perception of people from that congregation, it demonstrates that personal encounters between congregations at the metropolitan scales also frame religious imaginations. Sherman's experience is not unique: of the 40 people interviewed, even the eleven who were involved in the original planting of St. Matthew's Church attended other Chinese Christian congregations in Vancouver.

Congregational walls are fluid. Many of my interviewees had other experiences at other Chinese churches in Vancouver before coming to St. Matthew's, churches that did not share denominational ties with St. Matthew's as an Anglican Church but were non-liturgical evangelical churches such as Christian and Missionary Alliance, Evangelical Free, United Methodist, and Pacific Grace Mennonite Brethren (a Chinese Mennonite movement in Metro Vancouver). It is these personal encounters among Chinese Christians across congregations that link these congregations at a metropolitan scale (for a fuller exploration of this scale, see the previous chapter).

The bulk of the parishioners at St. Matthew's Church live in ethnoburban Richmond. Just as the congregation gathers on Sunday at St. Matthew's Church in Richmond City Centre (a neighbourhood that has at least three Chinese Christian congregations), the following two maps (Figures 3.2-3) demonstrate that the bulk of the parishioners at St. Matthew's Church lived in Richmond during the twelve years between the beginning of the church and the year of my ethnographic study, while a minority also live in the city of Vancouver (mostly in the Killarney district). While I argue that these parishioners are mobile enough to move throughout Metro Vancouver, an older woman in her early sixties, Janice, says that her son teases her for being a "**Richmond sze lai**," a Cantonese derogatory designation that literally means "master's breast" (*i.e.* the female courtesan of a male "master") and is used in the lower classes of Hong Kong to

designate older women who stereotypically have no need to be employed and spend their days gossiping and grocery shopping. A “Richmond *sze lai*” is one such stereotypical woman whose geographical territoriality is thought to be confined to Richmond. While as Waters (2003) shows that many such women (such as astronaut wives) find social networks in Chinese churches, most parishioners, especially the ones that I interviewed, are mobile enough to travel by private car or public transportation to engage their personal social networks, workplaces, and public events throughout Metro Vancouver. While ethnurban Richmond might serve as yet another intermediate scale between the congregational and the metropolitan scales, this thesis’s interest in the *transnational* scale leads me to simplify these two intermediate scales into the metropolitan scale of Metro Vancouver, a scale at which Chinese congregations in Metro Vancouver are connected and at which most of the parishioners at St. Matthew’s Church live their everyday lives.

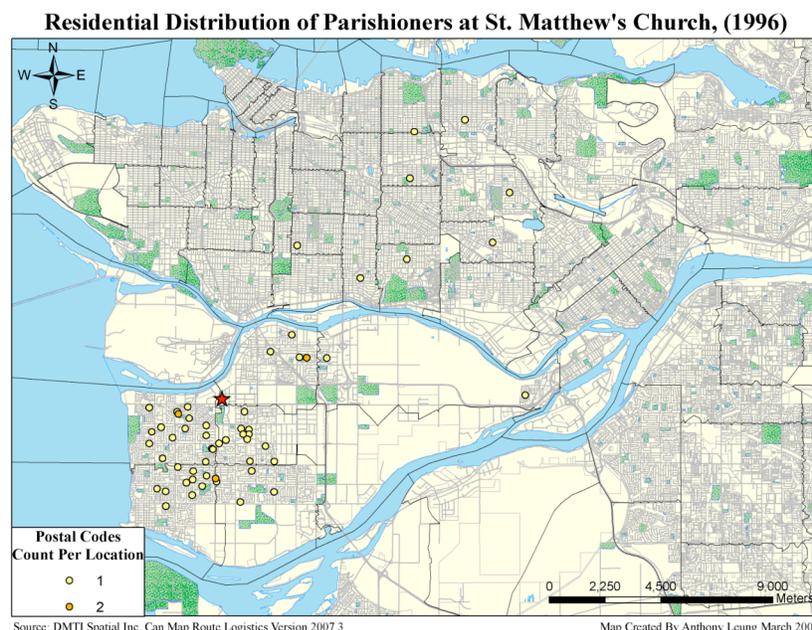


Figure 3.2: St. Matthew's Parishioners, December 1996²⁴

²⁴ The following maps (Figures 3.1-2) were created by my research assistant, Anthony Leung, in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) from the postal codes of parishioners listed in St. Matthew’s Church’s annual telephone

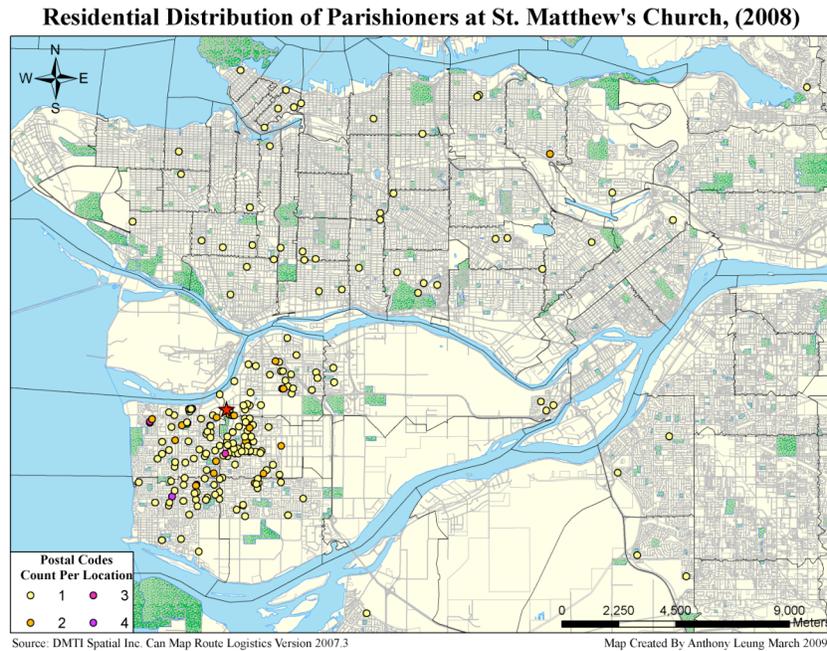


Figure 3.3: St. Matthew's Parishioners, 2008

But the metropolitan scale is an intermediate scale between the congregational and the transnational; this thesis is primarily concerned with the transnational scale. Through religious media, inter-church gatherings, and transnational movement, these congregations are also linked at the transnational scale between Hong Kong and Vancouver. Indeed, even Sherman's observation bears this out: while reflecting on his unpleasant tithing experience at the *metropolitan* level at which congregations are connected, he compares it to his tithing experience *in Hong Kong*. His religious imagination is not merely shaped by Vancouver's Chinese churches but by Christianity in Hong Kong. Likewise, many parishioners at St. Matthew's Church also tended to compare their experience of Christianity in Vancouver with that of Hong Kong. Such comparisons, interviewees informed me, were fueled by their own personal travels between Hong Kong and Vancouver as well as through online Christian classes, Hong Kong Christian

directories. To protect the church, I have not put these directories in the reference list as their titles would give away the church name. The star in these maps indicates a part of Richmond City Centre, the approximate location of St. Matthew's Church shared by two other Chinese churches. See Figure 1.4 for the political boundaries between the cities in Metro Vancouver.

literature, sermon audio from Hong Kong preachers, and three speakers flown in from Hong Kong to St. Matthew's Church in 2008. Transnational religious imaginations at St. Matthew's Church do not exist merely in the imagination, nor are they isolated from Chinese Christians in other churches: they are maintained by live personal relationships and spiritual encounters not only across congregations but, more importantly, across continents.

I argue that a study at the innermost personal scale—a study of the geographical imaginations of *homo religiosus*—frames the discussion of the geography of religion at the congregational, metropolitan, and transnational scales. To be a Hongkonger Christian is to embody and practice the geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christianity. But this imagination is accessible not merely through a participant observation of St. Matthew's Church but by talking to a significant number of the people who attend St. Matthew's Church and finding out what themes are in common among their geographical imaginations. These geographical imaginations materialize into congregations that are linked within Metro Vancouver and in trans-Pacific networks between Hong Kong and Vancouver that in turn reinforce the geographical imaginations that brought them about in the first place. To study one congregation—St. Matthew's Church—may reveal specific insights about the inner workings of St. Matthew's Church. But these insights, I argue, are not limited to St. Matthew's Church. Instead, because the congregation is locked into a larger metropolitan network of Chinese congregations that is itself linked to Hong Kong at the transnational scale, what constitutes the geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church opens windows to larger scales at which these imaginations are operationalized.

Geographical Methodology: A Global Ethnography of St. Matthew's Church

Studying trans-Pacific connections at St. Matthew's Church means that the parishioners at St. Matthew's Church cannot be simply interviewed about what the role of the church is in their lives or the way they perceive the church as functioning. Instead, there is an imagined religious territoriality that is embodied by them in their geographical imaginations and materializes on a trans-Pacific scale that links Hong Kong and Vancouver. To study such an imagined geography requires a methodology that is able to ground such a transnational phenomenon in a place like St. Matthew's Church.

The nine months of ethnographic work for this project involved both participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The participant observation took place every Sunday morning at St. Matthew's Church's main 11 AM service, a liturgy conducted in Cantonese. My own duties as a ministry intern also required my attendance at the 5 PM English service. I was especially active as an ethnographer for the 11 AM services: I had two full field notebooks after my time at these services. I also attended three sets of special talks given by speakers from Hong Kong. The first set took place in May 2008 when St. Matthew's Church flew over a prominent Hongkonger evangelist, Paul Ng, to speak on ministry, faithfulness to the Christian Gospel, prayer, sexual purity, and marital union. A second set of talks took place in September 2008 when Peter Ho, the prominent pastor of 4000-person congregation Tung Fook Evangelical Free Church in Hong Kong, came with his wife Shirley Loo, a prominent writer and speaker in Hong Kong Christian periodicals and parachurch organizations. They held sessions on church growth, social justice, and marital issues. The third experience of trans-Pacific Hong Kong Christianity took place on 11 November 2008 at an inter-church gathering of Chinese Christians throughout Metro Vancouver in Richmond called Wedlock Day: taking place

simultaneously in Hong Kong and in Vancouver, events were held in Cantonese and featured videoed presentations by the Member of Parliament, Hongkonger Christian Alice Wong of the Conservative Party, as well as a special presentation by Paul Ng on Christian marriage. Other special events in which I participated included a special dinner celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the pastor's ordination and the church's twelfth anniversary banquet at an upscale Chinese restaurant.

The bulk of the research for this thesis comes from the 40 interviewees who participated in this project and who lent their insight into the personal scale. These 40 interviewees were selected by complete voluntary participation. Such a selection process was ethically necessary because of my positionality: simply asking people to participate in person, telephoning them, or e-mailing them may have been construed as coercion as both my father and I have spiritual influence at St. Matthew's Church. I mailed interview invitations to 70 people in the church and made two announcements in Cantonese during the church services that such a letter may be arriving in parishioners' mailboxes. I selected whom to send these letters from the most recent church directory: I first selected people with leadership positions in the church (either on the church council or in positions of service, such as on the music team), and then I selected others at random. Many who responded were longtime members of the church, but as I did more interviews, this first set of respondents began advertising my skills as an interviewer, and in time, even those who did not receive letters of invitation volunteered their time to be interviewed by me. With the exception of the adolescents with whom I had been working, this selection with a complete volunteer basis became a grassroots congregation-wide effort (with no active engagement on my part, except for saying yes to volunteers for interviews) for more people to have their stories heard and to have their geographical imaginations figured out. There was no

talk about coercion, and feedback to the interviews was cheering: a memorable incident included one interviewee who sat back after the interview and said in Cantonese, “I feel so *shufok*” (a Cantonese term that simultaneously means *comfortable*, *comforted*, and *relaxed*). Such a positive reaction to the research resulted in a diversity of interviewees, ranging from people who had been at the church from the beginning to people who had only recently begun to attend. As Figure 3.4 shows, while 17 out of the 40 respondents (42.5%) had been at the church for over a decade, there were 2 (5%) who had been there for less than a year, 10 (25%) for 3 years or less, and another ten (25%) between 3-10 years.

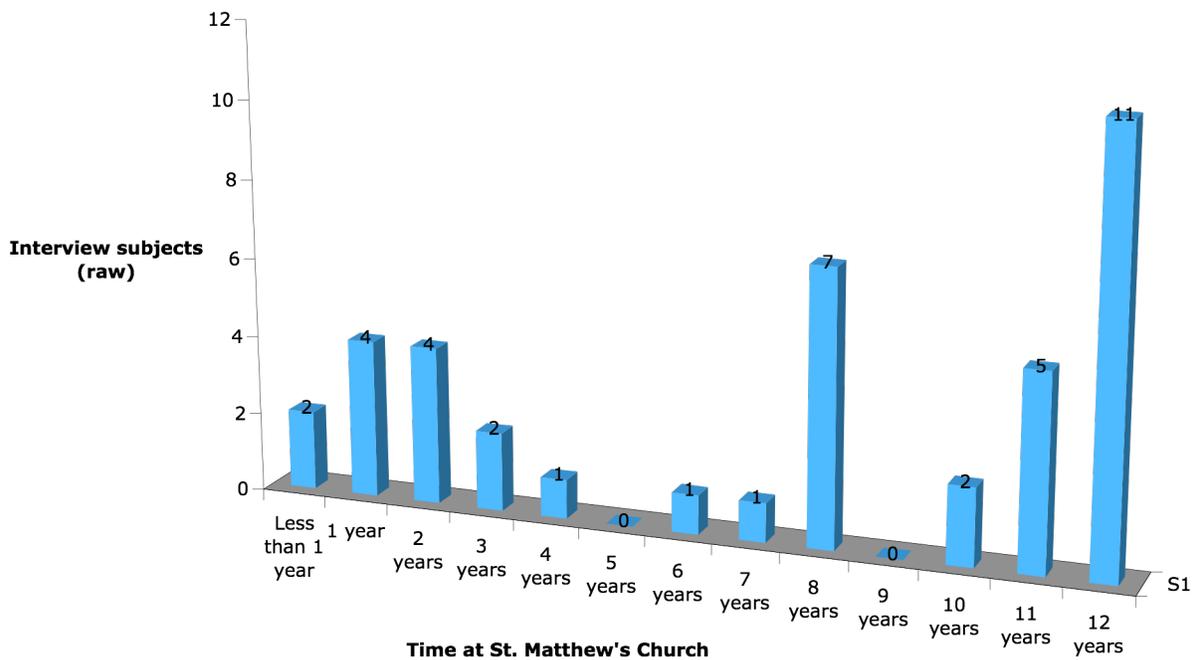


Figure 3.4: Interview Subjects: Length of Time Attending St. Matthew’s Church

In effect, many of the interviewees were eventually acquired by snowballing. As it is, this research does cover the geographical imaginations of about 10% of the church, but this 10%

is not necessarily a random sample, although it is representative of a diversity of people who have been at the church for a long time and those who have not, as well as a variety of age groups. The youngest was 20 years old, the oldest 74. The distribution in Figure 3.5 indicates that the age group with the most people was the 40-49 bracket (11 respondents; 27.5%), followed by the 30-39 bracket (9 respondents; 22.5%) and the 50-59 bracket (7 respondents; 17.5%). There were 5 (12.5%) interviewees in their 20s. As for seniors, there were 5 (12.5%) in their 60s and 3 (7.5%) over 70. There were 20 male and 20 female. Four people decided to be interviewed as couples, so while I interviewed 40 people, there were a total of 38 semi-structured interviews conducted.

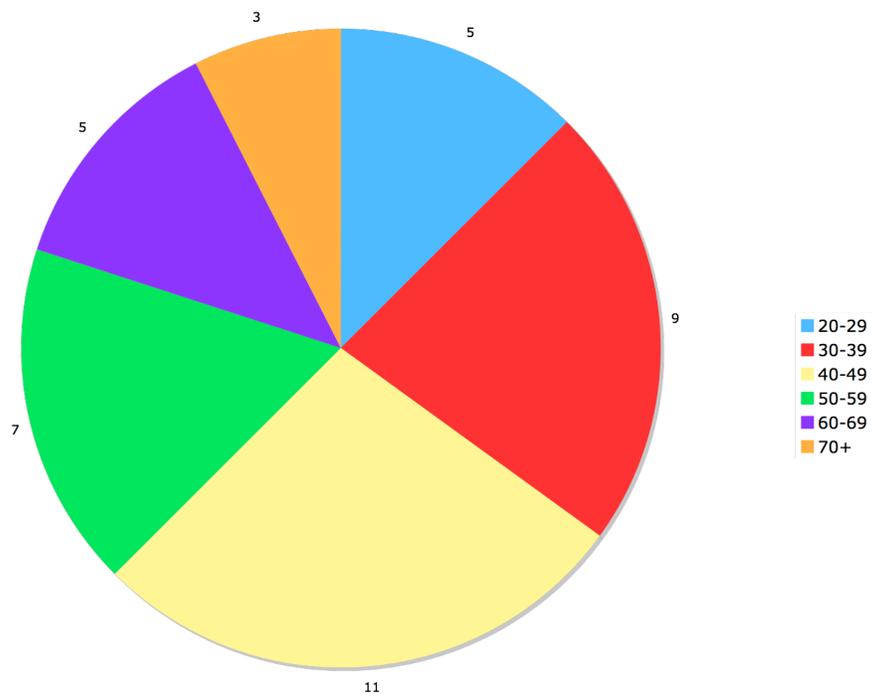


Figure 3.5: Interview Subjects: Age Brackets by Decades

The semi-structured interviews focused on the parishioners' transnational imaginations. Themes that structured the conversations included place of origin, people who were close to

them, people that they held in respect, language, media practices, and religious practices (see the Appendix). Such themes uncovered the intersection of religion and geopolitical imaginations in these interviewees' geographical imaginations. This methodology has its roots in what Burawoy (2001) has called *global ethnography*. Far from being an oxymoron, a global ethnography seeks to “ground globalization” (Burawoy, 2001), to examine the political, economic, social, and (here) religious processes that contextualize phenomena happening on the ground. A global ethnography traces its roots from two sources. The first is from Burawoy himself in his *extended case method* (Burawoy, 1992). For Burawoy, the ethnographic case can be extended across space and time in a way that the ethnography may uncover new theory to re-construct older theories at a macro-geographical scale. As Burawoy puts it, participant observation may happen at the micro scale, but it can be placed in the context of a macro scale to increase its theoretical power. The second is Marcus's (1995) exhortation for ethnographers to construct multi-sited ethnographies to test the limits of field work: this construction happens as ethnographers “follow the people” as humans migrate, “follow the things” as materials, commodities, and intellectual property are moved, “follow the metaphor” to understand the origins of meaning in language use and print media, “follow the plot, story, or allegory” as narratives are used as heuristics that bind places together (*e.g.* in collective social memories), “follow the life or biography” of interview subjects' life histories, and “follow the conflict” of parties whose clash takes place in multiple sites. While Marcus originally advocated a multi-sited ethnography in light of this methodology, I argue that it is possible to follow people, materials, metaphors, narratives, life histories, and conflicts that Marcus calls us to follow by following parishioners' imaginations, extending the research beyond their experience of St. Matthew's Church alone across time (into the memory) and space (into the trans-Pacific Hongkonger Christian territoriality between Hong Kong and

Vancouver). An example of such research is Tsing's (2005) ethnography of global connection in the Kalimantan in Indonesia, where she argues that multiple scales that include (in increasing size) the village, the city, the nation, transnational networks, and the globe often clash over interest and ideology that concern environmental, economic, and political issues, creating *friction* that is itself creative and from which new political possibilities can emerge. Tsing's ethnography is based in the Kalimantan over 14 years, during which she made repeated trips to the field but contextualized her findings in a multiplicity of scales. To put it in Burawoy's and Marcus's terms, Tsing began with a micro-ethnography and extended her case to the macro-geographical global ethnography, grounding globalization in the Kalimantan by following the people, the things, the stories, and the conflicts.

This ethnography of St. Matthew's Church attempts the same approach for a transnational religious territoriality. While the ethnography was in part a participant observation that searched for transnational religious territorialities in the weekly operations of the congregation, the majority of the findings came from the semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire approved by the UBC Behavioural Ethics Board structured conversations around six themes (see the Appendix). The first theme was *place of origin*. In this section, I asked interviewees to reminisce on their childhood, particularly on their religious and educational lives. Interviewees often discussed the advantages of a religious education in Hong Kong. Interviewees who were religious in Hong Kong also tended to contrast church life in Hong Kong with church life in Vancouver. It was here that they also revealed their preference for either being called a Hongkonger or a Chinese national; 39 preferred some kind of Hongkonger designation.

Two further themes further fleshed out the transnational geographies in which these Hongkonger Christians lived. One dealt with where friends and family lived. I asked interviewees to name where people with whom they felt close resided. Many answered in terms of family, although some noted that they had friends in Hong Kong with whom they kept constant contact through telephone and email. It was often noted that attachment to place was based on where family members lived. Another theme dealt with people that they respected. I began this theme by asking what qualities of a leader the interviewee respected. While this theme would often turn into a conversation on family members they revered, these qualities would also be used to assess their level of respect for the church leadership at St. Matthew's Church and to understand what the church meant in their lives. We would also explore their views on other prominent Christian leaders: while many named Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life* as an influence, many others also commented on the influence of prominent Christian scholars, pastors, and evangelists from Hong Kong.

Another two themes dealt with communication. The first was a language preference. Many interviewees indicated that their language of choice was Cantonese, although many could speak English. Some humorously noted that one spoke more Cantonese in Richmond than in Hong Kong, a statement that led to further probing about place. The second dealt with media preferences. I asked them what their favourite television shows were: many responded that TVB from Hong Kong broadcast overseas was their preference, although many also included American television shows such as *Seinfeld* and *American Idol*. They were also questioned as to what their news preferences were: many cited Cantonese news, although others listed Internet websites from CNN, CBC, and BBC.

The last theme dealt with transnational religious life. Here I began by asking them which service they attended at St. Matthew's Church and how they felt about the music and sermons they heard there. This information was used to assess their religious imaginations: many stated that it was not the stylistic preferences that mattered, for they came to church to worship God. A final question asked: if they were to proselytize people, which groups would they proselytize? While many said that they would prefer God to pick this group for them, many also admitted that Cantonese would be a language of choice for personal evangelism, *i.e.* telling the Christian Gospel to members of one's personal networks.

These interviews were then transcribed and then coded for five geographical themes. The first code looked at Chinese places that highlighted statements about Hongkongers, Mainlanders, and Chinese culture. The second code looked at religious places, both in perceptions about religion, memories of religion, and current experiences of religious place. The third code examined educational places and sought to understand what education meant and where this education took place. The fourth code looked at Western places and perceptions about what it meant to move to the West. The fifth code looked at spaces of home and sought to understand what it meant to have a homeland as well as what the concept of family meant to interviewees. An interview with Sherman reveals the advantages of binding the research to the congregational site while still maintaining a global ethnographic methodology because these codes frequently were mixed all in the same statement. For Sherman, what he thought about being a Hongkonger geopolitically was more or less bound to the church. In this quote from his transcript about Mainlanders (given a Cantonese derogatory designation as *dailokyan*, "big land people"), the Chinese, religious, western, educational, and family codes are simultaneously mixed:²⁵

²⁵ I am indebted to Tom Woodsworth, a doctoral student at UBC Geography, for sharing this insight at a home seminar.

I know how to read people well enough to know after, you know, five minutes, ten minutes with somebody whether or not, or how well-bred, a person is, and where their upbringing was. Like I know quite a few people that come from very modest means, and you talk to them, they're the most cultured, honest people you've ever met, and I love those people to death, right? As opposed to Mainlanders, or *dailokyan*, some...they try to pretend to be something that they're really not. Like if you look at the stats now, I think what they were saying was that by 2017 or 2020, Mainland China will probably consume 70% of the world's luxury good items, high end luxury good items, Louis Vuitton, new Mercedes-Benz, that kind of stuff. So obviously, they got money. But...and I've met quite a few people from Mainland China who's got a lot of money. I don't enjoy my time with them. They're pretending to be something they're not. I mean [*chuckles*], there was an ad that I saw a while ago where they were looking for—you know how you got English tutors? They were looking for Westerners to go back and teach etiquette to all these people who've got a new-found wealth. To me, that kind of stuff is not taught. It's something you grow up with. Even go to finishing school, and you can pretend to have class, it doesn't mean that you actually have class. It's very snobby, I recognize that, but it's also something I'm pretty honest to myself about. I don't mind admitting that. I don't. I think even in this church you can see that too. I mean, the number of Mainland people who are here, and the types of people who interact with them, and even the people who do interact with them, the way in which they have that interaction, you can see whether or not if it's fake, and I don't know how many people actually are on that list, but I can imagine you can probably pick out for yourself how many of those there are, which ones are fake and which are honest.

Sherman began by comparing Mainland Chinese migrants (*dailokyan*) to people he has met on his travels throughout Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Asserting that *dailokyan* are mere emulators of Westerners, he mixed Chinese place with Western place, the links between the two being educational place (“finishing school”) and places of home (“It's something you grow up with.”). But without prompting, Sherman immediately moved from these comparative notes between *dailokyan* and Westerners to the *church*, a religious place, and insisted that the Mainland Chinese migrants at St. Matthew's Church are as pretentious as those outside. For Sherman, religious place made little difference in terms of political and cultural geographies. Sherman's account is not unique among the 38 interviews, although (as I shall show in chapter 6) some Hongkongers were more ambivalent about assigning such stereotypes to

Mainlanders within the church. Indeed, such mixing of the codes indicates that oftentimes, for the Hongkonger Christians I spoke with, religion is inextricable from emotional, political, and cultural geographies. As Kong (2001a) would have it, Sherman demonstrates that his religious territoriality is not bound to an officially sacred site (St. Matthew's Church) but rather extends that officially sacred site to sites beyond the ordinarily sacred. Sherman's geography of religion is tied to his Hongkonger imagined geography. Personal geographies are also projected at the congregational scale.

This global ethnography of religion at St. Matthew's Church takes seriously the specific global and local sites that constitute the imagined geographies of parishioners at St. Matthew's Church. From the questionnaire, these sites were broad enough to include geopolitical boundaries between Hong Kong and Mainland China and specific enough to include specific schools, churches, and home places. What I sought to understand was the connection among these places and how these places contributed to the religious territoriality of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church. As it is, this research grounds the globalization of this territoriality by framing it in specific transnational and metropolitan sites beyond the congregation. The results from this research are data from which it is possible to understand what religion means in the everyday lives of these Hongkonger Christians.

Conclusion: From Personal Positionality to Public Geography

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that my personal positionality as a Chinese Christian in fact opens a hermeneutical dialogue between the academy and the church on the geography of religion at scales that range from the personal to the transnational. As I have argued, this dialogue has made my position as a Chinese Christian in the geographical academy an ideal

position from which to contextualize St. Matthew's Church at the personal, congregational, metropolitan, and transnational scales. An interest in position has not resulted in small-minded, navel-gazing auto-ethnography but has instead fostered a dialogical inquiry into the geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church, a church in which I have insider interest but to which I am also new, a community where I have become an insider after moving to Vancouver. My positionality as a Chinese Christian has allowed me access into these geographical imaginations, but my upbringing from the San Francisco Bay Area has also afforded me the distance of comparative context in my investigation. Indeed, while this study has personal implications for me, this thesis is not so much concerned about me but about *me entering into a hermeneutical dialogue* with the parishioners at St. Matthew's Church, many of whom are first-generation migrants who share different geographical imaginations from me. The purpose of the hermeneutical dialogue is to be able to read their religious lives with geographical sensitivity.

It is in the context of my hermeneutical approach that the scalar model presented in the previous chapter in Figure 2.1 makes sense. I proposed a model that reads St. Matthew's Church not only as a congregation but as a gathering of individual *homo religiosus*, each with their own personal stories and geographical imaginations. These geographical imaginations—centered on Hong Kong and framed by Christianity—are the glue that holds the congregation together. The congregation itself is locked in an intermediate metropolitan scale among the 106 Chinese Christian congregations in the Metro Vancouver area, but most importantly, these religious folk find themselves engaged through their personal geographical imaginations in a transnational religious network between Hong Kong and Vancouver. This chapter has elaborated on my personal positionality in order to make clear how I as a researcher engage these personal

geographical imaginations with a hermeneutical approach. Indeed, this thesis is concerned with these personal geographical imaginations as a window into how these religious migrants exercise their agency as they find themselves in a trans-Pacific Christian network—indeed, a “bubble,” according to the previous chapter.

Through this scale model, I have developed a methodology in keeping with what Burawoy (2001) has called *global ethnography*. The global ethnography that I perform in this thesis uses semi-structured interviews that capture the transnational imaginations of the predominantly Hongkonger population at St. Matthew’s Church so that connections can be made between the everyday personal imaginations of these Hongkonger Christians and the transnational Hong Kong-Vancouver bubble in which they are inevitably involved. While the interviews certainly touched on congregational and metropolitan life (the intermediate scales in the scale model), the bulk of the interviews focused on the micro-geographical personal scale and the macro-geographical transnational scale. As later chapters demonstrate, this methodology explains the tenacity of St. Matthew’s Church in preserving itself as a Hong Kong Christian congregation: it seeks to maintain the peace and stability its Hongkongers imagine to be Christian through maintaining its involvement in the trans-Pacific Hong Kong Christian bubble.

What is being imagined in the case of my thesis is what it means to be simultaneously a Hongkonger and a Christian. This intersection raises issues for scholars of trans-Pacific Hongkongers who have focused up till now on transnational Hongkonger agency in the global residential property market (Ley, 1995; Mitchell and Olds, 2000; Mitchell, 2004), their trans-Pacific family strategies for employment and education (Waters, 2002, 2006), and their economic hardships in Canada (Ley, 2003). This thesis seeks to complement that research by examining the *religious* motivations of some of these Hongkongers’ migratory strategies. In so

doing, this thesis is also relevant to geographers of religion as it demonstrates that it is insufficient to merely focus on how places are sacralized. Geographers of religion, as I showed in the literature review in chapter 2, must broaden their research to examine how religion becomes intertwined with other imagined ethnic and political geographies, with other identities. I use my own positionality as a Chinese Christian insider to push for both a more comprehensive view of Hongkongers in trans-Pacific space as well as a deeper look into how religion intersects with everyday lives and imaginations. This thesis shows that religion affects all four scales that contextualize St. Matthew's Church because the parishioners at St. Matthew's Church embody *religious* subjectivities. But this faith, I argue, must be read with geographical sensitivity.

Chapter 4: Hong Kong Christians: Transnational, Metropolitan, and Congregational Contexts

While the previous chapter dealt with the importance of the personal scale, this chapter uses extensive methods to quantitatively and historically contextualize the global ethnography I perform on Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church. To use the words of the second chapter, this present chapter frames the micro-geographies of the religious imaginations of parishioners at St. Matthew's Church with the macro-geographies of transnational Hongkonger migration to Vancouver in its political, economic, cultural, and economic dimensions. What is sketched in this chapter is brought into sharper focus in the global ethnography that I perform in chapters 5 and 6, an ethnography that primarily focuses on these Hongkonger Christians' religious dimensions.

But to foreground the personal scale, this chapter begins with an illustration of these Hongkongers' transnational dimensions by using an interview excerpt. Janice, the "Richmond *sze lai*" from the previous chapter, is in fact a sixty-year-old divorcee in a well-respected position at St. Matthew's Church. Impressed by my punctuality at her interview (for her, young people are never punctual), she decided to be open to my probing, provided that she could *gong zhongmun* (speak Chinese). The Chinese she spoke was not Mandarin Chinese, the official language of the PRC otherwise known as *putonghua* ("the ordinary language"), but her native Cantonese with Hongkonger urban inflections. When I asked where she grew up, she replied, "**Hong Kong**," but quickly noted that the space in Hong Kong in which she grew up was the Anglican church that she attended as a child: "**Always in Hong Kong, go to school, get out of school, go to church because my home had faith: we were Anglican. So I spent a lot of time growing up in church. I didn't go out much and play, I spent very little time playing with**

others. And the things I used to do at home, besides going to school and getting out of school and playing piano, was church.” This religious upbringing, however, did not insulate her from Hongkonger geopolitics. She explained to me that though she was ethnic Chinese, she would never call herself Chinese:

I never say that I'm a Chinese, you know. This is Hong Kong people. Never say they're Chinese. They're Hongkongese... Because we grew up in Hong Kong, experienced Hong Kong so much. Although British colonialism occupied Hong Kong for so many years, but it was a good occupation. Really good. They did a very good job. They made Hong Kong people's status, they did that extremely well. So we went from our age—we're not young, eh?—we saw Hong Kong from the 1950s—those times were pretty poor—and then they took flight. The 1960s were extremely good. 70s, 80s, kept rising. So we were in Hong Kong for so many years, we have much affection for Hong Kong, actually.

Admitting that she did not trust people from Mainland China, she told me that she thought that the recent talks given by speakers flown in from Hong Kong on sexual purity and marital stability were irrelevant to people in Richmond. Sex was not the main issue of concern. The real important issue was “**interpersonal relationships**” (*yanziyan guanhai*). Transnational Hongkongers needed to learn to develop trust, especially with Chinese migrants who did share their own geopolitical distinctions. After all, many Hongkongers(/ese) had fled Hong Kong to Canada to flee the 1997 takeover of Hong Kong from the British by the PRC so that they could preserve their capitalist lifestyles. Encountering Mainland Chinese migrants in Canada—in a land to which they fled—was often accompanied by unpleasant feelings.

Janice is not the ideal *homo economicus* often cited in the geographical literature as bringing a new form of Hongkonger neoliberalism to challenge Vancouver's neoliberal ideals (Mitchell, 2004). She is not a business migrant. She worked as a secretary in Hong Kong, and when she moved to Canada, she quickly found jobs at firms in Edmonton and now in Richmond. But her capitalist economic ideals are based on her geopolitics: distrusting Mainlanders, she

identifies herself as a Hongkonger who is geopolitically distinct from the Mainland Chinese and who left Hong Kong in 1988 as the clock ticked toward the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to Mainland Chinese governance. Indeed, she used the often-derogatory description of Mainland Chinese: *dailokyan*. *Dailok* literally means “big land,” and a *dailokyan* is a stereotypical rural Chinese peasant, a country bumpkin unacquainted with the sophisticated ways of an urban environment like Hong Kong. Moreover, *dailokyan* is not merely a rural-urban distinction; it also carries with it a differentiation of a person from the communist Mainland, an Other to capitalist Hong Kong. Janice is a Hongkonger *par excellence*, a subject whose sense of identity is defined by the urban political economy in which she grew up in geopolitical distinction to a political economy north of the New Territories cast as Other. She is *homo economicus* in a *geopolitical* sense.

But Janice is not merely a Hongkonger with a geopolitically-based identity. She is a Christian whose subculture in Hong Kong, in Edmonton, and now in Vancouver are bound by the Anglican churches she has attended. In Hong Kong, as she said, she grew up primarily within an Anglican circle. When she moved to Edmonton, she attended an Alliance church with a strong exchange student ministry before she helped to start a Chinese Anglican church in an upscale district in Edmonton. When her sons moved to Vancouver for jobs and to start families, she moved with them and quickly rose in the echelons at St. Matthew’s Church, yet another Chinese Anglican church. Janice’s citizenship may belong to Hong Kong, but she understands her own subjectivity as *homo religiosus*.

Janice’s personal subjectivity and geographical imaginations raise questions about how to study transnational Hongkongers. While many have noted the geopolitical and economic dimensions of Hongkongers, I note at St. Matthew’s Church—for Hongkonger Christians—that

a religious dimension certainly complements this geographical imagination. As the emphasis on religious education and exposure discussed in later chapters suggest, these imaginations may not be strictly limited to the Christian community, although Hongkongers who do not identify as Christian will certainly have less religious commitment and may even be antagonistic to the Christianity to which they were exposed.²⁶ Still, at the personal scale, religion is often mixed with these geopolitical distinctions. Such an argument is nothing new: indeed, Max Weber's (2003) seminal argument is simply that the spirit of European capitalism is driven by a secularized Protestant asceticism that prizes profits above personal well-being. This asceticism, Weber argues, can be derived from the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther's understanding of vocation, the idea that God has a special calling on the lives of every Christian, and that it is every Christian's duty to fulfill that calling. Weber's subjects are indeed different. Invoking Weber, Chinese scholars such as Tu Wei-Ming (1998) may question me for studying Christianity instead of Confucianism because the geography I explore is not European but (for lack of better terms) Chinese, and as Tu points out, Weber argued that it was *Confucianism* that framed the political economy of Chinese society. But as I shall demonstrate, the Chinese Christian population in Vancouver has a significant force in migrant Chinese political geographies due to their social conservatism rooted in their Christian imaginations. This chapter demonstrates that these imaginations are rooted in emotionally-evocative historical memories. As Ho (2008) has argued, citizenship is often constituted by the emotions, by conceiving of one's home country as family. What constitutes this Hongkonger geographical imagination are emotional experiences rooted in historical events. Some of the events that were remembered in my interviews were of

²⁶ Such a statement is merely a *suggestion* toward which the emphases on religious education and the political involvement of the church in my research, both ethnographic and secondary, point. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to make this statement a definitive claim. More research needs to be done *outside* Christian circles to assess the viability of this statement.

tear gas thrown by Communist agitators in Hong Kong in 1967, the sight of Chinese student demonstrators for democracy being brutally gunned down and run over by tanks in 1989 at Tiananmen Square, the recent scares of SARS in 2003 in which the Chinese government was blamed for not taking swifter action on the disease and the fake baby powder incident in 2008 when certain PRC factories produced fraudulent infant products that proved fatal for many infants who ingested them. From these memories, many interviewees made an emotional case that their Hongkonger geopolitical separation from the PRC Mainland was justified (see chapter 6).

This chapter geographically contextualizes the *homo religiosus* side of transnational Hongkongers who have been frequently typecast as *homo economicus*, ostensibly because of their economic savvy but more plausibly because of their personal geopolitics and emotional citizenship. It does so by framing St. Matthew's Church (the congregational scale) with the linguistic, political, and religious geographies of the Chinese migrant population in Vancouver (the metropolitan scale) and in these geographies' connections with East Asia (the transnational scale). As with Janice's interview, this chapter also takes seriously the geographical imaginations of individual parishioners at St. Matthew's Church (the personal scale). The first and second sections of this chapter capture the complexity of the term "Hongkonger" (Cantonese, *heunggongyan*) and locate this complex term in the cultural and political geography of Hong Kong. The third part uses this cultural and political geography to contextualize a discussion of Christianity in Hong Kong. The fourth and fifth parts discuss the transnational migration of some of these Hongkongers to Vancouver first by quantifying their migration and then reviewing the literature on their migration logics. The sixth part discusses the religious dimensions of these migrants with statistical data on Vancouver's Chinese population's religious

adherence. The seventh part profiles the 40 interviewees from St. Matthew's Church as predominantly Hongkonger in terms of their own cultural and political geographies. In this sense, the chapter grounds the theoretical discussions in the previous chapters: in the case of Hongkonger Christians, religious imaginations are contextualized by personal geopolitics. This chapter profiles this population. The following two chapters present the results of this contextualized ethnography.

Defining Hongkongers: A Slippery Business

Heunggongyan is a notoriously difficult citizen-subject to describe, much less define. In the early 1980s, anthropologist Hugh Baker spoke of the emergence of "Hong Kong man" [sic]:

"Life in the short term" is not, of course, unique to Hong Kong, but something unique has been emerging from Hong Kong's cities: it is Hong Kong Man. He is go-getting and highly competitive, tough for survival, quick-thinking and flexible. He wears western clothes, speaks English or expects his children to do so, drinks western alcohol, has sophisticated tastes in cars and household gadgetry, and expects life to provide a constant stream of excitement and new openings. But he is not British or western (merely westernized). At the same time he is not Chinese in the same way that the citizens of the People's Republic of China are Chinese. Almost alone in the Chinese world Hong Kong has not adopted *Putonghua* (Mandarin) as the lingua franca: instead Cantonese holds sway. Admiration for and empathy with his compatriots Hong Kong Man certainly has, but he also now has pride in and love of the society which he has created through his own determination and hard work. He gives little credit to the Union Jack under which his success has been nurtured, and he is not necessarily happy at the prospect of the five-starred red flag presiding over his activities. Hong Kong Man is *sui generis* and the problems of the territory's future are more difficult to resolve because of it. (Baker, 1983: 478-479).

But this portrait, as well as more recent portrayals of *heunggongyan*, is slippery. Though Baker's description rings true by capturing a hybrid citizen-subject, one must wonder if this is only one socioeconomic class in Hong Kong society. Yet Baker cannot be faulted, for capturing a more complete picture of Hongkongers has been extremely difficult both in the literature and in the interview data that I shall review. After all, as Ma (1999) points out, *heunggongyan* is in fact

a cultural identity that defines itself against the Other, “a distinctive local identity [that] has only taken root since the late 1970s, when the new-found Hong Kong identity was largely constructed by foregrounding cultural differences between Hongkongers and mainland Chinese” (Ma, 1999: 1). Because being a *heunggongyan* is more about what it is not than what it is, it is difficult to substantially pin down what exactly a Hongkonger is except by caricaturizing Mainlanders as uncivilized, an approach that many are hesitant to use especially after the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China. But after the 1997 handover, the term *heunggongyan* ironically still carries weight. Despite the difficulties of maintaining a Hongkonger identity, Mathews, Ma, and Lui (2008) have demonstrated in a survey taken in 2006 in Hong Kong that the term *heunggongyan* still carries political and cultural weight because of (as they argue) a Hong Kong urban identity, a tenacious market mentality, and the continued use of Cantonese as a preferred Chinese dialect. Indeed, out of their 1007 respondents in 2006, 80.8% (an amalgamation of the “Hongkongese,” “Hongkongese but also Chinese,” and “Chinese but also Hongkongese” categories in Table 4.1) responded that they were still some kind of Hongkonger (see Table 4.1). *Heunggongyan*, while difficult to define, is still a discursive reality with geographical implications for Hong Kong as a political and cultural space.

Table 4.1: Self-proclaimed cultural identity of interviewees in Hong Kong, 1996-2006 (%) (Ma, Mathews, and Lui, 2008: 97)

<i>Cultural identity</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2006</i>
Hongkongese	25.2	23.2	28.8	22.8	24.8	21.5
Hongkongese but also Chinese	32.9	31.8	30.0	35.8	36.0	38.1
Chinese but also Hongkongese	14.7	11.6	15.6	17.0	14.5	21.2
Chinese	25.7	32.1	24.5	23.5	23.6	18.6
Other	1.5	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.1	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Number of respondents)	(769)	(302)	(527)	(533)	(500)	(1007)

But there have been noble efforts to define Hongkongers. Abbas (1997) labels Hong Kong with a *culture of disappearance*, a colonial space with a floating identity where representations of identity are constantly replaced and substituted both in the media and in built form. While Abbas is right in pointing out the rootlessness of Hong Kong's de-nationalized culture, a culture of disappearance is a slippery culture that could mean just about anything, as long as anything also disappears. Faure (2003) proposes specifically, then, that Hongkongers suffer from a *colonial mentality* that stems from what he calls *the politics of appointment*, that because in colonial Hong Kong, only a certain political class could be appointed to government positions, the proletarian Hongkonger population with an inferiority complex decided not to go into politics or academia and have seen themselves as unfit to govern or study Hong Kong for themselves. For Faure, such colonial subjects left the arena of politics and academic space to run their own small family businesses. Economic human, Faure suggests, is inferior human. Ma, Mathews, and Lui argue (2008) for a *market mentality*, that because Hongkongers lack a national consciousness, they have approached their identity as consumers, concerned only for their own economic security. Such an argument is similar to Ku and Pun's (2004) exploration of the politics of the *entrepreneurial citizen* in Hong Kong, a citizen-subject engineered by the family, the school, and the media to be business people in a globalizing economy. What is common to all these arguments is that what it means to be a *heunggongyan* is to be a Chinese entrepreneur in an ephemeral, globalized society framed with a colonial legacy. But what is slippery about all these descriptions is that there is nothing specific or substantial about a cultural geography of fast, disappearing entrepreneurial citizens in a political underclass. Defined as such, to be a Hongkonger could refer to just about any colonial subject who has had the good fortune of rising from rags to riches.

My interview subjects had similar difficulties as they frequently contradicted each other and had trouble expressing what it meant for them to be a *heunggongyan*. What was a consensus, however, apart from the existence of the term *heunggongyan*, was that life in Hong Kong, *pace* Baker, was life in the fast lane of a crowded Chinese city. For Mei Ling, such a packed atmosphere was home when she was there at the time, although she is grateful to have moved to a place like Canada that she feels is more peaceful and slower:

Hong Kong is very, very dusty, lots of people, and people talk very loudly. But it's very familiar because the things are very accessible, convenient, for example, you need to do shopping, you need to take the bus, it's very convenient. And it's also the place I was born. So even though it's very noisy, very dirty, the air is very dirty, and it's very crowded [Cantonese *lit.* human mouths are crammed crowded], but I feel that I can accept it.

Jackie remembers that Hongkongers worked hard for their money because they were “**looking for a better life,**” a life that especially featured owning their own “**house.**” But asked what a “**house**” meant, she clarified, “**Yeah, it's a flat. A flat looks like from 300 square feet to a bigger one over a thousand. Yeah, the range is very big. We say that the smallest house is like a monk's quarters...It's a very, very packed place. Very tight, very tight, very tight.**” Life in Hong Kong for many was a crowded life, and while Hong Kong was home, it was congested. It was also fast. Sarah, a Hongkonger woman in her late fifties, told me that Richmond was nowhere near the speed of Hong Kong: “**In Canada, you only do one thing a day. Doing two things a day is already doing extra. In Hong Kong, you do twenty-something things a day.**” From this interview data, a Hongkonger lifestyle meant embracing a fast-paced, multi-tasking way of life in an urban environment where all were going at that same quick speed. Hongkongers may live in a multidimensional culture that can be characterized by a ghostly film culture of disappearance (*pace* Abbas), a place where a colonial legacy has left behind a politics of appointment (*pace* Faure), a city populated by people who could be

categorized as *homo economicus* whose civil duty is to be entrepreneurial (*pace* Ku and Pun). But this multidimensionality takes place in a crowded, congested urban geography.

Aside from crowded congestion, few could agree on what this multidimensionality actually encompassed. At times, my interviewees even contested the narrative of *homo economicus*. Johnny, a Hongkonger in his forties, also put forth the popular conception of a Hongkonger lifestyle as a life of *convenience* in a crowded, accelerated city. But asked to clarify how a Hongkonger differed from a Mainland Chinese person, he had difficulty: **“You can sense it. No matter how they dress up. No matter how they talk. We just have the sixth sense to feel that. It’s very hard for me to quantify. How to put it in words is...I never tried that.”** Difficulties notwithstanding, other interviewees attempted to articulate this sixth sense.

Immediately before the comments that I cited before in my comments on global ethnography in the previous chapter, Sherman, a professional in his thirties, gave voice to a *homo economicus* version of Hongkongers:

Hmmm...what does it mean? Ummm...you’re very capitalistic, very materialistic, uhhh...you really don’t live for life. You live to work. *Heunggongyan* are very hard-working, and they’ve got an obscure sense of values, and I think I have that...You really live to work. You’re not really living for anything else. And you speak to most Hong Kong-raised people my age or younger, well, particularly my age, you sit down with them for an hour, have coffee, whatever, OK? Eventually the topic of, “So what are you doing? How are you making your bucks?” Or, “What’s the state of the economy?” Or, “What’s an opportunity out there to make some money?” But the Almighty Dollar will eventually enter that conversation 90% of the time. That’s very typical of *heunggongyan* conversations in any setting, in, yeah, with anyone. It just comes up....I don’t mind it. I mean, money is important to me as well. I try not to go there, but when I’m surrounded by other Chinese, well, especially *heunggongyan*, can’t help but going there. [*chuckles*] I consider myself still a *heunggongyan* more for the fact that I do spend a fair bit of my time, my own personal time, thinking about where I am financially myself and what do I have to do to make it to retirement.

Such a response that is so money-centered is indeed corroborated by the *homo economicus* literature on Hongkongers. But Adam, a leader in the church, begged me not to leave my

definitions of Hongkongers at what he called the “**money/power**” Hongkongers, who for him were specific to Hong Kong at a moment in time, a moment (he noted) that happened after he had already migrated from Hong Kong in the early 1980s. Indeed, Adam had left a previous Chinese Anglican church because he had heard that a new pastor from Hong Kong would bring such a group of Hongkongers to Canada:

It’s a couple years before 1997. Lots of Hong Kong people started to immigrate. That’s what some people heard. When [that pastor] came, he was going to bring his own people. There would be some difference between the two groups, in terms of opinion, in terms of culture. Those people who are coming with [that pastor], they’re more Hong Kong style people, maybe they’ve got more money, they have higher spending power because they make money in Hong Kong, they bring the money here, and the people that were local [in that church], they don’t want that kind of culture, so I think one-third of them moved to [another Chinese Anglican church].

Asked if he still considered himself a Hongkonger, Adam had contradictory feelings. He began by answering yes, for he had grown up there, but because of his move to Canada in the mid-1980s, he considered himself more Canadian than Hongkonger because he was not used to the lifestyle in Hong Kong. Adam’s contradictory response suggests a conception of what being a Hongkonger means deeper than the one put forward by Sherman: on the surface, Hongkongers may seem to be fast-paced *homo economicus*, but at a deeper level, it is more about emotional connections to a place where one grew up as well as a live connection with that way of life.

Part of that way of life is keeping up with Hongkonger media in Hong Kong film and Canto-pop, a popular form of music that features Cantonese lyrics and often depicts life in Hong Kong. But interviewees had trouble agreeing if that was part of their way of life as Hongkongers. I interviewed a couple, Henry and Jane, who disagreed on what it meant to be a Hongkonger. Henry argued for a *homo economicus* way of seeing Hongkongers: “**They’re really fast-paced...it’s just really, really a quick kind of thinking, business-oriented people.**

They are not religious. I don't feel that Hong Kong people are religious. They worship money." Because he frequently had money on his mind, like Sherman, he considered himself a Hongkonger. But his wife Jane had different thoughts: for her, being a Hongkonger was keeping up with the latest Hongkonger fashions:

I'll consider myself more a *heunggongyan* five or six—actually, ten—years ago. But not like now. Because I think I'd say, 50%, I'd consider myself a *heunggongyan* because I feel like I lost the contact of the Hong Kong trends and the issues and the things like that, I am not as up to it as I used to be. I know the major news, but not a lot of what is popular and what is trendy right now. That's why I don't feel much about *heunggongyan* because when you say you're a *heunggongyan*, you know what happened in the entertainment world, you know what the newest toys are out there, you know what's the trendiest thing, that's what I would consider myself a *heunggongyan* if I'm on top of things... Yeah, it's my perception of *heunggongyan*. *Heunggongyan* is all about buying the newest things and the latest gadgets and trendy stuff and things like that.

Julia, a second-generation Chinese Canadian in her early twenties, considers herself a *heunggongyan* for the same reason Jane does not. When I asked her if she considered herself a Hongkonger, she exclaimed,

YES. I would. More so than a Canadian, though. If you were to talk to me about like...I don't know...Justin Timberlake, and I'm like, "What? What?" I feel like that. But if you were to talk to me about like Hong Kong entertainment, I'd be more interactive with you.

Such diverse responses demonstrate that being a Hongkonger is to possess a multi-faceted imagination. For some, it is a way of living; for others, it is being *homo economicus*; still for others, it is staying current with Hong Kong media. Granted, there are similar themes of urbanity, crowdedness, and competition, but there is little agreement on what being a Hongkonger is even among non-academics, and as we have seen earlier, academics have found the term an equally difficult one to pin down. And yet the consensus among both the academics and the laity is that Hongkongers are different from PRC citizens and have a unique geographical

imagination that is focused on experiencing the urban and cultural geography of Hong Kong. It is just that this experience is difficult to definitively describe.

Hongkonger Political and Cultural Geography: From Anglo-China to Civilized Urbanites

I argue that a Hongkonger cultural geography can only be understood if it is placed in terms of political geography. Indeed, Hongkongers may defy definition, but there is a definite genealogy of this imagined geopolitical distinction. Hongkongers did not merely emerge in the 1970s out of thin air. Rather, Hong Kong as a place resembles what Soja (1999) has called a *third space*, loosely used in this thesis as a productive hybrid space out of which hybrid identities can emerge. Munn (2001) has shown that the intentions of the British in the mid-nineteenth century for Hong Kong was to create a space in East Asia that they called *Anglo-China*. Anglo-China was a political experiment, a disciplinary tactic used by the British to civilize the Chinese in Hong Kong through legal disciplinary means (such as curfew laws) and educational institutions. Hong Kong was indeed colonized, but colonized for the sake of producing a hybrid citizen-subject who may have been ethnic Chinese but British in thought and practice. While the idea of Anglo-China faded by the late nineteenth-century, Chu (2009) has also shown that urban spaces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries constructed in the model of Ebenezer Howard's *garden city* were also used to civilize the Chinese in Hong Kong with images of Anglophilic beauty.

However, despite the civilizing attempts of Anglo-China, it is important to remember that the Chinese in Hong Kong have always had agency to make themselves who they wanted to be, even if what that meant was becoming *homo religiosus* in a Christian sense. Historian Carl T. Smith (1985) was one of the first Hong Kong historians to call for attention to the agency of the

Hong Kong Chinese, not just their colonial superiors. Studying the Christian church in Hong Kong, Smith argued that it was Chinese Christians educated in British mission schools who became the nineteenth-century middlemen such as the Tong Brothers, who in turn rose to be the new business elite in Hong Kong and made Hong Kong the economic success that it became. British mission schools also produced Chinese Christian Sun Yat-sen, whose ability to speak English allowed him to fundraise in North America for a revolution that launched the Republic of China in the early twentieth century. Smith's approach to the agency of the Hong Kong Chinese has also led to Sinn's (2003) argument that the founding of the Tung Wah Hospital in the 1870s was propelled by a form of local Hong Kong Chinese politicians who saw the need to provide social services to the public that were not provided by a laissez-faire British government. It has also launched a literature focusing on Chinese union organizations (Chan, 1991; Tsai, 1993), a literature that has examined the agency of the Chinese in colonial Hong Kong throughout the history of Hong Kong (Ngo, 1999).

But what is interesting about Smith's argument is that, *pace* Weber, it positions Hongkonger *homo religiosus* as the precursor to Hongkonger *homo economicus*, indeed, the precursor to what it means to be a *heunggongyan*. As he concludes his account, he argues in a tone similar to Ma's positioning of 1970s Hongkongers *vis-à-vis* Mainlanders:

The histories of the Church in China and of the Church in Hong Kong have been different. This difference has influenced attitudes and policies. In the future, there should be a sharing of the uniqueness of each group, a searching for the most effective way for the Church to contribute to the national life of China and to assume a positive role in the life of its own particular community, yet also to participate in a universal community of faith. (Smith, 1985: 211).

As Smith suggests, part of what being a citizen-subject of this thirdspace of "Anglo-China" Hong Kong meant, then, was to at least be influenced by the Christian church through the education system. It is that *homo religiosus* element that tends to be missing in transnational

accounts that see transnational Hongkongers migrating from Hong Kong to flee the Mainland Chinese “other” because of their ostensible *homo economicus* orientation.

It is out of this thirdspace rift between Hong Kong and the Mainland that Ma (1999) can argue that a Hongkonger identity that defined itself against the Mainland Other took hold in the 1970s. In 1967, riots broke out on the streets of Hong Kong as followers of the Chinese Communist Party threw tear gas and assassinated key Hongkongers who spoke out against the abuses of the Cultural Revolution in China. While sentiment was initially friendly toward the motherland, Lui and Chiu (1999) note that what the riots did was to create a feeling of antipathy toward a Mainland many Hongkongers saw to be anarchic, an uncivilized government opposed to an organized society that could be epitomized by colonial Hong Kong. Indeed, after these riots, students of the Hong Kong media have noted that with the rise of Cantonese-speaking TVB in 1968 (Ma, 1999), a modern Hong Kong identity began to take hold as the film industry shifted from the Mandarin-dubbed kung fu films of Bruce Lee to the Cantonese realist comedy of the Hui Brothers in the 1970s, the “new wave” of realism of Ann Hui in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the ghost films of Wong Kar-wai in the 1980s, and the *mou lei tou* comedy of Stephen Chow in the late 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, during the rise of Cantonese television and cinema, the Hong Kong Legislative Council in 1971 was itself considering what kind of Chinese it would adopt as the official language in Hong Kong:

...we have to examine whether Cantonese alone (as advocated by the vast majority of the representations received), Cantonese and Mandarin, or Mandarin alone should be adopted. In this connection, we note from the statistical figures from the Report of the Census 1961, that Cantonese was the usual language of 79% of the Hong Kong population and it was understood by 95% of the population. We have no further information on these figures. Consequently, we have no doubt that Cantonese would at the present moment have more relevance and reality for the population as a whole and accordingly conclude that interpretation for the open meetings of the Legislative Council and Urban Council should be confined to English and Cantonese only. (Faure, 1997: 298-299).

This *lingua franca* of Cantonese recognized by the Hong Kong government became cemented by the quasi-national use of the vernacular in film (Chu, 2003) as well as in a new style of Hong Kong music known as Canto-pop. Mainlanders, by contrast, became epitomized by Ah Chan, a comedic television character who portrayed Mainlanders as country bumpkins who had come into new money but fell flat in the face of British-civilized Hong Kong (Ma, Mathews, and Lui, 2008). To be a *heunggongyan* meant to speak Cantonese, not Mainlander Mandarin, and to live in a civilized territory that was positioned against the perceived disorder of the Mainland.

In 1983, Margaret Thatcher tripped while descending the steps of the Great Hall of China in Beijing. Hong Kong's political economy was set on edge. With consumer confidence at an all time low, the Hang Seng index fell dramatically. Margaret Thatcher's "fall" affected Hong Kong so much because she was in Beijing holding discussions with the PRC government regarding Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule. After all, Hong Kong had been a British colony since the post-Opium War Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. But with the advent of the return of the New Territories in July 1997, the British and Chinese governments began in the 1980s to discuss the return of all of Hong Kong to China. The British government kept quiet about these talks; Thatcher herself assured Hongkongers that they were doing all they could to keep Hong Kong. But as Faure (2003) points out, the British had begun decolonizing since the 1950s Suez crisis when they discovered that they could not maintain their colonial budget defending their territories in the Middle East while keeping Hong Kong. Hong Kong had to go. And realizing this was what set Hongkongers on edge.

When Margaret Thatcher fell in 1983 on the steps of Beijing's Great Hall of China during the talks over Hong Kong sovereignty, the stock market understandably crashed in Hong Kong. A Hongkonger imagined geography that othered the Mainland certainly did not welcome the

talks between the British and the PRC that led up to the 1984 Sino-British Agreement, an agreement that ceded Hong Kong back to the Mainland on 1 July 1997. In the imaginations of many Hongkongers, the Mainland threatened the *laissez-faire* capitalist political economy of Hong Kong, not to mention the emergent “civilized” urban Cantonese culture that defined *heunggongyan*. It was in the context of this Hongkonger imagined geography that multiple passport-holders emerged: despite the promise that Hong Kong would be kept as a Special Administrative Region for 50 years in a “one country, two systems” policy, many Hongkongers felt that to be truly safe, they needed to acquire access to passports from countries in the West so that they could migrate to Canada, the United States, or Australia if Hong Kong became politically and economically unstable after 1997 (Ong, 1999). These flexible Hongkonger migrants’ cause for quick emigration was confirmed, however, by what they perceived as the injustice of the Chinese government when students protesting for democracy were violently suppressed at Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. Granted, in the 1990s, the comedic figure of Ah Chan became less pronounced in the Hong Kong media in light of the handover; as Ma (1999) argues, in the 1990s came a noticeable shift of nervous conciliation with the Mainland. But as heavy emigration patterns continued up until 1997, Hongkongers demonstrated by their migration that they were fleeing for political and economic security, unwilling to risk suffering another Tiananmen, especially if that Tiananmen was in Hong Kong the next time.

What I have demonstrated in this brief exploration of the term *heunggongyan* in Hong Kong’s political geography is that while the term *heunggongyan* is a slippery term, it is so because it is a politically-loaded term used to define a boundary between Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland. This boundary has been existence long before the Chinese Communist Party’s rise to power in the late 1940s in China, although prior to that rise, this boundary was

more porous. As both Smith (1985) and Munn (2001) have shown, this boundary was first drawn by the colonial British who attempted through education and the legal system to Anglicize Chinese subjects. However, what may be interpreted as one-way colonial discipline often translated into a two-way street: Hongkongers often took agency for their own lives in becoming business middlemen and in organizing informal economies and social services. The Communist Mainland's violent attempts at power in Hong Kong during the Cultural Revolution from 1967-76 cemented a political break between Hongkongers and Mainlanders. By establishing their own Cantonese television and cinema as well as developing a *laissez-faire* capitalist economy, Hongkongers came to see themselves as fundamentally different in terms of *cultural geography* from Mainlanders. But to be a Hongkonger is in fact a statement of political geography. What makes the expression of those politics a slippery exercise is when this political geography is used to define a culture apart from China.

Christianity in Hong Kong: A Political Geography of Religion

It is in this political and cultural geographical context that we can locate Christianity in Hong Kong. As Smith (1985) demonstrates in his account of British Baptist missionaries and Christian educators as the first non-Chinese people to settle in Hong Kong in 1841, the Christian church has been a political force in Hong Kong since the founding of Hong Kong as a British colony in 1842. While the Hong Kong census does not count religious adherents, *Hong Kong* (2006), an annual publication of the Hong Kong government, consistent with previous years, reported that about 600,000 people in Hong Kong were Christians, 100,300 of whom were Filipino Catholics. This number amounts to just under 10% of the 7 million total population of Hong Kong at the time. Such a number is consistent with the nineteenth-century colonial British

efforts to create an Anglo-China thirdspace in Hong Kong (Munn, 2001) that resulted in a variety of indigenous Christian churches established in Hong Kong that went on to have social, economic, and political clout (Smith, 1985). These arguments, primarily made by Smith, suggest a need to re-examine our narrative of Hongkongers for a geography of religion, indeed, a geography of Hongkonger Christians that differs from the Chinese church in the Mainland (see Smith, 1985: 211).

The literature casts Hong Kong Christianity as primarily a political force in Hong Kong, a fair assessment in accordance with the literature (esp. Smith, 1985; Munn, 2001) and with my interview data about Christianity belonging to the higher classes (see chapter 5). Indeed, Leung and Chan (2001) have argued that the church and the state in Hong Kong formed what they call a “contractual agreement,” the church often acting as the executor of the state’s will while the state often cooperated with the church to perform charity services in Hong Kong. Such ecclesiastical, executive roles, they argue, have been changing since the 1980s as Catholic and Protestant churches have taken a more “prophetic” role by preaching social critiques leveled toward the state and privileged Hong Kong society. Factors in the change during the 1980s, they argue, included the entry of more progressive clergy and lay leaders into the Christian church in Hong Kong as well as an anticipation of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to PRC rule. But though the church and the state have often been partners in politics, Leung and Chan lament the dearth of research on Christianity in Hong Kong, although a brief literature review prior to this statement established a general consensus that Christian churches often played a political role in Hong Kong society:

On a practical level, Church-State relations in Hong Kong have been an inseparable part of Hong Kong’s history, though researchers have largely neglected this aspect. The study of Church-State relations should help fill some blanks in Hong Kong’s history. For example, it suggests that the churches played the role of ‘contractor’ or ‘deputy’ to the

government. This resulted in an uneven relationship of power between the churches and the government and limited the churches' capacity to adopt the role of 'prophet,' mentioned above. The study of Hong Kong's Church-State relations reveals how the government was able to absorb certain forces in society that had the potential to turn against it, and how it was able to manipulate those same forces into becoming faithful partners. (Leung and Chan, 2001: 5).

Leung and Chan's assessment is no surprise when one considers Smith's (1985) history of Chinese Christians as the rising business and political elites in nineteenth-century Hong Kong. These Chinese Christians were first educated in Christian schools and then advanced Hong Kong's political economy, often to their own advantage. The Christian church and the state, as Smith would have it, have been acting in tandem since the beginning of Hong Kong's history.

Such an emphasis on the political geography of Christianity in Hong Kong suggests that while a quantitative minority of Hongkongers in Hong Kong actively practices Christianity, Hong Kong Christianity is no small political force in a qualitative sense (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3). According to Table 4.2, after 1970, Catholics and Protestants in Hong Kong made up a relatively consistent 10% of the population, even as the total population in Hong Kong continued to increase. This percentage was consistent up to 2005, the Hong Kong Yearbook (2006) shows, with a reported 600,000 (8.6%) total Catholic and Protestant population in a population of 6.99 million in Hong Kong.

Table 4.2: Hong Kong Population, Numbers of Catholics and Protestants, 1950-2000
 (Source: Leung and Chan, 2001: 7)²⁷

Year	Hong Kong Population	Number of Catholics	Number of Protestants	Total (Catholics and Protestants)	Ratio of Total Number of Catholics and Protestants to Hong Kong Population (%)
1950		(33,848)			
1951	2,000,000	40,000	20,000	60,000	3%
1955	2,400,000	73,499 (60,000)			
1960	3,190,000	158,419 (146,464)			
1965		(220,280)			
1966	3,716,400	234,500			
1970	4,127,800	247,953 (241,813)	152,047	400,000	10%
1975	4,379,900	265,000 (265,806)	175,000	440,000	10%
1980	5,147,900	266,800 (266,843)	190,000	456,800	9%
1985	5,466,900	269,000 (267,429)	231,000	500,000	9%
1990	5,859,100	258,200 (253,362)	285,000	543,200	9%
1995	6,307,900	254,140 (257,457)	260,000	414,140	8%
2000	6,500,600	229,700 (229,723)	300,000	529,700	8%

In Table 4.3, these numbers are compared to other religions that are also active in Hong Kong.

While the majority of Hongkongers answered that they had no religion, those who did were more likely to affiliate with folk religions or Buddhism. However, if one amalgamates Catholics and Protestants, one finds that there were more self-identifying Christians in 1988 (12.1%) and 1995

²⁷ This data was originally taken from each year of *Hong Kong* published by the Government Information Services Department in Hong Kong. As a Roman Catholic nun, Beatrice Leung (one of the co-authors of this volume) had access as well to the Archive Office of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, which gave these authors a more exact number of Catholics in Hong Kong, listed in this table in parentheses.

(12.9%) than Buddhists (6.6% and 11.6%, respectively) in Hong Kong. Christians may have been a statistical minority, but they certainly numbered on par with more stereotypical “Asian” religions.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Religious Groups in Hong Kong in 1988 and 1995 (%) (Source: Leung and Chan, 2001: 7)²⁸

Religious groups	1988	1995
No religion	58.3	60.2
Folk religion	23.0	15.3
Buddhist	6.6	11.6
Protestant	7.2	8.4
Catholic	4.9	4.5
(N)	(1,644)	(2,275)

But a quantitative minority of self-identifying Christians does not indicate a minority of Christian *exposure*. A psychometric test based on the *Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity* after the 1997 handover showed among 598 Chinese-speaking students (79% of whom did not actively attend a Christian church) in Hong Kong, personal attitudes toward Christianity positively correlated with church attendance and personal prayer (Francis, Lewis, and Ng, 2002). While the study does not report the actual results of the study in terms of how favourably these students regarded Christianity, this positive correlation between personal attitudes and Christian spiritual practice demonstrate that there has been ample exposure to Christianity in Hong Kong. After all, at least most of these students could accurately associate their attitudes to Christianity with Christian practices. While many probably would not identify as Christian (for many did not attend a Christian church), they were certainly not lacking in Christian *exposure*.

In short, Christianity in Hong Kong may be practiced by a minority, but its impact on political space is unmistakable. Indeed, while Christianity might well be studied as a geography

²⁸ This data was originally taken from Cheng and Wong (1997: 301).

of religion in Hong Kong, it has been known both in political discourse and in popular experience as a *political geography*. This political geography, as the genealogy of Hong Kong's cultural geography in this chapter has shown, began in the nineteenth century as a colonial project to transform Hong Kong from a Chinese space to Anglo-China. But as Smith (1985) and Sinn (2003) have shown, this colonial project did not remove agency from Chinese people in Hong Kong but rather empowered them as they were educated in Christian schools to become a rising business class in Hong Kong, able to speak English but fully participating in Chinese society often with an eye toward social charity, as in the case of the Tung Wah Hospital. While such studies have argued that Christianity in Hong Kong has often been more of a political than a religious geography, it has been, I argue, less of a politics of oppression and more of a politics of empowerment. This argument that I put forward is consistent with the recent changes in Hong Kong Christianity that Leung and Chan (2001) have also pointed out: the church, while still a political force, has been advocating Christian social change even in opposition to state policies more consistently over the last two decades. Indeed, as this thesis shows, the transnational Hongkonger Christians that I spoke with did not think of Christianity as an oppressive colonial force. They saw Christianity as a colonial religion that displayed a social status to attain, if not a religion that gave true peace and stability. Christianity was empowering, not oppressive.

Hongkongers in Vancouver: Quantitative Estimations from Place of Birth and Mother

Tongue

In 1992, 66,000 Hongkongers left Hong Kong, a peak from the average of 62,000 (about 1% of the Hong Kong population at the time) who had been emigrating every year since 1990. 85% migrated to Canada, the United States, and Australia (Migration News, 2002). As Li (2005)

demonstrates from Citizenship and Immigration Canada's (CIC Canada) Landed Immigrant Data System (LIDS) data, the numbers of Hongkonger migrants to Canada reached up to 23,727 in 1988, rose to 39,356 in 1992, and peaked at 44,223 in 1994. Indeed, in the interval between 1990-1995, the 172,840 Hongkongers who moved to Canada represented 57% of those who had emigrated from Hong Kong at that time. While these numbers declined to 22,251 in 1997, Hong Kong migration to Canada still made up 70% of the emigration from Hong Kong between 1995-1997 (Li, 2005: 20-21). Only in 1997 did the numbers of Hong Kong migrants to Canada drastically fall. These statistics demonstrate clearly that there was something motivating a quick exit out of Hong Kong from the late 1980s up to 1997, an emigration that makes a Hong Kong Christian congregation like St. Matthew's Church in the late 1990s and 2000s possible in Canada. Indeed, what is behind these numbers is a migration narrative that makes the previous discussion of the political, cultural, and religious geographies of Hong Kong relevant in a Canadian context. In this section of this chapter on extensive contextualization, I move with these transnational migrants from Hong Kong to Vancouver. This section first profiles the Chinese population that arrived in Vancouver, assessing how many of these migrants were Hongkongers at the time that I studied St. Matthew's Church. I then engage with the literature on the migration logics of these transnational Hongkongers.

Table 4.4: Hongkonger Immigrants to Vancouver in Comparison to Other Migrants by Place of Origin, 2006

	Immigrant Population, 2006	Pre-1991	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2006
Total	831,265 (100%)	388,740 (100%)	142,130 (100%)	148,700 (100%)	151,690 (100%)
China, People's Republic of	137,245 (17%)	43,580 (11%)	23,520 (17%)	30,350 (20%)	39,790 (26%)
Hong Kong SAR	75,775 (9%)	33,445 (9%)	25,115 (18%)	14,335 (10%)	2,875 (2%)
Taiwan	40,805 (5%)	4,930 (1%)	11,630 (8%)	17,290 (12%)	6,950 (5%)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2007a

If we take the 2006 census's statistics on place of birth, Hongkongers do not make up the dominant immigrant population in Vancouver. As Table 4.4 shows, migrants from the Chinese Mainland seem to have made up 17% of the immigrant population in Vancouver in 2006, whereas Hongkongers made up 9%. Another 5% were Taiwanese migrants, who, like the migrants from the PRC, are Mandarin-speaking (though with a slightly different accent). Granted, PRC and Taiwanese migrants certainly have their own geopolitical animosities, with the PRC claiming Taiwan as its own while Taiwan, with its exiled Guomintang (Kuomintang nationalist) government, insists on its own independence (Zhao, 2001). If we took this table at face value, it would demonstrate that Hongkongers are a minority in the Chinese population in Vancouver and—if we were to combine PRC and Taiwanese migrants (22%) despite their geopolitical animosities into one Mandarin-speaking linguistic geography—Mandarin would dominate over the 9% of Hongkongers who would prefer Cantonese. Hongkongers would seem to be an insignificant linguistic minority in Vancouver.

However, Table 4.4 underestimates the number of Hongkongers in Vancouver. Many Hongkongers, including some of my interviewees, were born in the PRC, inflating the number of

PRC migrants and underestimating those who would self-identify as Hongkongers. A better profile of Hongkongers in Vancouver would deal with how many migrants actually spoke Cantonese as a mother tongue, although this would also inflate the numbers to include PRC migrants from Guangdong and Fujian Provinces. In 2006, 324,840 (15.5%) of the total population of Vancouver (2,097,960) spoke some form of Chinese as a mother tongue. As Figure 4.1 demonstrates, 125,940 (40%) of these Chinese speakers considered Cantonese their mother tongue while 69,265 (22%) treated Mandarin as their mother tongue, 1,035 (0.3%) Hakka, and 120,205 (38%) another Chinese dialect (*e.g.* Shanghainese, Taiwanese, Fujianese, *etc.*) (Statistics Canada, 2007b).

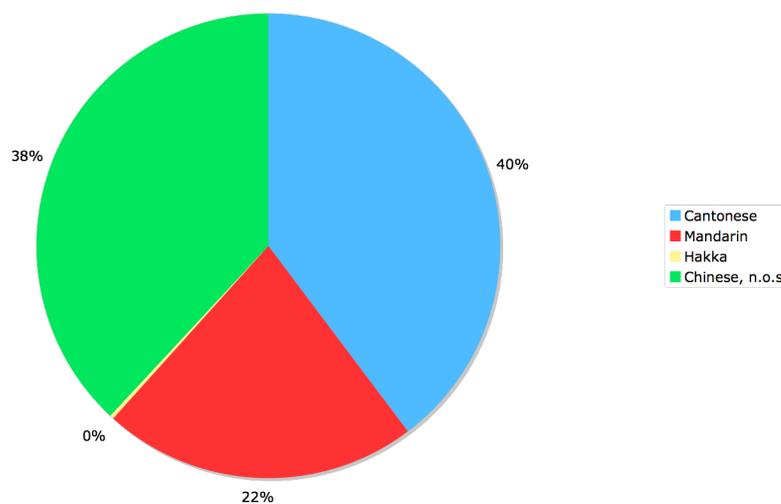


Figure 4.1: Chinese Population by Mother Tongue, Metro Vancouver (Source: Statistics Canada, 2007b)

If we took Cantonese as the *lingua franca* of Hong Kong, these numbers would cast Hongkongers as the primary Chinese population in Vancouver. But there are numerous factors that would serve as caveats to this assertion. For one, PRC migrants from Guangdong and Fujian Provinces may indeed treat Cantonese as a mother tongue; although they might not use the same

urban slang as Hongkongers, the census does not factor in Hong Kong slang into their questions about mother tongue. Secondly, as Rosie, the only PRC interviewee among my 40 subjects, explains, she is as fluent in Mandarin as she is in Cantonese. But the census data do not give us multiple responses for official language; it only gives multiple responses for English and French, English and an unofficial language, and French and an unofficial language. If we were to take Cantonese as an indicator of Hong Kong migrants, these data would inflate the number of Hongkongers in Vancouver.

A safer estimate would be to ballpark the number of Hongkongers to a midpoint between the place of birth data and the mother tongue data in the 2006 census. This midpoint can be rounded off to 100,850, an *estimation* (not a hard number) of around how many Hongkongers there might have been in Vancouver in 2006. While it would be unsafe to make definitive conclusions from these quantitative data, there are trends we can observe. The most significant trend is that while immigration from Hong Kong to Vancouver is tapering off as it approaches 1997 (although this does not count circular migrants who migrate to and from Hong Kong, see Ley and Kobayashi, 2005), the number of PRC migrants to Vancouver is rising (see Table 4.4). It would be unsafe to make a definite comment that the number of Hongkongers in Vancouver is significantly decreasing or is statistically lower than that of PRC migrants, given the arbitrariness of the midpoint we have taken. But it would be safe to say that the rising numbers of PRC migrants in the Vancouver may signal a slow demographic change, one of which may involve language. Cantonese may still have been the primary Chinese dialect as mother tongue in 2006, but as more PRC migrants enter Vancouver, the Chinese population that prefers Mandarin has to rise as well.

Hongkongers as Vancouver's New *Homo Economicus*: Economic Geography as Emotional Political Geography

However, these quantitative data only tell the beginning of the story. Qualitative methods would fill in the story for why these Hongkongers migrated in such massive numbers from Hong Kong in the late 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, this qualitative work tells the story of Hongkonger migration to Vancouver, a cultural geography of a group that continues to be influential in shaping linguistic, political, and (as I argue) religious geographies in the Chinese community in Vancouver. The story that I tell begins with a review of the literature that both portrays and questions transnational Hongkongers in Vancouver as *homo economicus*. Stories about Hongkonger *homo economicus* in Vancouver have become very well-known in geographical circles: multiple-passport holders who flee Hong Kong for political stability in the wake of the 1997 handover, “astronaut” men who shuttle between East Asia for work and Vancouver for family and leave their “left-behind beauty” (Cantonese, *loi joimei: mei*, which means beauty, is a pun on America, *meiguok*) wives with their “satellite kids,” families who plan to increase their family’s cultural capital in East Asian workplaces by sending their children to the West for an English-speaking education, builders of “monster houses” that disturb the Tudor British aesthetic of Vancouver and the Hongkonger tycoon Li Ka-shing’s purchase of Vancouver’s downtown False Creek. But as I review this literature, I demonstrate that these well-known stories must be placed within the transnational scale that I have proposed in this thesis: it must take seriously the self-imagination *heunggongyan*—a geopolitical distinction turned into a Cantonese linguistic geography and urban cultural geography—in Hong Kong itself. Such a context is necessitated both by the literature on Hongkonger identity (the

transnational scale) as well as the qualitative data from my interview research (the personal scale).

When Ong (1999) noted that in the mid-1980s, a new citizen-subject emerged in East Asia holding multiple passports, she spoke in the context of late capitalism of a new alternative modernity epitomized by the flexible citizen. Based on Harvey's (1989) work on the flexible accumulation that has dominated the neoliberal global economy after the 1980s, Ong and Nonini (1997) proposed that Chinese transnationalism epitomizes late capitalism a prime expression of this new alternate modernity, an Asian modernity, so to speak. Such work on Asian modernities has inspired over a decade of scholarship that has explored the modernizing influences of transnational media and migration (Appadurai, 1996)—scholarship that is not limited to Chinese transnationalism. For example, Goh (2002) has asserted that there is a Southeast Asian modernity that places traditional elements of a Malaysian imagination (such as the *kampung*) in technologically-sophisticated, modern urban settings; indeed, Bunnell (2004) demonstrates that such modern dreaming is part of an attempt on the part of the Malaysian government to turn its cities into cyber corridors near Kuala Lumpur (Putrajaya and Cyberjaya). Technological advance, combined with traditional "Asian" elements, is said to be the *modus operandi* of this new Asian modernity. Such work documents a non-essentialized East Asian subject that cannot be reduced to Confucian values (much as a 1997 edited volume on Asian modernities attempts to do) (Tu, 1997) because of the entry of Chinese people into the global economy. As the Southeast Asian literature on Malaysia and Singapore have shown, discussions of Asian modernities need to have stronger geographical focus; they cannot rely on an essentialized Chinese subject. And as this thesis shows, even modern Chinese subjects are not all the same.

Transnational Hongkonger migration to Vancouver is one such example of an Asian modernity. Cerniteg (2007) of the *Vancouver Sun* reminisces about the passing of a term that described Vancouver humorously as “Hongcouver” and the University of British Columbia (UBC) as “the University of a Billion Chinese,” recalling other Asian American counterparts such as UCLA as “the University of Caucasians Living Among Asians” and MIT as “Made in Taiwan” (Takaki, 1998). He also recalls the vigorous “monster house” debate in inner suburb Shaughnessy, where new migrants from Hong Kong exercised what they thought were their own private property rights to tear down Tudor style mansions to build *fengshui*-friendly Chinese style mansions, were criticized by neighbourhood organizations, and in turn responded with charges of racism (Ley, 1995). Mitchell (2004) has described these Hongkongers as migrants who bring a Hong Kong form of neoliberalism to challenge Vancouver’s neoliberalism. Monster houses were not the only issue. The City of Vancouver sold the Expo ’86 lands to the highest bidder, Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing of Cheung Kong Holdings, with the help of the *guanxi* relationship middleman, Vancouver councilman Stanley Kwok (Mitchell and Olds, 2000; Mitchell, 2004). These lands on the previously industrial lands of False Creek have been developed into a high-end condominium and amenities area known as Pacific Place. Likewise, the once Anglo-dominated suburb of Richmond became an ethnoburb with 33% of its population as ethnic Chinese by 1996 and 43% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 1997, 2007c; Li, 1998; Rose, 2001). Such ethnic enclaves can be portrayed as residential by-products of business migration and financial transference from Hong Kong to Vancouver (Edgington, Goldberg, and Hutton, 2006). Hong Kong transnational migration to Vancouver has indeed transformed this Canadian metropolis into a global residential property market, challenging the norms of British Columbian neoliberalism.

This literature that portrays transnational Hongkongers in Vancouver as challengers to Canadian liberalism has tended to discuss them in terms of *homo economicus*. This discussion has two sides, some geographers preferring to see transnational Hongkongers as economic migrants, others pressing for a stronger emotional geography. Indeed, while Mitchell (2004) tends to see transnational Hongkongers as crossing the neoliberal line in Vancouver, Ley (2003) questions the term *homo economicus* as applied to Hongkonger and Taiwanese migrants to Canada by the Canadian state because such an ideal type covers up the fact that many business migrants have not had successful business experiences in Vancouver. The key issue for Ley is place: while East Asian migrants might have been successful business people in Hong Kong or Taiwan, both the business models and the regulations are different in Canada. Failing to understand this geographical dynamic led to the failure of many small businesses. As Ley (2004) demonstrates, such transnational migrants are *not* merely bearers of an alternate neoliberalism, nor are they merely carriers of a transnational culture rooted in Chinese transnationalism in late capitalism. They are human, and part of what being human means is to be physically limited and emotionally vulnerable in everyday life despite high-powered participation in transnational space.

Indeed, Hongkongers did not come to Vancouver simply to start a neoliberal property war; they came fleeing the political takeover of Hong Kong by the PRC, to give their children a Western education, and to wind down in the later stages of their life course. Within the economic migrant narrative, Ong (1999) herself attributes the multiple-passport-holding Hongkonger to the challenge of the Mainland Chinese Communist takeover of Hong Kong in 1997, a political situation that caused over 1% of the Hong Kong population to emigrate in 1992 alone and spreading what Hamilton (1999) has called a culture of “cosmopolitan capitalists” who

founded small family businesses with *guanxi* networks all over the world. Like Janice (who opened this chapter), Jackson originally moved to Vancouver because of the imminent handover of Hong Kong to China. When I asked him why he moved to Vancouver, he answered:

Jackson: At that time, it's because of the 1997 issue, this is the main reason.

JT: So you moved because of 1997?

Jackson: Yeah.

JT: Did Tiananmen have any effect on you?

Jackson: No, because we're already in the process of application.

JT: Was it more like confirmation?

Jackson: Oh, oh, right, you can say that.

Jackson eventually returned to Hong Kong to work in an academic post while his wife and son remained in Vancouver: **“In the past we immigrated from Hong Kong to here in the early 90s. But I returned to Hong Kong to work again...Both of them were not eager to go back to Hong Kong, even to have a short visit and that kind of thing. It seems [the wife and son] got very involved in Vancouver.”** What began as a geopolitical move to escape the governance of Mainland China eventually resulted in Jackson embracing a transnational family strategy known in colloquial Cantonese circles as a *taihongyan* way of life, the commonly noted “astronaut” or “spaceman” lifestyle. Jackson’s family life corroborates the findings of Waters (2002) on flexible families in an astronaut regime: such families may be flexible, but the distance of transnational space often has resulted in a *de facto* separation of lives, especially among astronaut wives who start out lonely and vulnerable in Vancouver but eventually develop social networks separate from their husbands, who often return “home” to find that they no longer know their families. Waters (2003) points out, based on these findings, that transnational Hongkongers do not merely exist in a limbo transnational space; contrary to arguments about mobility, she argues that Hongkonger transmigrants undergo a settlement experience that eventually leads to some degree of acculturation. Jackson and his family may have come to

Vancouver for political refuge thinking that they could remain Hongkongers. But Jackson corroborates Waters's (2003) findings when he discovered that only he, not his family, was a Hongkonger because his family had gotten heavily involved in Vancouver.

Underlying these political and emotional struggles, however, is a popular transnational discourse among Hongkongers epitomized by the phrase, "Hong Kong for making, Vancouver for quality of life" (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005: 121). *Trans-Pacific life*, Ley (forthcoming) shows, varies through the lifecourse. The first step is education. As Preston, Kobayashi, and Man (2006) have shown, the flexible migration described by Ong does have a settlement narrative: children brought to Western countries for an education that differs from the cram school model in Asia also learn the politics and lifestyles of the Western countries in which they are educated. Such a western education, Waters (2006) argues, builds more cultural capital for East Asian students from Hong Kong so that their chances at a better career in Asia are higher. But after education comes work. Within the lifecourse argument, this observation has led Ley and Kobayashi (2005) to reconsider if return migration to Hong Kong is really return migration at all; it could, after all, be *transnational sojourning*, a journey between Canada and Hong Kong throughout the life cycle as Asia tends to be for work and North America for peaceful retirement away from the hustle and bustle of the modern Asian city (Preston and Kobayashi, 2006). It is in this context that astronauts who shuttle between work in Hong Kong and family in Vancouver must be placed (Waters, 2002). Hongkongers in transnational space not only challenge Vancouver's neoliberalism; they re-conceptualize transnational space and lifestyle, despite its emotional difficulties, by treating Vancouver as one of two points in the life cycle. Moving to Vancouver is not primarily an economic choice in which business migrants are struggling to make ends meet with their small businesses. It is a lifestyle choice, and with this choice, as

Waters (2002, 2003) has shown, an emotional geography has emerged where Hongkongers often need to choose between Hong Kong and Vancouver, between workplace and family.

However, all of this discussion about the life cycle, emotional geographies, and challenges to the *homo economicus* narrative needs to be placed in the geopolitical context of what was an imminent cession of Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997. Jackson and his family's move occurred prior to the event of Tiananmen Square that precipitated a mass emigration from Hong Kong, peaking at 66,000 in 1992. Such a move demonstrates that Hongkongers prior to 1989 already had unfavourable presuppositions about what the Chinese Mainland would be like, a geographical imagination that cast the PRC as Other and from which they had to get away. Indeed, like Jackson, Jackie had already moved to Vancouver from Hong Kong in anticipation of 1997. When I asked her why she moved, she replied,

All because of my husband. He was afraid of the Chinese taking over Hong Kong because ever since we're born from Hong Kong, we already have a mind of a British colony, already brought up like in that way. And then what we experienced or what we heard from China is a very impossible situation to stand, very negative. So he was so afraid. And he had an aunt living in Mainland China, and he had so many bad, bad experiences and bad news from China from his mom. So he was so afraid of the Chinese way of ruling people. When we knew that Hong Kong was going to go back to China, he said...oh, he decided to go.

Jackie and her husband, like Jackson, were in Vancouver in 1989 when the Tiananmen incident happened:

We were so glad that we were here. When we were watching the TV about the Tiananmen event, we were crying. In one way, we were happy because we are not under then. And in another way, we feel so sad about the people there. At that time, it was really the heart was *guaju* [Cantonese, "anxiously worried"] about the people over there, although we don't know them, although we're so scared about the Chinese people there. But at that time, we saw there was really a passion there. It was very unhappy; you can say it was *seungsum* [Cantonese: "heart-breaking" and "saddening"].

Such an emotional response to Tiananmen was typical. When I asked Joey, a Hongkonger in his mid-thirties, if Tiananmen affected his decision to move from Hong Kong, he replied:

Oh, yes, definitely! Definitely! Because it's not just because...probably without Tiananmen, the Hongers²⁹ feel scared, but not as scared, but after they see that it seems that like the Tiananmen thing just shows, makes Hongers think that that's the death of democracy. So that's why a lot of people just rush to here.

Such responses corroborate what Ho (2006) has called *emotional citizenship*, that geopolitical self-identifications of homeland, exile, and transnational lifestyles are constituted not primarily through economic strategies but through emotional connections. Behind the discussion of life cycle and emotional geographies was an emotional preservation of what is imagined to be a *Hongkonger* way of life, a lifestyle that was threatened by the 1997 handover. The emotional attachment to being a Hongkonger meant that a geopolitical reconfiguration that placed Hong Kong under Chinese rule was taken *personally* by Hongkongers who feared a change of life when China would take over Hong Kong. It was in fact emotional allegiance to the idea of Hong Kong as a *laissez-faire* British colony primarily populated by Cantonese-speaking Chinese subjects that prompted such mass migrations to Vancouver—a place that many transnational Hongkongers thought that they would finally be able to escape what they perceived to be potential political persecution. As such, the debate about transnational Hongkongers in Vancouver needs to move beyond the *homo economicus* discussion, although transnational Hongkongers do bring what looks like an alternate modernity to Vancouver, a transnational neoliberalism that challenges Vancouver's political economy (Mitchell, 2004). But as the discussion about emotional geographies and the life cycle has indicated, this economic intervention is part of a larger set of issues related to a Hongkonger lifestyle. This lifestyle, I argue, is couched in the term *Hongkonger* (Cantonese, *heunggongyan*) and involves a self-

²⁹ “Honger” is a colloquial shortening of the term “Hongkonger.”

imagination that has both emotional power and geographical implications. We have covered what happens when the transnational scale (transnational Hongkongers in their life cycle) meets the metropolitan scale (Vancouver). But as Smith (1985) and Leung and Chan (2001) have demonstrated, the politics of being a Hongkonger is also wrapped up with the Christian church. It is thus to a Hongkonger geography of religion *in Vancouver* that we must now turn.

Hongkonger Christians in Vancouver: A Quantitative Profile of a Geography of Religion

What is often overlooked in this tale of transnational Hongkongers in Vancouver are their *religious* dimensions, particularly in terms of Christianity. As Leung and Chan (2001) lament the dearth of research on Christianity in Hong Kong, I also lament the relative lack of research on Christianity among Hongkongers in Vancouver.³⁰ If Christianity represents a significant part of the political geography in Hong Kong, how does migrants from this religious and political geography move, transform, and maintain transnational linkages in transnational space? How does Christian space factor into the imagined geographies of transnational Hongkonger migrants who were exposed to Christianity in Hong Kong and actively practice that faith in Vancouver?

Such questions need to be further explored because of the significance of *Christianity* in the religious geography of Chinese migrants to Vancouver. While a report published by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005) claims based on the 2001 census that migrants are changing the religious landscape of Canada by introducing non-Christian religions, a closer look at the numbers suggests that in the Chinese community, *Christianity*, not Eastern religions or Buddhism, dominates the religious scene for those who choose to affiliate with a religion.

³⁰ I lament a *relative* dearth. Notable exceptions include Waters (2003) on the social networks that astronaut wives use to settle in Vancouver (including Chinese churches) and Ley (2008) on the ethnic church as an immigrant service hub and “home away from home.”

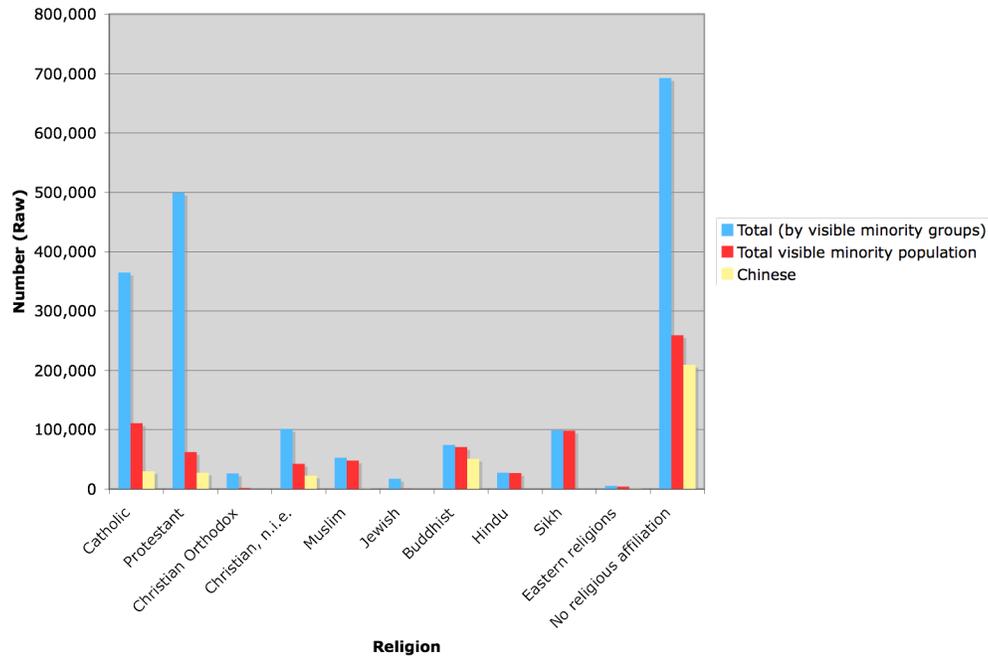


Figure 4.2: Major Religions in Vancouver, 2001: A Comparative Perspective Among Visible Minorities (Source: Statistics Canada Census 2001)

At a first glance at the 2001 census as displayed in Figure 4.2, the Chinese community is not a particularly religious community. In 2001, the total number of Christians (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and other) in Vancouver numbered 992,105 (50.4%) in comparison to a 692,765 (35.2%) that indicated “no religious affiliation.” But of that number of Christians, the Chinese community makes up very little: 80,865 (8%) of the Vancouver’s Christian population. It is still considered minimal in the visible minority population: it is 11.1% of a total Christian visible minority population of 725,655. 209,370 of the Chinese population in fact prefer to identify themselves as having no religious affiliation: this figure contributes to just under a third (30.2%) of the previously mentioned secular population in Vancouver. Moreover, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005) is *correct* in saying that Chinese immigrants have introduced a religion that is changing the religious landscape of Vancouver: of the 74,550 Buddhists in Vancouver, 50,870 (68.2%) are Chinese. According to the numbers, it seems that the Chinese community hardly contributes to the Christian population in Vancouver.

But this invisibility of Chinese Christians in the quantitative data comes from the perception that Chinese Christians make up a small percentage of what is still the dominant religion in Vancouver: *Christianity*. Christianity, as is shown in Figure 4.3, is primarily a non-visible minority religion (77%), with visible minorities contributing to less than a quarter of its adherents (23%). Chinese Christians do not change the religious landscape of Canada: they mildly reinforce it. And the effect on the numerical data is indeed mild: Chinese Christians make up a mere 8% of all Christians in Vancouver. If there is a visible change in the landscape of Vancouver’s religion, it is in the introduction of Buddhism by Chinese migrants.

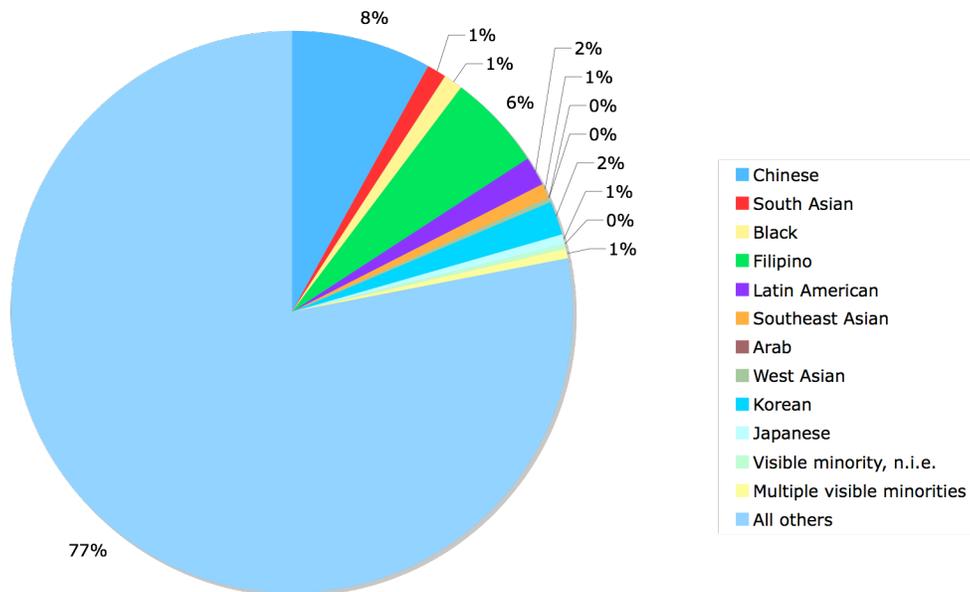


Figure 4.3: Christians in Vancouver, 2001, by Visible Minority (Source: Statistics Canada Census 2001)

However, such comparative statistics do not take into account the geography of religion *within* the Chinese community. Indeed, if we supplement our metropolitan scale (Vancouver)

with a transnational scale (the transnational Chinese community), we find that there are more Christians than Buddhists within the Chinese population in Vancouver in 2001 (see Figure 4.4).

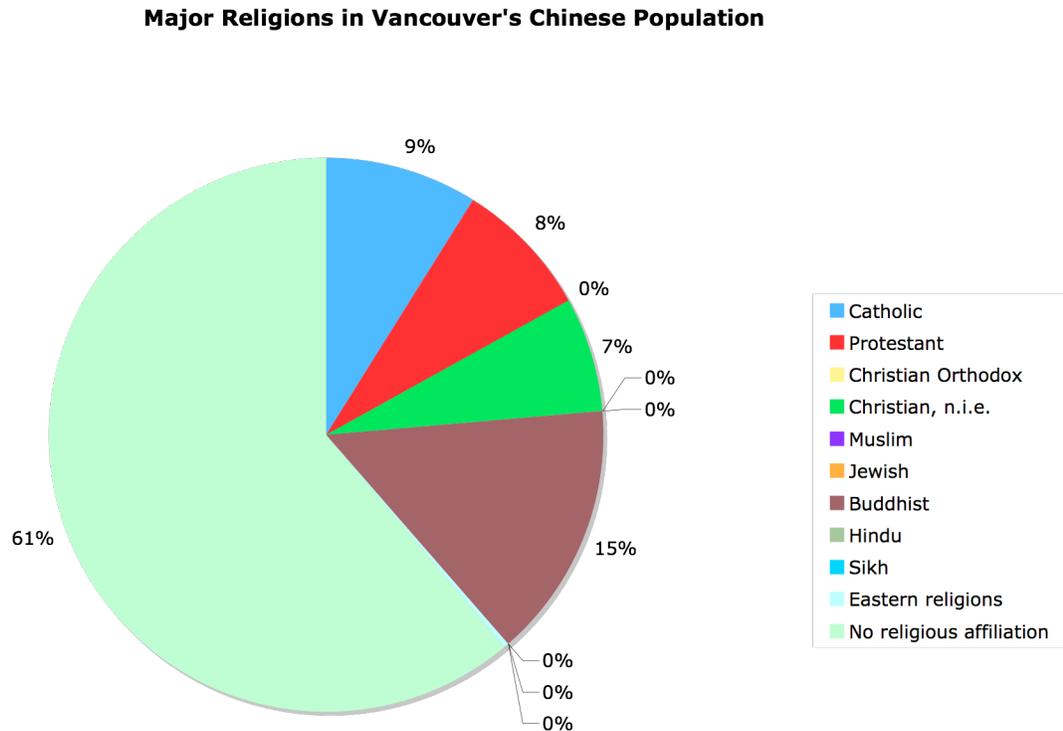


Figure 4.4: Religion in Vancouver's Chinese Population, 2001 (Source: Statistics Canada Census 2001)

While the majority (61%) in the Chinese population having no religious affiliation, we find that if we amalgamate the 30,020 (9%) Catholics, 27,790 (8%) Protestants, 165 (0%) Christian Orthodox, and 22,890 (7%) other Christians all within the Chinese population, Christians make up 24% (80,865) of the Chinese population. This figure is greater than the 15% (50,870) who identify as Buddhists in the Chinese community. Such a result suggests that while the Chinese population has contributed to the Buddhist population in Vancouver, within the transnational Chinese community itself, Buddhists are dwarfed by Christians.

Although there are indeed more who claim to be secular than religious within the Chinese community, this figure demands explanation because these Christians problematize the popular conception put out by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005) that migration is changing the religious landscape of Vancouver. While the Chinese community has contributed Buddhism, Buddhists in the community are even more of a minority than Christians. Moreover, while these Christians are indeed a minority in the Chinese population, they are not inactive socially or politically: as I shall show in the next chapter, they actively proselytize, wish to expand the number of Christians in Vancouver, and attempt to spread their religious territoriality that is characterized by their social conservatism throughout Vancouver. Indeed, according to Ley (2008), if anything, Chinese Christianity in Vancouver has grown since 2001, for churches in the Chinese community are mostly newer churches, many of them having started less than a decade before the article was published (1998) and are mostly under 100 members each. In addition to the Chinese population attending Roman Catholic parishes (30,020, or 8%, in 2001), as of 2007, there were 106 Chinese Protestant congregations in Vancouver with a variety of Protestant denominations. As Figure 4.5 shows, apart from the Catholic and non-categorized Christian populations, Protestant churches such as the Baptist, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Anglican, Mennonite Brethren (with a missionary movement within that denomination to the Chinese population known as the Pacific Grace Mennonite Brethren), and United Churches all played a significant role in the religious geography of Vancouver's Chinese population in 2007. These churches are well scattered throughout Metro Vancouver (see Figure 3.1 in the previous chapter), with 50 congregations in Vancouver and 20 in Richmond. As Ley rightly implies, these churches demand to be studied by their sheer existence because they are active in

contributing to Vancouver’s urban geography through their transnational linkages and rapid growth.

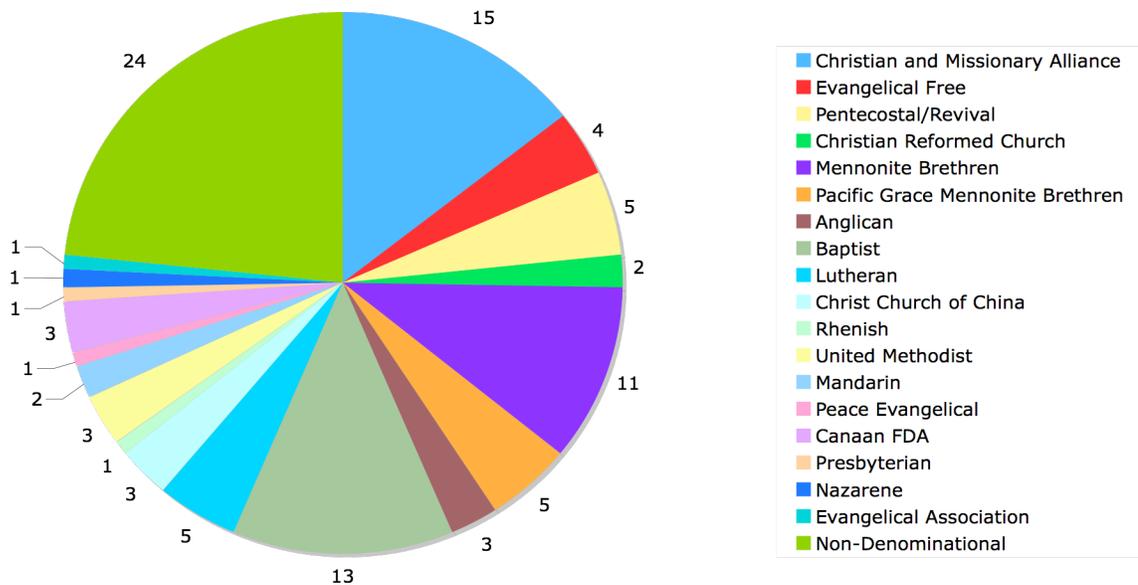


Figure 4.5: Chinese Churches in Vancouver, 2007, by Denomination (Source: Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship Directory, 2007)

Most of this study has operated under Warner’s (1998) paradigm of congregational studies, examining the social functions of the church in relation to the migrants they serve. Indeed, what has been mentioned about religion in the literature on transnational Hongkonger migration to Vancouver, aside from references to *fengshui* geomancy in property ownership, is the role of church life in providing social networks for migrants. Waters (2003), for example, cites the role of the Christian church in providing an emotional haven for lonely astronaut wives in the Hongkonger community:

For Hannah, religion provided a sense of direction and additional meaning to her life. The growth of Chinese churches in Vancouver testifies to the significance that religious pursuits have played more generally in the lives of this ethnic community...Several

participants talked about finding a more ‘meaningful life’ in Vancouver, whether centered on religion, personal pursuits, and hobbies or spending time with their children” (Waters, 2003: 230).

Following Beattie and Ley’s (2003) analysis of the immigrant German church as a service hub, Ley (2008) has also written on immigrant German, Chinese, and Korean Christian churches in Vancouver as spaces of social services and networks, spaces that provide meaning both materially and socially for people who feel uprooted from an old land and need to find home in the new. In this literature, the immigrant Christian church is a space for the socialization of new migrants, part of the literature initiated by Warner and Wittner (1998) on immigrant congregations (see chapter 3).

But I argue that what makes these churches significant is not only their social services but the political enactment of the transnational religious territorialities imagined by Chinese Christians who attend these churches. Many of these Chinese Christians, I suggest, are not merely Chinese: they are Hongkongers. Indeed, an overwhelming number of these Chinese churches are in fact *Cantonese* churches. As Figure 4.6 shows, 74% of the 106 Chinese churches listed in the Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship’s (2007) directory run their primary services in Cantonese. Indeed, as one revisits the map in the previous chapter (Figure 3.1), of the 50 Chinese congregations in Vancouver, 39 of them run their services primarily in Cantonese; of the 20 in Richmond, 16 are in Cantonese; of the 9 in Burnaby, 7 are in Cantonese. Such a linguistic geography, based on the political and cultural geography that I have outlined above on Hongkongers, suggests that the majority of these churches are in fact *Hongkonger* churches. But conceptualizing these churches as Hongkonger churches moves the discussion of these Chinese churches in Vancouver from the metropolitan scale (Chinese churches in Metro

Vancouver) to a transnational scale (the linkages between these Vancouver churches with their Hong Kong roots).

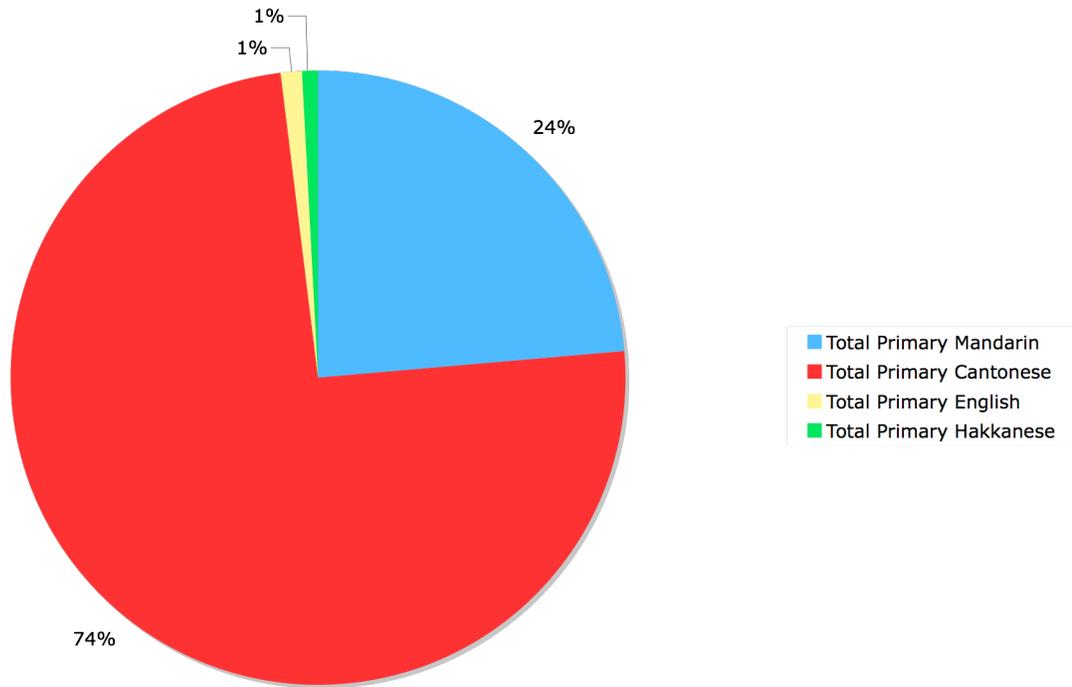


Figure 4.6: Chinese Congregations in Vancouver, 2007, by primary language used in congregational worship and organization (Source: Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship Directory, 2007)

Such figures also suggest that the majority of the Christians in the Chinese community are in fact transnational Hongkongers. Indeed, as I have shown earlier, while Hongkongers may have dominated the Chinese community in Vancouver in the 1980s and 1990s, this Chinese demographic may be shifting. To revisit the linguistic geography I outlined earlier in this chapter, the Chinese dialect of choice as of 2006 was still Cantonese, but the numbers of Hong Kong people immigrating to Canada were tapering off while the PRC numbers were rising (compare Table 4.4 and Figure 4.1). Consistent with these findings, the figures in the Chinese *Christian* community indicate that the Chinese dialect of choice should be *Cantonese*, the *lingua*

franca of Hong Kong. The linguistic geography in the Chinese population in Vancouver is consistent with the *religious* geography. But, as I shall show in chapter 6, such an argument does not discount the existence of Mandarin-speaking Christians in Metro Vancouver. However, an overwhelming majority of Chinese Christians, as indicated by the number of Chinese congregations, is still Cantonese-speaking. This Cantonese preference, I argue, demonstrates a likely geopolitical allegiance of Chinese Christians in Vancouver still toward Hong Kong.

St. Matthew's Church is not an isolated congregation in this linguistic-religious geography: rather, as I shall elaborate further in chapter 5, it is an integral member of this transnational religious phenomenon. But understanding this religious geography cannot be done in terms of numbers, nor can it only be examined in terms of how a church functions or what media it subscribes to. This geography of religion must have traction with parishioners who attend St. Matthew's Church—and indeed, parishioners of other congregations in this trans-Pacific religious geography between Hong Kong and Vancouver (some of whom have made their way to St. Matthew's Church). It is here that the Eliadean term *homo religiosus* is especially helpful. As Hongkongers have been discussed and problematized as *homo economicus* both in the literature and by themselves (as discussed in my interview data), *homo religiosus* reveals one side of the multidimensionality of transnational Hongkongers in Vancouver. I argue that the way to study this religious territoriality is by studying the geographical imaginations—the imagined territorialities—of these religious people themselves. But as *homo religiosus* is only one side of the multidimensionality of Hongkongers themselves, studying Hongkonger Christians' geographical imaginations reveals a side of Hongkongers that is neither captured by the quantitative data that show most Chinese migrants as secular nor discussed fully in the geographical literature on transnational Hongkonger migrants. Indeed,

these religious territories are not bound only in congregations but in familial, educational, and religious spaces embedded in these adherents' memories and lifeworlds, spaces that may be shared by Hongkongers who may or may not be overtly religious. Chinese immigrants to Vancouver may have contributed secularists and Buddhists, as well as alternate forms of neoliberalism, family strategies, and political geographies. But this study attempts to unfold the effects of *Christian* exposure in Hong Kong behind much of this geography by studying the geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church.

St. Matthew's Hongkongers: Geopolitically Profiling a Congregation

St. Matthew's Church is one such Cantonese-speaking, predominantly Hongkonger church. As Figure 4.7 shows, my interview results bear out this assertion.

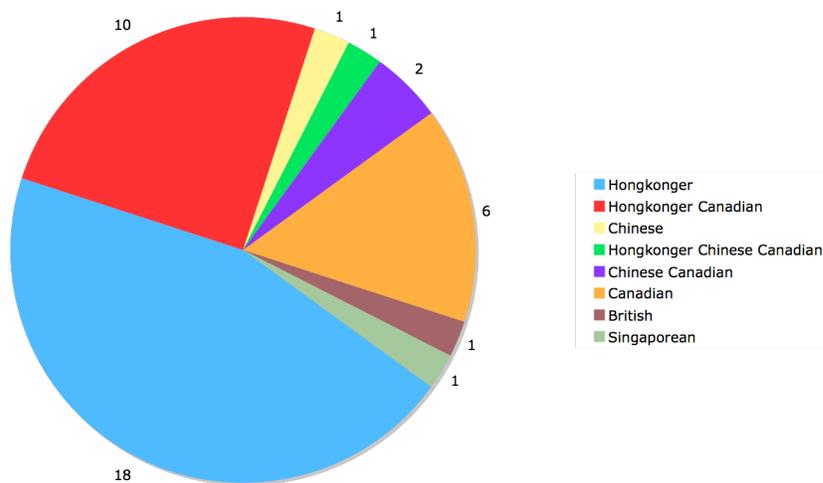


Figure 4.7: Interview Subjects: Geopolitics by Self-Identification

To categorize my interviewees geopolitically, an overwhelming 28 (70%) of them agreed that they could be categorized as Hongkongers. Of these 28, 10 (25% of the total; 35.7% of the Hongkongers) indicated that they wanted to be known as *Hongkonger Canadian*, usually

because they had moved to Canada and had acquired Canadian citizenship but still retained Hongkonger practices and geographical imaginations. One went as far as to say that he was Hongkonger Chinese Canadian. Two (5%) saw themselves as Chinese Canadians, one because he felt strongly attached to Chinese history because his father taught him Chinese stories and the other because she was herself a Mainland Chinese migrant from Guangzhou. 6 (15%) indicated that they were Canadian; 2 (5%) of these were actually born in Canada as Canadian-born Chinese (CBCs), and the other 4 (10%) claimed to have shed their Hongkonger leanings upon arrival in Canada (although further probing demonstrated that this assertion was problematic). One had spent an extended portion of her life in Britain and decided—because she still had a grandmother living in the United Kingdom—that she was British. One was Singaporean Chinese. As Figure 4.8 demonstrates, of these interviewees, 7 (17.5%) had emigrated between 1986-1990, 10 (25%) between 1991-1995, and 8 (20%) between 1996-2000. Such figures taken together indicate that over half of the interviewees (25, or 62.5%) had migrated to Canada from East Asia within the last two decades.

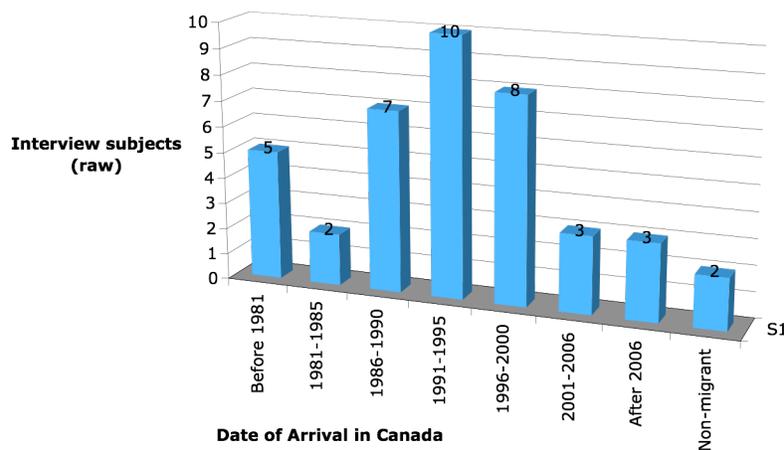


Figure 4.8: Interview Subjects: Dates of Arrival in Canada

This data demonstrates that the majority of the Hongkongers I spoke with came in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Such a result corroborates the narrative this chapter has discussed regarding Hongkonger migration to Vancouver during this time period. The interviewees themselves (even those who were not Hongkonger) were not surprised by these results. They themselves extended these results beyond the Hongkonger pool and asserted that St. Matthew's Church was a Hongkonger church. When I asked about Mainlanders in the church, those who were less involved in congregational life told me that they had not even met Mainlanders in the church: having attended the church for less than two years, Joanna told me that her acquaintances at the congregation were all Cantonese-speaking:

- JT:** Do you meet these kinds of people [Mainlanders] in the church?
Joanna: So far in this one, because I'm so new, just a few months, and most of the people I met are quite nice.
JT: Are they mostly from Hong Kong that you meet here? Mostly speaking Cantonese?
Joanna: Yeah, most speak Cantonese. I still don't meet those people talking Mandarin yet. So I'm not that sure.

A long-time member, Jaime, told me that she knew that there were Mainlanders in the congregation, although their numbers were minimal: she knew this, she told me, because she had bought eight sets of headphones for simultaneous Mandarin translation during the Cantonese service when St. Matthew's Church had started over twelve years ago. If one wanted to know how many Mandarin-speaking Mainlanders there were at St. Matthew's, she implied, one had only to count the number of headphones in use. The issue, however, was that there were only eight sets of headphones, suggesting either that the number of Mandarin-speakers was still minimal, that many Mainlanders sat through the service oblivious to the Cantonese being spoken, or that most of the Mainlanders were from Guangzhou or Fujian Provinces. Indeed, one

interviewee voiced a general opinion that the church would have to change not only its language but its *culture* if there were enough non-Hongkongers in attendance:

...our church is a very typical Hong Kong church. Hongkonger culture. So all of us Hong Kong people talking together has no problems. Even if our values are different, because our culture is the same, we all know what we're doing. We don't need to explain. But Chinese *dailok* people have different priorities, different culture, they completely don't understand why we see things, why we do things. And maybe when they do things, we don't understand why they see things, why they do things.

Indeed, the 70% Hongkonger representation among the interviewees itself bears out the reality that St. Matthew's Church is geopolitically a Hongkonger church. But as I shall show in chapter 6, these geopolitics are being challenged by the influx of Mainland migrants to Vancouver. St. Matthew's Church may be a Hongkonger church, but with the demographic change may also come a change in cultural and political geographies in the future.

Conclusion: Transnational Hongkonger Christians in Geographical Context

This chapter has sketched a geographical context in which the geographical imaginations of the parishioners at St. Matthew's Church can be located. I first began in Hong Kong, locating the geography of Christianity in the cultural and political geographies of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hong Kong. Tracing emigration from Hong Kong in the 1980s-2000s, I then sketched an overall picture of Hongkongers in Vancouver, and I argued that this migration was a transnational migration because of the transference of political, cultural, and economic geographies from Hong Kong to Vancouver. But given the political geography of Christianity in Hong Kong, I asked about a Weberian dimension: is there a *homo religiosus* side of transnational Hongkongers that lurks behind the common narrative of *homo economicus*? An assessment of Vancouver's Chinese Christian population demonstrates that Cantonese is the *lingua franca* that dominates the Christian scene in Vancouver, consistent with the findings on mother tongue in

Vancouver. I gave a caveat, however, to these findings: the Cantonese numbers are an inflated number because there are Chinese migrants in Vancouver other than Hongkongers who also speak Cantonese, and the number of PRC migrants to Vancouver is rising. Nevertheless, St. Matthew's Church falls within this geographical context that I have sketched because of the geopolitical values and linguistic preferences of the interviewees that I have used as a window into congregational life. This chapter has thus moved from the *transnational scale* with a sketch of Hong Kong cultural, political, and religious geographies to the *metropolitan scale* as these transnational geographies are played out in Metro Vancouver in their political, economic, and religious dimensions. This chapter ended with a sketch of the *congregational scale* in the context of the transnational and metropolitan scales that encompass Hong Kong and Vancouver.

By providing these contexts, this chapter has opened the door to qualitative research on the *personal scale*, the scale that I argue holds the congregation, the metropolitan Christian connections, and the trans-Pacific Christian bubble together. Indeed, the geographical imaginations of many of my interviewees fuse personal geopolitics with a geography of religion. I demonstrate that the geography of religion is not isolated from everyday experience or imaginations but tends instead to be a refuge from instability commonly located in political and social geographies from Hong Kong. To explore such a geography of religion suggests that behind the common conception of transnational Hongkongers as *homo economicus* in Vancouver is a *homo religiosus* side that is not captured by the statistics and is seldom explored fully in the literature. As I shall show in chapters 5 and 6, this *homo religiosus* side has its roots in colonial Hong Kong where Christian practice was a form of upper-class spirituality, a way to find "true" peace in the midst of turmoil, a geographical imagination of the West as a space of calm *vis-à-vis* the crowded and political unstable space of Hong Kong. As I shall argue, the religious

geography that emerges from such an imagination is a geography of imagined tranquility that does not go unchallenged in multicultural Canada. Transnational Hongkongers do create their sacred spaces. The issue is that these sacred spaces are not isolated from the non-religious urban, cultural, and political geographies that I have outlined in this chapter, neither in their imaginations nor in the way that their religious geographies intersect with public space.

Chapter 5:
Cantonese Home, Christian Bubble:
Territorializing Hongkonger Christianity from the Home to Transnational Space

While the previous chapter geographically contextualized St. Matthew's Church, this chapter examines the geographical imaginations of 40 (10%) of the parishioners at St. Matthew's Church and relates this personal scale of inquiry to the trans-Pacific Cantonese Christian bubble in which they find themselves. As described in the previous chapter, St. Matthew's Church in Richmond is a Hongkonger church. It is a Hongkonger church not only because the services are run in the Hongkongese *lingua franca*, Cantonese, but, as I shall show in this chapter, because of the power of transnational memories of Hong Kong combined with live transnational connections in the present that affect the everyday lives of many of the Hongkongers who attend St. Matthew's Church.³¹ A parishioner who feels out of place at St. Matthew's can qualitatively emphasize this point. Alexis, a Singaporean interviewee confessed that she often did not feel that she fit in to St. Matthew's because of the Hongkonger culture, although she looked forward to learning from Christian speakers from Hong Kong and also contributed to congregational life by serving as a children's Sunday school volunteer at St. Matthew's Church:

Sometimes I feel that I don't fit in because of the cultural thing especially when they start talking about things from Hong Kong. If they are talking about things here, I can sort of relate to it. But if they start talking about things from Hong Kong, I can't relate to it. I wasn't brought up there. So I do have that problem.

What adds to Alexis's difficulty is a language barrier: the Chinese she grew up speaking in Singapore was Mandarin. However, this dissonance is compacted by the fact that her first language is actually English learned in Singapore, hampering her ability (in her imagination) to contribute to a Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong church except in the English-speaking children's

³¹ While there are no hard numbers comparing Hongkongers and Mainlanders at St. Matthew's Church, the general consensus was that St. Matthew's Church is a Hongkonger church because it is run in Cantonese, the pastoral staff and lay leadership are all Hongkonger, and, as Alexis's case demonstrates, those who are not Hongkonger have difficulty fitting into St. Matthew's.

ministry. Alexis demonstrates the Hongkonger centrality of St. Matthew's Church through what Cresswell (1996) has called *transgressive geographies*: her being out-of-place because of language and memories of the place she grew up (Singapore, not Hong Kong) demonstrates that the dominant group at St. Matthew's Church is indeed a Hongkonger population. St. Matthew's Church may be a Chinese mission, but it is not—as I showed in the first chapter—a “whole Chinese cake.” It is rather a home for a particular kind of Chinese population, a Hongkonger Chinese group.

In this chapter, I demonstrate that both memories of Hong Kong and existing transnational connections to Hong Kong shape the personal imaginations of Hongkonger Christians living in Vancouver and attending such Hongkonger Christian churches as St. Matthew's Church. First, this chapter introduces a diagram of how the imagined geographies of transnational Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church can be conceptualized. Second, this chapter explores these imaginations and their emphasis on Christian conversion through what I argue are aspirational, educational, and familial elements of Hongkonger Christianity. Third, this chapter interprets these Hongkongers' move to Canada and to the West as a search for a geopolitical peace that is rooted in their imagination of Western spaces as spaces of peaceful and moral education. Fourth, this chapter extends these imaginations to the congregational scale where the church is seen as a home, a place where one meets regularly with one's Christian family. Fifth, this chapter shows at the congregational scale that while many Hongkonger Christians think that they can transcend geography through Christian spirituality, the religious dimensions of their lives (especially congregational life) are bound by a linguistic geography from Hong Kong: Cantonese. Sixth, this chapter demonstrates that this Hongkonger Christian imagined geography extends beyond the congregation to the metropolitan and transnational

scales as Hongkonger Christians seek to engage both Hong Kong and Vancouver with their Christian territoriality expressed in social and sexual conservatism. This chapter argues based on these interviews and ethnographic sketches that to be a Hongkonger Christian means to maintain and extend a family-oriented Christian territory first to oneself, then to one's family, and finally to the transnational city, be it Hong Kong or Vancouver.

Hongkonger Christian Imaginations: Education, Family, and Christian Space

The following diagram (Figure 5.1) illustrates the global and local sites in the geographical imaginations of transnational Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church:

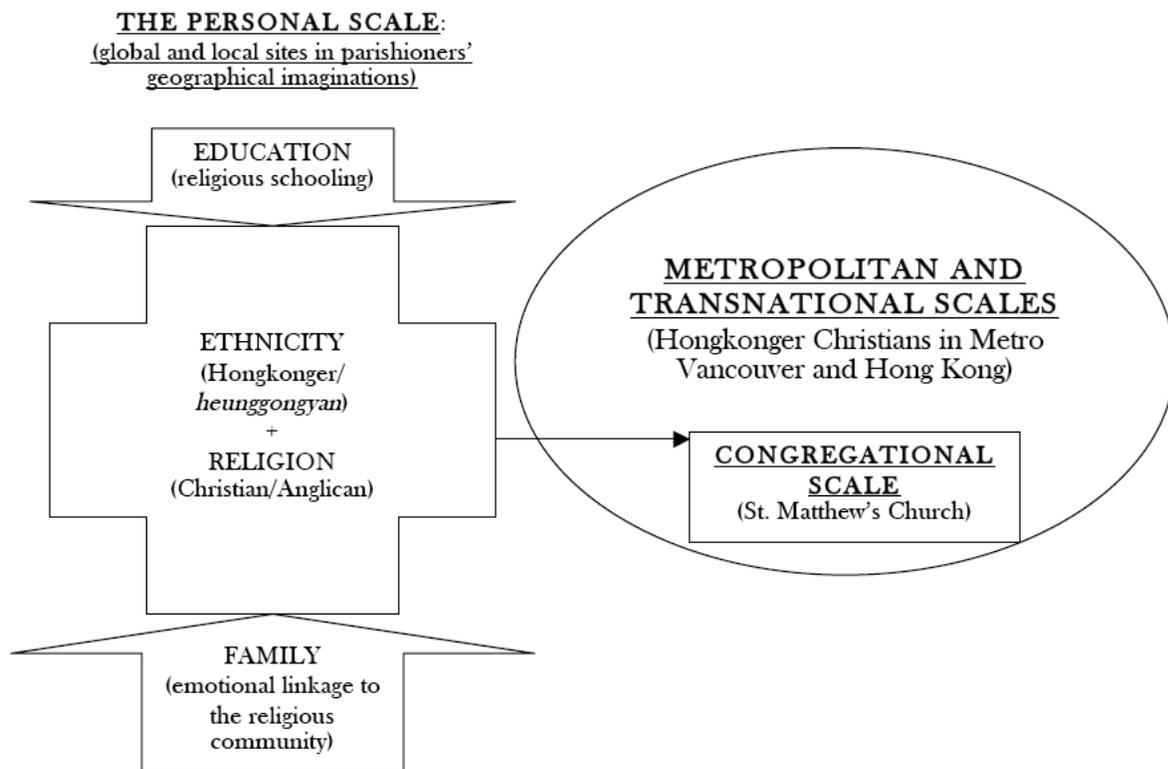


Figure 5.1: The Global and Local Sites in the Geographical Imaginations of Transnational Hongkonger Christian Parishioners at St. Matthew's Church

The geographical imagination discussed in this thesis is an association of ethnicity (Hongkonger) with religion (Christianity in its Anglican expression at St. Matthew's) due to Christian exposure

in Hong Kong. This ethnicity, as I have shown in the previous chapter, is place-based with its origins in a political geography that distinguished capitalistic, Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong from the communist, Mandarin-speaking Mainland. As I shall show in this chapter, exposure to Christianity has tended to take place in Hong Kong, whether or not parishioners actually converted in Hong Kong or upon extended reflection in Canada. As with the Hongkonger ethnicity, this Christian religion is also situated in place: in the memory and imagination of Hong Kong.

The sites that help to fuse ethnicity and religion together are *education* and *family*. Until the post-1997 educational reforms under Tung Chee Hwa when religious schools were reduced to only 25% of the primary and secondary schools that operated in Hong Kong (Ma, Mathews, and Lui, 2008), many of the schools in Hong Kong were religious schools. Many religious schools were considered *ming hao*, famous schools, a trend that Smith (1985) demonstrates began in the nineteenth century with the founding of schools such as St. Paul's College to educate young men to be the rising business elite in Hong Kong and that has continued through the twentieth century (Ma, Mathews, and Lui, 2008). A prominent component of the interviews, then, established where interviewees had gone to school and then sought connections between their educational experience and their religious memories. Such a method is not new: Goh's (2003) argument for the existence of a global Anglophonic evangelical bubble (one that awkwardly intersects with the Cantonese-speaking one discussed in this thesis) is premised on religious schools in Singapore (pre- and post-colonialism) that taught its students English and instilled in them religious and moral values. Like Singapore, Hong Kong was also once a British colony. Many interviewees attributed these religious educational spaces to the colonial power, a

power to which (as I shall show below) many felt grateful because they were given a chance to learn to be “civilized” in a “Western” way.

But another solidifying factor was *family*. Not all of the families of the interviewees were Christian. Indeed, if just under 10% of the families in Hong Kong are Christian, this means that over 90% are not; the CIA World Factbook (2009) estimates that the rest of these families are an “eclectic mix of local religions.” Folk Buddhism as an expression of this local mix of religions was prominent in the interviews. However, the interviewees spoke as Christians who were educated in a British colony. Folk Buddhism for many interviewees was an uncivilized, unenlightened alternative to Christianity. Those who embraced Christianity, while facing backlash from their families, also tried to convert their families. Those who grew up in Christian households tended to see Christianity as the true religion that brought true peace to one’s personal family life.

These geographical imaginations of what it means to be a Christian as a Hongkonger then materialized into a congregation at St. Matthew’s Church. This congregation is itself geographically contextualized by the metropolitan and transnational scales. As I shall show in the rest of this chapter, this geographical contextualization is manifest not only in Christian media but in the practices of the congregation in actively promoting Christianity in Metro Vancouver through transnational political and religious action in Cantonese. Both these geographical imaginations and their materializations are complicated, and while this overview of education and family that is situated in place draws to a close, the stories of how living between Hong Kong and Vancouver as Christians begin. Such transnational Hongkonger migrants see Christian territorialities as spaces of peace, a “home away from home” that must be extended

beyond the home. The rest of this chapter explores how such a conception has come to be and how it has concretely materialized in Metro Vancouver.

Encountering Peace: Emotions and Spirituality in Christian Education and Colonial Space

Being a Hongkonger was often conflated with having Christian exposure from ecclesial political geographies and religious education (Smith, 1985; Leung and Chan, 2001). However, this conflation often took place not only because religion in Hong Kong was imagined merely to be a political force. As my interviewees often agreed, Christian spaces in Hong Kong were often seen as emotionally desirable spaces because of their peaceful and sacred qualities. These spaces, they often said, were not desirable because they grew up in families that went to church every Sunday (indeed, many did not) but because they were exposed to Christianity through the British colonial marketplace and in Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist schools in Hong Kong. Indeed, as I have argued in Figure 5.1, spaces of religious education (and more broadly, growing up in a British colony) exposed many Hongkongers to Christianity. This exposure, they told me, was an exposure to a sophisticated religious practice that ironically led to a spiritual encounter as well.

Indeed, many Hongkongers admitted that their own conversions to Christianity were heavily influenced by them having been exposed to Christian space during their upbringing in a British colony. As many interviewees told me, this perception that Christianity belonged to the higher classes was their foot in the door for becoming Christian. Asked how she was exposed to Christianity in Hong Kong if she was educated in a secular government school, Sophie answered without hesitation,

Part of that is all that is in the market about Christmas and so on, it's about giving. And the second is the annual Christmas events at school, singing Christmas carols.

To be honest, in those days, in Hong Kong, we're kind of influenced by the Western culture, we thought it's something that's higher in the hierarchy, you know, that kind of sense. And so I thought, well, it's not a bad thing to do. At least it's different from those worshipping those idols.

For Sophie, even as a non-Christian, was anti-pathetic to Chinese polytheism. But her antipathy did not stem from Chinese religion being polytheistic: it was that it was superstitious and not respectable. In short, there was a class difference. As an intellectual advance from polytheism, becoming Christian later on in life put her in an elite class that could be differentiated from the 90% of Hong Kong that was not Christian and “worshipping those idols” (Leung and Chan, 2001; CIA World Factbook, 2009). Such elite desires led both Sophie and another woman, Janine, to want to be married in Christian churches for the status appeal. Sophie introduces her class-based introduction to Christianity in Hong Kong with, “**Wow. It's a joke,**” and then proceeds to tell how she met her husband and wanted to get married in a church. To do so, she had to be baptized. Although she went to baptism class, she concedes that she was baptized only because she had a good impression about Jesus from the Christmas celebrations. She concludes, “**When I look at it [conversion and baptism], that's so naïve. But that's how God brings people to him. [laughs].**” Janine also confesses:

I didn't get baptized until I was 23, and the only reason I got baptized was because I was getting married. I had to get baptized to get married in the church! It was because my husband was already a Christian, and he's already been baptized, so I decided I would be baptized. And after I was baptized in Hong Kong, because I got married in Hong Kong...I feel I was filled with even more joy and peacefulness.

Sophie and Janine's experiences are not uncommon among the Hongkongers at St. Matthew's Church. Imagining Christianity as a religion that put them at a higher social status than Chinese folk religion, they also stumbled upon spiritual peace in Christianity in Hong Kong. As Leung and Chan (2001) argue, Christianity was often a political force in Hong Kong. This political force, I argue, was not experienced as a coercive force to convert to Christianity but rather *a*

constant exposure to Christian spaces as sites of desire. Sophie and Janine wanted to be married in these Christian spaces; however insincerely, their aspirational desires prompted conversions (with baptisms) that have ironically lasted until now. Upon further probing, the British presence in religious schooling and the status dimension of Christian space is unmistakable. One may not have grown up in a Christian family in Hong Kong, but simply growing up in this place (read: *thirdspace*) called Hong Kong exposed one to a religion thought to be more sophisticated and emotionally-satisfying than folk Chinese Buddhism. Cresswell (1996) uses church buildings as an example of a place where one strives not to transgress the boundaries of a space and to be “in place”; one silently prays in a church; one does not behave sacrilegiously. Hong Kong was the place where these Hongkongers learned how to be “in place” in these churches that were often built by the British and then subsequently maintained by Chinese Christian converts (Smith, 1985). Exposure to Christianity awakened in many Hongkongers a desire for—if not a conversion to—a peace that was placed in a Christian space.

Such a view correlates with the idea that religious education and attendant youth activities are of a higher quality in Hong Kong, that indeed a *western* education carries more cultural capital in East Asia (Waters, 2006). Religious schools in Hong Kong are described as *ming hao*, famous schools, schools out of which graduates carry more cultural capital in Hong Kong (Ma, Mathews, and Lui, 2008). Exaggerating a point that is reasonably well-founded, Jimmy exclaimed when I asked him if he had had religious schooling, “**Yeah! In Hong Kong, it has to be! You know, in Hong Kong, I went to an Anglican secondary school. In primary, it was a government school, but secondary, I went to Anglican.**” Indeed, Jimmy’s point is an exaggeration because not all schools in Hong Kong were religious schools, even before 1997 (as Sophie would corroborate above). But it is a point well taken when 29 out of my 40

interviewees (and the one from Singapore) have had experiences with religious education in Hong Kong. Jackson, himself raised in an Anglican school and involved in higher education in Hong Kong, explains:

Because you know, a good school depends on the teacher they recruit. And also they have enough money to get as many resources as they want. So normally, on the average, the missionary schools, they've got money. And also most of the missionary schools in Hong Kong, I think they're partly subsidized by the government. So it ends up with that they can recruit good teachers. In terms of good teachers, that means that the teachers are formally graduated from a teachers' college, or they are university graduates.

Harrison corroborates this point with his own experience of religious education:

In a way, I guess, in a way, in those times, religious schools have much finance—better finance than private schools. You have actually two resources. From the government if you are a recognized school, you have a supplement from the Hong Kong government, part of educational funding in the budget, and also from the Anglican whatever...like the riches. If you're a Catholic school, you have from Rome...yeah, the Vatican. And if you're Anglican, we have a little bit from England. But most of them, the money is actually from the local donation. So Hong Kong Anglican schools, it's very smart, Anglican schools are so successful in those years because a lot of money donated go into the school too, you know. They also have *sun dzik* (religious orders), they also have salaries, but they also have budgets for those many, many Anglican schools in the diocese, *But Seur* [an Anglican school] and all those famous schools. And also Catholic have a good one, Wah Yun is a famous Catholic. St. Paul's is Anglican. So you can see those ones are usually pretty good schools, so good schools in Hong Kong usually tied up with religion too. So maybe it's good in a way. So you follow Jesus to an opportunity, you also learn it, you have a good environment for study, so if you're lucky, you join a religious school, you're better off, right?

Students were appointed to these schools based on their exam scores, several interviewees explained, and if parents wanted to send their children to these schools whether for religious reasons or to acquire cultural capital even if the family was not Christian, they had to press their children to do well on the government exams that determined their ability to study in “famous schools.”

But at the personal scale, religious schools did not merely add to one's cultural capital; they were seen as sites that planted religious memories in children—that is, if the children were receptive to this spiritual education. Asked about the impact of religious schools on their faith now, many remembered morning assemblies when headmasters gave sermons and the children were led in prayers, although many also added that because they were young, the services meant little to them. Benson notes that it was because he did not understand Christian spirituality that he was often bored during the service:

The school is Catholic, but it doesn't mean that I believe in God at that moment. Yeah, because the school is Catholic, every morning they pray, so I just listen but no one talks to me about their religion, and at that moment I just think about sports. [laughs] So they pray, they just say, "OK, everybody keep silent and pray," and then I keep silent, and then well, you know, my heart is not on God and I'm thinking about something else.

Indeed, like another interviewee, Robert, some also noted that apart from the school being called a religious school, it was just like any other secular school:

They don't have a very Anglican atmosphere. It's mostly school. But I used to be a boarder, so I lived in school for three years in my school life there. Every Sunday, after we went back to the dormitory, at night time, we'll have an assembly, and then we just started the rest of the week. Then dinner, and then assembly. So it's not like a very intensive Anglican atmosphere, it was just very, very light.

Robert later left Christian faith in Hong Kong to pursue dating relationships and only returned to church attendance in Vancouver when he saw that his sister's participation at St. Matthew's Church made her a friendlier person. For Robert, attending an Anglican school seemed to be unhelpful in his religious encounter because the school (in his opinion) was only a nominally Christian school. But the key to having a religious encounter, many like Benson noted, was that one had to *desire* the Christian peace being offered in the religious school. As Benson later found working at a bank and Robert found dating relationships more attractive, they were among those who did not desire it during their childhood.

Still, many also remain thankful for the exposure to Christianity at a young age. Minnie, for example, voices an opinion common among my interview subjects:

I think having religion in the school has a very good impact on the children, I think. The up-bringing-wise. You have conscience. They will keep reminding you if you're doing this or doing that, maybe God will punish you or something. Yeah, they put conscience in us rather than nowadays, if you don't have any faith, I guess people will not have that much conscience. It won't bug you if you do something bad really.

For Minnie, Christian education was a source of moral education, a way to be disciplined in childhood so that one could develop a social conscience. Common as this view of moral education might be, though, spiritual memories of school being a place of peace like the eye of a storm are also common. Clara, a Hongkonger in her seventies, tearfully remembered an unusual kindness that St. Stephen's Girls' School did for her when most of her family died as her home burned down in the late 1940s: although her uncle could not afford to send her to boarding school, the headmaster took her in for free. For Clara, St. Stephen's was not merely a famous school in which to acquire cultural capital. It was a religious place where teachers who were concerned for her personal well-being showed her an extraordinary kindness. Jack, a transnational Hongkonger currently living the astronaut lifestyle, also recalls a “**seeker group**” in his Catholic school that taught him spiritual practices, prayers that he practiced even before his formal conversion at St. Matthew's Church: “**I think the prayer part is mainly from the seeker group because I remember that the leader in the group told us that the Jewish pray to God daily every time, every moment. And I like that practice, and I make some short prayers to God and that really helped because I can experience God.**” Like many of my interviewees, Jack's religious experience in a Catholic school shaped the way that he has encountered God in his everyday life as *homo religiosus*, both before and after his formal conversion. Experientially and in the memory, religious schools were not only famous schools;

they were peaceful sites of spiritual formation. These sites in turn were not exclusively for Christians in Hong Kong; indeed, while it would be beyond the bounds of this study to make this claim, one could imagine that Hongkongers (like Jack once was) who do not attend St. Matthew's Church and are not confessionally Christian could have been as similarly impacted by their Christian schools as the Hongkongers who have now been formally converted and would self-identify on the census as Christian. As Kong (2001a) would have it, such schools—while they look like officially sacred sites—are in fact *unofficially* sacred sites. Because they were not exclusionary schools, religious education became a staple part of life for many Hongkongers and constituted a significant part of the geographical imaginations of the transnational Hongkongers at St. Matthew's Church.

Mei Ling, a woman in her early 40s who identifies herself as a Canadian, captured the interrelation of education, emotions, and Christian spirituality in her interview. Mei Ling began her interview discussing the dustiness and the crowdedness of Hong Kong (see chapter 4) and how happy she was now that she had migrated with her husband, Andy, to Canada, a place where there was much more clean air and better quality of life. I used this as an entry point to ask her about her religious life in Hong Kong. She replied that she had been baptized as a baby in Hong Kong in the Anglican church, a denomination she called “Christian” (read: Protestant) as opposed to “Catholic.”³² However, while reminiscing over her memories of her elementary Catholic education, she remarked that there was in fact no conflict between her Catholic education and her “Christian” family. Such harmony came about, she thought, because of the peace she discovered in her Catholic school, a spirituality that contrasted with the crowdedness and dustiness of Hong Kong:

³² Like Mei Ling, many of my interviewees contrasted “Catholic” to “Christian” and then qualified that they were not opposed to Catholics as fellow Christians in principle.

Because even though I was baptized as a baby, and when I was small, I followed my dad and mom to Sunday school, but the Catholic elementary school, I feel that the Catholicism was very good. And I remember at that time, I was very godly, I went on the school bus, if I got there early, I would go to the fifth floor on the skyroof and they had a small chapel, and I would just meditate there. I would feel that it's very peaceful. I would watch mass (*mong neisat*; Mandarin, *mang misa*) there. And I felt that the Father was very nice, although I've forgotten all the messages that he spoke, but I had the heart and I liked to go upstairs to watch mass, and sometimes my allowance, I would save it to go to a counter to buy some of their sacred objects. You know, Catholics, they have some sacred objects, like the necklaces, the pins, it's like the Mother Mary, and when I was small, I didn't really care, I just felt that this is very cute, very good. So I would buy it, like the different crosses, the different pins, the different necklaces. And I went to Bible class, and the Bible was very cute (*dukyi*) because it was an elementary school, and you would hear the teacher tell the story, and then there were some crafts to do, so they would cut out a character and paste it in the book, and even though I was small, but I felt, oh, this stuff is very...I felt I could accept it. I didn't feel there was conflict. So for example, you, when you watch mass, and you're in Bible class, and the teacher would have you memorize...you know, every morning, they had a biblical text, now I don't remember, but every morning, there was a Catholic text that you would have to recite, and I felt that I could very much accept it even though my home was Christian and elementary school was Catholic, and I felt that there was no conflict.

She contrasted the peacefulness of her Catholic school with the boredom she felt at the Anglican church her family attended because she thought the Anglican sermons to be boring and relationships with people in the church to be superficial. This boredom came to a head when she began dating a non-Christian young man, Andy, now ironically a council member at St. Matthew's Church, an Anglican church:

But at that time, I continued—I didn't have much motivation to leave—until I met Andy. Then I took him back there. And he just fell asleep, and I felt, “Eh, if I want him to understand or to hear with the heart into the ear, then I need to let him hear something,” so I spoke with my dad and mom, and we were all unhappy, we all cried, I cried, my mom cried, and that means that if I left this church, it's not right because it's like since I was small, everyone had watched me grow up, so I explained that I am not leaving Christianity, I am going to find a church that fits, for example, Andy here, who hasn't believed and hasn't heard the Gospel, really want him to hear something. So eventually, we shopped around a few, like three, five, seven churches, and just before we immigrated, we found an Evangelical Free church. Like Hong Kong's Evangelical Free Church.

For Mei Ling, leaving the Christian faith altogether was out of the question, despite her dating a non-Christian boyfriend, ostensibly because of her family connections to the Christian church. Indeed, her insistence that she would stay a Christian—only a different kind of Christian—eventually brought harmony back to her family.

I argue that the exposure to Christianity in school combined with a receptive desire for the emotional and spiritual peace being offered was the imaginative source of strength for Mei Ling's tenacity in remaining Christian. To compare Mei Ling to Robert (see above), both of them were educated in religious schools, both grew up in religious families, and both were bored in the Anglican circles in which they were raised. Both of them also faced a spiritual crisis when they began dating. Robert left the church, but Mei Ling remained Christian, only a different kind. However, there were several differences between these two interviewees. First, while Robert criticized his Anglican school by saying, "**They don't have a very Anglican atmosphere; it's mostly school,**" Mei Ling remembered *not* the prestige of her Catholic school but the emotional and spiritual peace in the religious space of the mass and the religious objects that she bought. Second, while Mei Ling saw the spiritual peace she found in her Catholic school as a welcome alternative to the crowdedness of Hong Kong, it was the crowdedness that Robert enjoyed:

It's—I think it's—I choose to stay as a *heunggongyan* instead of Canadian style. Because like...this place is nice to live in. Environmentally-speaking, very nice. Air quality-wise, very nice. But like uhh...I think it's kind of boring as compared to a city in Asia, maybe because of the weather. After work people can still have lots of things to do. Shopping mall and department stores don't close until 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock in Asia. Here it's different. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, mall closes at 6. There's not much to do. People get used to go out to eat, here in Vancouver, yeah, some of the Hong Kong people are still doing the same thing. Another part is that home sweet home, they're ready to stay home for the night. So that is the part that I don't really get used to, that I prefer the Southeast Asian style of living.

Mei Ling migrated for quality of life, a quality that was arguably associated with the quietness she had experienced in her Catholic chapel. But the quietness she termed quality of life was construed by Robert as “**kind of boring**,” and the crowdedness she commented about in Hong Kong is construed by Robert as a chance to stay out late. While she like Robert was born into a devout Christian family, the strength of her religiosity came not from her family (a bond that did not stop Robert from leaving the Christian faith for a time) but by emotionally experiencing—and appreciating—firsthand the emotional and spiritual peacefulness of Christian practice in Christian spaces as an alternative to crowded Hong Kong society. As Figure 5.1 shows, family *and* religious education were instrumental in shaping connections between being Hongkonger and having Christian exposure. However, to interrogate “religious education,” for Mei Ling, what was important about religious education was not the education, *per se*, but the exposure to Christian life and practice. Indeed, Mei Ling embodies the figure of the *homo religiosus* described by Figure 5.1. Her confluences of Hongkonger identity with a religious spatiality may be shaped by an emotional connection with her family to a particular religious denomination but is ultimately strengthened by an appreciation for the sense of peace that she experienced in religious schools in Hong Kong.

Familial Peace: Conversion and Christian Territoriality in the Home

Ideas of family and home pervaded the conversations about religious life among my interviewees. My conversations with them covered the idea of home at St. Matthew’s Church but more importantly, they also explored the memories and personal familial networks that continue to shape their personal geographical imaginations (see Figure 5.1). At the personal scale (see Figures 2.1 and 5.1), Christian faith in Hong Kong often evoked *a true religion of*

peace that could give harmony to family life. Such an imagination led many Hongkongers to believe that true peace could come to their families by converting their entire families to Christianity. Indeed, this previous section's emphasis on the emotions evoked by religious space encountered in Christian education and sacred Christian spaces in Hong Kong does not mean that Hongkonger Christians base their faith on the emotions experienced in Christian spaces. For many Hongkonger Christians, Christianity is seen as the true religion in which one finds a true peace that can be spatialized into harmony within their own families.

This conception of Christianity as the true religion is often seen as the antithesis to folk Chinese polytheism. But such a conception was not merely a theological confession, nor was it only (as I argued above) a move toward greater personal sophistication; it was often spatialized in terms of its effects on *family relationships*. Maxine, a recent convert to Christianity in Vancouver who has only an elementary school education in a Catholic school, goes as far as to describe her Buddhist past in Hong Kong as a quest for fake peace whereas Christianity has given her real peace. Indeed, she told me that she used to frequently pray to her images at home and went to the temple seeking peace, arguably the same kind of spirituality Mei Ling talked about, but in a Buddhist (not Catholic or "Christian") space. However, the peace she sought was not merely a personal feeling of emotional satisfaction. When I asked her for what specific benefits she asked Guan Yin, a Chinese Buddhist folk deity, she answered, "**I thought I was getting peace. I used to beg her for when my husband was gambling money, I would ask the goddess to help him not to gamble, not to gamble, and not to gamble, to bring back money home. And my second husband, he used to go out to play [with women], and I asked for my husband not to go out and play, to come home.**" She then began to compare Jesus with Guan Yin:

They say her dress is torn, she's fought with enough people, it's like thinking that she is like the Lord Jesus Christ, but she is not like the Lord Jesus Christ, coming down so humbly, she is a princess with a princess status, like they used to say that those of us followers of Buddha, the Buddha is not humbly coming to earth, he's a prince, he's an Indian prince, Siddhartha. Like now that we've believed in Jesus, we know how to think back. Those so-called idols, they are not at all like the Lord Jesus Christ so humble to come to earth to rescue us, was nailed even to the cross. Those just all sat around and just did spiritual exercises and meditated. And those who worship them think that those Guan Yin meditations, they think that you will get something good from them. We thought it was that. We thought it was that.
[laughs]

For Maxine, conversion from Buddhism to Christianity was a spiritual experience in the sense of being able to find true peace in the humility of Jesus. This peace, however, was a peace that she territorialized in her family, so much so that now that her daughter Clarissa has become lazy (in her opinion) about her Christian spirituality, Maxine spends her prayers asking Jesus to draw Clarissa back to her:

Even my daughter who came when she was thirteen, I had hoped she would come to the revival meeting, but her group is now the college group...the ones who are older, I told her to come, but their whole band of friends came, the pastor's son³³ leads them, the pastor's son is the group leader, and my daughter was falling asleep. Ai! You don't know how much my heart hurt! So this morning, I just hoped, I prayed for my daughter. At first, my daughter was very warmhearted, like when she first believed, she would very diligently go to Bible study groups, go to Bible study, prayer, she would pray on her own, read her Bible, but now, I just see her going on the Web. I never see her holding a Bible to just read it. Prayer: just when she is about to take a meal, it doesn't take more than three seconds. I don't know if she's given thanks. If I don't catch her, she won't go to the service. She says she goes to English service, and she doesn't come every week. If she has nothing that week, or with friends, then she'll come. So this morning I was just praying, just like the pastor is saying, Satan has snatched them away. So I need to pray for her, rescue her out, I was so scared, I was telling God, this little lamb has gone astray, gone outside the fold. I hope that God will rescue her back into the sheepfold.

The peace that she has found in the humility of Christ is only in part an emotional peace; it is better described as a spiritual peace that will extend its peaceful territoriality back to the family. It was not enough that Maxine herself had found peace by joining the family of God through

³³ "The pastor's son" here is not me.

Christian conversion, nor was it enough that her daughter was also a convert and part of a college group at St. Matthew's Church. She was anxious about her daughter because her daughter's boredom with Christian practice meant that she was going "**outside the fold,**" like a sheep departing from the "**sheepfold.**" Clarissa's growing disinterest with Christianity meant—in Maxine's imagination—that Maxine's family was essentially falling apart. Christian peace is no mere confessional statement, nor mere emotional peace. Christian conversion, followed by a sustained converted lifestyle, has spiritual effects on the space of the family, the harmony of the home.

This conception of family peace meant that converting the family to Christianity was an important task. Cindy, a Hongkonger Christian who has a university education from Canada, corroborates Maxine's assessment of Chinese folk Buddhism as a false religion. Because of this assessment, she is intent on converting her mother-in-law to Christianity:

...she believes in God, but not the God that we believe. She has her god, and also her old tradition, her old belief, that's a big block, big stumbling block, that she thought that the God that she has believed in and has blessed her is the God that we believe in, it's Jesus. I told her no. So my next plan is, before she leaves, before she goes to Edmonton, I'm going to share with her the whole...Jesus' salvation....And I said I was going to share with her the words of the Bible, that's Jesus, the cross, yeah. Yeah, so the bridge thing. The bridge that I said a lot of people, the cliff, and then Jesus is the bridge, the cross, a lot of people use a lot of ways try to reach...try to jump across to God, try to use a lot of ways, try to *bai sun* [worship gods], try to *mai sun* [give gods money], but they fall into the cliff because they cannot jump from here to there, jump to God. That's the only bridge. That's the cross of Jesus Christ. So I'm going to share with her the bridge.

"The bridge" that Cindy is so intent on sharing comes from a popular Christian discourse that holds that the death of Jesus Christ is the only way to God. As Cindy brings this discourse to bear on her own familial experience, false religions such as Chinese folk Buddhism that fail to recognize that human effort to reach God without Jesus are bound to fail to reach God. In this theology, the cross of Jesus Christ functions as a bridge across a chasm between God and

humans. Like Maxine, Cindy considers Jesus Christ to be the only way to God, the true source of the peace that is the benefit of worshipping God in the first place. Indeed, as Sophie and Janine told me earlier, Cindy's conception of how to speak with her mother-in-law was through education: she had to educate her mother-in-law on what it meant to be theologically sound, to truly cross the Christian bridge. Her mother-in-law's conception of religion, with the trappings of folk Buddhism (as Sophie said above, "**worshipping those idols**"), was not only of the lower classes but a failed spirituality. Christian conversion would not only lift Cindy's mother-in-law to a religious reality that would be both true and more sophisticated, but it would bring greater harmony to Cindy's family because they would all be worshipping the same God, practicing the same form of Christianity—in Cindy's words, the *true* form of religion—all together and in harmony.

As Cindy (and many other interviewees) implied, the stakes of practicing this true form of Christianity together as a family were high, for true Christian practice had implications for family harmony both in the present *and* in eternity. For now, it would bring the whole family together in Christian spiritual practice. But in the future, the purpose of such conversion was so that the whole family would be worshipping the same God in heaven forever. The bridge to God would be ultimately crossed in death. Such a theological imagination also drove promotions of evangelistic meetings such as the ones given by the transnational speakers that I shall discuss later on in this chapter. On the week before Hong Kong megachurch pastor Peter Ho's evangelistic meetings at St. Matthew's Church, the announcements after the main 11 AM worship service featured a skit in which the sanctuary lights were switched off and the spotlight focused on a man who had recently died in a car accident standing in hell, regretting that he did not convert to Christianity at Ho's meeting. Robert, whom I later interviewed, played the voice

of God speaking to this man: “If I gave you one more opportunity, would you come?” he asked. One of the junior pastors at St. Matthew’s Church finished the announcement, “People around you need God’s love and your love. Invite them so that they will come and hear, or else they will end up in a dark place called hell.” He alerted those present to the invitation cards in the bulletin that parishioners needed to hand to someone in the individual parishioner’s own social or familial networks and announced the existence of an e-card in case people wanted to invite friends and family electronically. I asked Robert about this theology of the afterlife later on.³⁴ Though hesitant about the announcement’s statements on hell, he maintained the importance of Christian conversion:

JT: And so you’re sitting there during the promotions. What’s going through your head?

Robert: Basically, they just gave me an idea, the promotion needed to be done in a way to get people to come. Don’t waste this chance. So we created a very short introduction kind of drama saying, oh, someone is already in hell, and he regretted that he don’t come to the church, and a voice talk to him, “If I give you a second chance, will you come?” Basically that’s the promotion.

JT: So now just to clarify in terms of Christian belief, if someone does not believe in Jesus, they’re going to hell then.

Robert: If somebody don’t believe in Jesus, they’re going to hell...mmm...I would say if somebody had a chance but they choose not to believe in Jesus, it end up they go to hell. Because lots of people in the world, they don’t have a chance to listen to Bible, to understand Jesus. So for those, I don’t know. I don’t know. Maybe they have a last chance: “You want to believe or not?” I don’t know.

JT: But for somebody here, if they were to skip out on church and not come to

³⁴ Here is an example not of Christian agnosticism but of the *hermeneutical collision* that I described in chapter 3. It is important to underscore my own positionality as a Christian here. Though I too am a Christian and was raised in several different Christian circles with varying versions of the theology of the afterlife, my own Christian spiritual journey has led me to emphasize more “the resurrection of the dead” and a reshaping of the cosmos in a new creation as spelled out in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds rather than a heaven-hell dichotomy. This nuanced difference of eschatological emphasis leads me to place more emphasis on participating in Christ’s love relationship with his Father as he renews the world rather than to engage in evangelistic conversionism to spread Christian territoriality. This theological position is best explored in Bishop N.T. Wright’s (2003) *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. It is because of my personal exposure to so many versions of Christian eschatology and because of Sturm’s (2008) and Han’s (forthcoming) insistence that geographers of religion pay closer attention to the interrelation between religious eschatology and geopolitics that I thought it important to ask Robert to clarify his views before I “mapped” them in this thesis. Nuances of personal theological imaginations created interesting hermeneutical collisions during my ethnography.

the evangelistic meeting...

Robert: Actually, I shouldn't say that. What I would say is the whole thing, I only look at half of it. If you do things good, you will be in heaven. Other people, where they are, they are not in heaven, I don't know where they are. Maybe they will be somewhere else. That's what I understand. But actually the attention is, do the things right now in your lifetime, you'll be rewarded, and you'll be placed in a nice, bright environment. You know, you kind of have....[pause]...

While my questioning produced unease and confusion in Robert as he attempted to clarify his personal eschatology, this evangelistic promotion with which Robert was heavily involved clarifies the stakes of Maxine's and Cindy's anxiousness for Christian faith to be spread into their families through the Christian conversions of all of their family members. Not only did immediate family peace matter, but *eternity* hung in the balance. There were not only social, political, or cultural stakes in spreading the faith: there were *spiritual* stakes because for these Hongkonger Christians, Christianity was not just an emotional peace to be privately enjoyed; it was a spiritual reality that had implications for the afterlife. If one wanted to be together forever with one's family, one had to ensure the conversion of all of one's family members.

To be a Christian, in the imagination of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church, is the only way to be *homo religiosus*. Other religions are imagined to be false ways to the one true God. But such theological assertions were not privately held convictions. They were put in the context of the *family*. The true peace that people like Maxine and Cindy experienced from Christianity needed to be extended to their whole family, particularly those who were not within the fold and especially to those who had alternative religious practices (read: false and less sophisticated) to Christianity, practices for which they might face eternal damnation. The way to extend Christian space—indeed, to rescue those close to oneself from hell—was through *Christian conversion*. Indeed, as these two examples have demonstrated, family harmony was often conceived in terms of how many members of the family had converted to Christianity—

and how many stayed converted. This family harmony was not thought of only in the immediate space of everyday life but in the future space of the afterlife.

Geopolitical Peace: The Stable West as a Space for (Religious) Reflection

As we saw in the previous chapter, many Hongkongers—including the bulk of my interviewees—migrated from Hong Kong seeking shelter from political instability. Such migration recalls the axiom in the Hong Kong-Vancouver transnational network: “Hong Kong for making money, Vancouver for quality of life” (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005: 121). Imagining Canada to be a place to find quality of life, Hongkonger Christians often framed Vancouver as a haven away from the chaos of interaction with Communist-led Mainland China. Older Hongkongers fled during or after the social unrest of the 1967 riots before the Cultural Revolution. Others sought refuge in the West after the Sino-British Agreement in 1984 to return Hong Kong to China in 1997. Still others, already unnerved in anticipation of 1997, left in the wake of the Tiananmen incident on 4 June 1989. While many Hongkongers framed Canada in terms of a cultural geography of peace, the underlying reality was often a desire for a political geography of stability.

Often, the cultural geography of peace specifically homed in on the idea of *education*. When I spoke with older Hongkongers, they told me that they had migrated during or immediately after the 1967 riots, but they had migrated not because of political stability but more importantly to seek better education, either for themselves or for their children. In the wake of 1967, Harrison left for Ontario to pursue a higher education that he would not have had access to in Hong Kong. But education as a migration logic was conflated with political refuge. When I asked why he decided to move to Canada, he answered,

Well, couple of reasons, well, one of the reasons, 66/67, Cultural Revolution, and I'm also looking for opportunity to get a higher education. So I guess in those days, you want to study in the university, you gotta have two things. One, you gotta be real smart, cream of the crop, right? Hong Kong system is like a *gum tze tap* [pyramid]. And then as you go up the primary school, secondary school, and university, it gets smaller, you know what I mean? So you know, you gotta be really smart, IQ high, really smart, and if you're clever, and your marks are really top notch. And secondly, you have to be rich. Two elements in order to get into a Hong Kong university because in those days, maybe one or two, maybe one-and-a-half, half is *zhongmundaihok* [Chinese university], it wasn't really formalized, they called it *zhongmundaihok*, they called it *zhuzihokyuen* [the main school], but Hong Kong U is the only university recognized as a university graduate degree. So at that time, I knew that I would have no opportunity to study in university in Hong Kong...So in 1967, there was this Cultural Revolution going on, and a lot of people were kinda *fong seen* [rioting] all the way, so I said, "Maybe time to try to come over."

Harrison combines the political unrest of 1967 with his desire for an education in university, a desire that would have gone unfulfilled even though he had attended the academically prestigious St. Mark's College for high school. Education seemed to be his excuse to leave Hong Kong in the wake of the 1967 riots. Indeed, his statements were book-ended by the riots, a political context for his educational migration logic.

Harrison was not the only one who saw education as a way out of political instability.

Peter also left Hong Kong in 1973 for Canada ostensibly to educate his children in a Western system:

The main reason is that at that time, we...oh, we think a lot, we think a lot, almost I and my wife almost...we had spent almost several months to think about it. And finally, we get the conclusion the main point is: if my children still, they are still staying in Hong Kong, then they cannot obtain a very good education. That is the problem. So at the last moment, we decided to come here, mainly for my children's better education. You know as I had told you, there's only one university in Hong Kong, at that time when my children were born, when my children were born, the chance is better, the chances at university had set up already, but during my age, my youth, only one. I think you know it. One Hong Kong University. I had told you even though you are smart, very smart, if you don't have money, you cannot be allowed to go in. They did not accept you.

Peter corroborated Harrison's reason to migrate to Canada for education: there was only one university in Hong Kong in the 1960s, and it was difficult to be accepted into it. But while Harrison migrated for his own education, Peter came to educate his children in the late 1960s, a move that seems to extend Waters (2006) and Preston, Kobayashi, and Man's (2006) arguments about Western education as a way to increase cultural capital for East Asians. But in a later interview, Peter's wife Joanna reveals that such a statement about increasing cultural capital actually had a political dimension:

In 67. It really happened. One of the guys, he's the dj in the radio. And because every day, he's been making speeches about China, what they did is wrong, what they did is so bad, they're really abusing people, things like this. But this guy is finding the way to death...Especially in revolution, you never know who did it. He got into the car, and then it exploded! That's the first I learned of China! I shouldn't have that worst memory in my mind, but it's still there. And because of that, made me have a thought to get out of Hong Kong. See? Because I don't really want to be near China. I only like to visit the scenery, culture, the history...But I don't want to get close to it. And that's one of the main reasons I have to get out of Hong Kong, immigrate to Canada.

Underlying the British colonial presence that most Hongkongers appreciated in the sense of bringing technological progress to the city (although admittedly, not in the sense of being a political underclass; see Faure, 2003) was a constant insecurity due to the chaos they imagined would ensue if Hong Kong were to return to China. Hong Kong was not only a crowded city that had Christian spaces of peace. It was a British colony that sat constantly in the shadows of the Communist Mainland that threatened their free-market way of life, a fear that many were reminded of in 1967, 1984, and 1989. The only way to find real *geopolitical* peace, many thought, was to get out of Hong Kong.

This Hongkonger political geography contextualizes their migration away from an overly competitive workplace and education system in Hong Kong. Both Harrison and Peter left a politically unstable Hong Kong *for* the sake of education, whether to upgrade their own

education or to educate their children. In a sense, political instability in Hong Kong also made Hongkongers reflect on their own personal insecurities in the dog-eat-dog education systems and career paths in Hong Kong. Geopolitical uncertainties gave Hongkongers an excuse to migrate to a place where there was not only a geopolitical peace but a better quality of life. Canadian schools were often seen, then, as a refuge from Hong Kong schools that are said to focus on academic competition. Indeed, as the transnational Hongkongers with whom I spoke felt themselves released into a Canadian space of geopolitical peace, they expected—and often found—Canadian schools offering a much more creative education. Winston, for example, was thankful for being able to take an extended minor in music at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby because it allowed him to explore **“the gift of music in church, because church helped me to explore what I’m really interested in and what I can use my talent to serve.”** School and church *in Canada* were combined in Winston’s case to help him find his true passions. It was in Canada that Winston found not only geopolitical peace but institutions to aid him in his personal reflections, reflections that he later told me led to a dramatic Christian conversion. For Winston, Canada was a peaceful space for reflection. Such a notion was not unique. Citing popular consensus that schools in Hong Kong—whether religious or not—were essentially schools designed to cram information down students’ throats (Preston, Kobayashi, and Man, 2006), Jason, a Hongkonger retiree, reflected on why he moved his family to Vancouver in the first place:

...my relatives in Canada told me about the Canadian education system, their children have less homework, but they started doing projects and were encouraged to ask questions about anything, so I thought that is a good way...and Canada from my understanding is a very peace-loving country with lots of land, and not enough people, and so there might be a lot of opportunity for myself and for my children.

Winston experienced what Jason describes here. Canada was imagined to be a place of personal enrichment because of both an education system that encouraged creative thinking and a national space where economic opportunity—not competition—was imagined to be the norm. The quality of life many imagined that they would find—and indeed, some found—in Canada was a *quieter* way of life both for themselves and for their children.

Indeed, geopolitical peace was often connected with peace in one’s personal life, whether this personal peace meant more time to spend with the family or more time for religious reflection. Benson saw his migration from Hong Kong as a way to escape his pressurized banking job. This escape, he told me, was in fact a preparation from God for his conversion and the conversion of his family: **“At that moment, not God first. I thought I was not happy; in work, as I rose higher, the pressure got even more. At that time, I could not go home to eat dinner more than twice a week. Even Saturdays, Sundays, I had to work. So it was no fun. And so it became that it was not a good thing.”** Benson’s eldest daughter was similarly suffering from an over-pressurized, prestigious Catholic school that she was attending:

Maryknoll is a very famous school in Hong Kong. I’m so proud she can go there, but she never told me she’s...she studied very bitterly, very bitterly. She dared not tell me because I’m so proud of her, I think, wow, she’s very good. At that time, everyone...probably only three people in her [elementary] school could get into Maryknoll [Secondary]. At that time, her exams were very good. But she suffered very hard in Maryknoll; her marks were so bad. She used to get 90s, now she gets 60s. I don’t know what problems she had, but she thought it was very bitter; every night, she studied so hard; at the end, I found out, I said this can’t go on. She had no friends; because at Maryknoll, most people had money...maybe everybody—this is in Hong Kong—they’re driving Benz. She takes transit, walks, maybe not too many friends. So when she came [to Canada], she was happier. So I think we can’t be like that in Hong Kong.

While he does not say anything about political instability in Hong Kong, Benson’s migration more than twenty years after Harrison’s and Peter’s still evokes the sense that Hong Kong is an over-pressurized, overly competitive environment where one cannot find peace. And while

Benson was not a Christian when he lived in Hong Kong, Belinda epitomized Hongkonger Christian *homo religiosus* as a very active member of the Anglican church, serving as a church council member, a choir director, and a headmistress of an Anglican primary school. But her comments on Hong Kong resembled Benson's in terms of the busyness, even within an ecclesial setting:

Before I immigrated, I thought it was a responsibility to go to church because in school, I already believed: the Bible is true, it's really true, and I went back to church as my responsibility, I had to conduct, I had to teach, I had to have a meeting, I did church things, these are my responsibility. I didn't feel that faith had anything special toward me because I thought I was so powerful. I was being Shang Ti [the Sovereign Above]. I think I am God. I was wrestling for a seat with God. You know what I mean? I didn't have to listen to God. I could do it myself. I could do a lot of things.

Coming to Canada for political security after Tiananmen, she found herself migrating into the Canadian economic recession in the early 1990s. She was out of a job. Belinda's sudden *un-*busyness in Canada plunged her into a spiritual crisis:

Then I just died. From being a powerful person, I became powerless...I looked back to see that God wanted me here. If I stayed in Hong Kong, I would be powerful, powerful, powerful, going up, but God wanted to make me powerless. I needed to be humble. I needed to know that it wasn't just me. I belong to Shang Ti. He leads me. Good thing I have religion. If not, I would have gone mad. I would have gone mad because there's a lot of things you can't turn out of. A lot of people immigrate, come over, they can't turn out of it and that's just a dead situation. I am very sensitive to God. In Hong Kong, my relationships didn't work. It wasn't that I wasn't working: I prayed, I led hymns, I had responsibilities, everything, but I feel that it's not such a must. I'm so busy. I don't have time for Shang Ti. Where do you find time? But here, no work, no people, and even that work didn't exist anymore. Recession, right? 1990.

For Belinda, the spiritual crisis after her migration led her to a deeper relationship with God that she had not experienced in her Christian life in Hong Kong. Hong Kong was a place of unrest even within the ecclesial circle. Emigrating to Canada caused Belinda to rethink her religious activities, even to cut down on church and work activities in Canada (indeed, the work was

forcefully cut from her) so that she could focus on her personal spirituality. Political insecurity for Belinda unmasked her own personal struggles for power in a competitive Hong Kong society by providing an impetus to move away from Hong Kong. A search for geopolitical peace eventually led to spiritual serenity.

Migration for geopolitical peace and finding Christian spirituality in Canada suggests that in some Hongkonger imaginations, Canada is indeed a better place for religious reflection. Jackie found that while in Hong Kong, she was concerned about wearing brand-name items to work and church. But the Christian values that she learned in Canada made her a very different person:

The most important, the most different is being myself. Don't care as before, like before, I really care about how people look at me. But now, it doesn't matter. Me is me. I rather let you know the real me is like this. Do I have this outside stuff? It's not important anymore. I mean, I have that daring, I dare to let go of it, and I can still stand up. Even though me, I don't wear that, I don't put that on, I am still me, I am a person that God still treasures.

For Jackie, Canada is a place where she formed a new sense of worth based on a renewed Christian spirituality. Although (like Belinda) she was a Christian before in Hong Kong, she found that her move to Canada was transformative for her own self-awareness, after which she noticed that she had had no sense of peace even in the church in Hong Kong. Canada was a place where such peace could be found. Indeed, such an intensification of religious affiliation after migration to Canada parallels Chen's (2006) argument that Taiwanese migrants in Southern California, whether they were Christian or Buddhist, became more intensely religious when they moved to America. As I showed in chapter 2, changes in the national context for migrants often renewed their desire for religious practice. Robert, her younger brother, noticed a marked change in Jackie and was himself drawn to the church in Canada, even though he had left the church in Hong Kong to pursue dating relationships:

Amazing. She is the originally, she is the most hot-tempered (*ngok*), most unfriendly sister, but after the church, this one, she changed entirely. And five years ago, the pastor told me to do a testimony. I brought out that issue too, that my sister is not friendly, but after she came to this church, she changed. Made me curious: what kind of church is this? I wanted to come here to check it out. So even now her life today mostly is surrounding either family or church.

Indeed, the reflections of one Hongkonger upon migration affected not only herself but also the family that migrated with her, spreading Christian faith back into her family. Canada is indeed a better place for religious territoriality to spread to the family, but it is so because Canada offers (in the imaginations of the Hongkonger with whom I spoke) a quieter quality of life, a land where Hongkongers—whether they were converted or not—had both the time and the environment to reflect on the spiritual dimensions of their everyday lives. Such reflections, in Benson’s case, sometimes led to Christian conversion.

But this said, Winston, a worship leader in his thirties at St. Matthew’s, took a more critical view of Canada and the possibilities of religious reflection after migration. Although he grew up in a non-denominational Christian family in Hong Kong, he told me that he was converted to Christianity in Canada and was given the freedom to explore his musical talents away from a city full of harsh competition. But Winston qualified his comments about Hong Kong’s competitive society and its relation with its geography of religion:

But even though Hong Kong is a very...like a high-pressure living place, so they will still have some struggle for working or something, but they are very devoted. They need the religion...For Canada, sometimes religion will become some leisure stuff. Not that important for lots of people. Because the living standard here is good, we are very, like, uh...mmm...we got everything.

But in Hong Kong, **“There’s so much struggle, so many pressures, working situation, their working place, their relationship with colleagues, people, all this makes them crazy.**

Relatives, friends, will make them more close together and pray for what they need.” But

Winston’s comments need to be taken as a lay Christian’s understanding of the church in Hong

Kong. Julia, the young second-generation Canadian who is so much associated with the Hong Kong media that she bills herself as a Hongkonger, comments,

If you can be as big as Tung Fook Church [the 4,000-person megachurch pastored by Peter Ho] as big, and can have so much recognition, it's very hard. And Hong Kong people like to pick on you, they always find someone to criticize you, and if you don't have a good stance, you don't have a good, strong viewpoint, and you can't defend what you're doing, you can be easily beat down.

Jimmy echoes Julia's understanding of the church in Hong Kong: the church in Hong Kong, he told me, is itself shifting its self-understanding from being a social service hub to being a competitive religious marketplace. His friend, who visited a Baptist church in Hong Kong, walked in on the day that the pastor who had been there for twenty years was resigning because he could not meet the board of deacons' new expectations that he expand the church's attendance numbers. As with Belinda and the many others who saw leading the church in Hong Kong itself as a job, the move to Canada sobered them by forcing them to reflect on their Christian beliefs, not only their Christian service. While Winston's comments that Hongkonger Christians in Hong Kong may be more committed, it is also true that Hongkonger Christians in Vancouver may tend to see themselves as more relaxed, able to use their newfound de-pressurized free time to think about spiritual matters.

Having moved to Canada, transnational Hongkongers also bring their desires for emotional, spiritual, familial, and geopolitical peace to Canada. Geopolitical peace tended to frame the "quality of life" migration logic, a "quality of life" that included religious reflection and spiritual renewal. Unlike the latent political instability of Hong Kong, Canada is a place where the Chinese government could not hope to govern. Unlike the competitiveness of Hong Kong, Canada is a place where things are slow and life is quiet. Unlike the cram schools of

Hong Kong, Canada is a place where young creativity and talent can flourish. And unlike the religious competitiveness of Hong Kong, Canada is a place for religious reflection.

Congregational Peace: Church as the Father's House

From examining religious imaginations and migration logics at the personal scale, this chapter now moves to consider the *congregational* scale and to examine how the personal geographical imaginations this chapter has been discussing are played out at St. Matthew's Church. As a space that facilitates religious reflection in a land that offers a quieter quality of life, St. Matthew's Church and other Christian congregations tend to be seen as *extensions of home*, indeed, as the house where God is to be approached as a Father. Such a view does not contradict but *complements* the congregational studies literature that has posited that immigrant churches provide social services, ethnic maintenance, and identity formation (Warner and Wittner, 1998; Yang, 1999; Beattie and Ley, 2003; Ley, 2008). As this literature has itself pointed out, these ethnic service hubs are not merely seen as social service centres; they are often seen as *home* and *family*. Sherman, a 36-year-old Hongkonger who migrated to Canada in his early teens but still associates himself with Hong Kong, described Christianity as "**being in a relationship**" with God as Father. For him, such a relationship had unique implications for what it meant to go to church on Sundays:

It's like going to your parents' house. You feel comfortable when you go to your parents' house. And for me, going to church, I feel comfortable. I mean, for a long while, I haven't done it for a little bit now, I don't know why, but I used to sleep the minute the church service starts, I go to sleep, and I don't wake up until the service ends...That hour of sleep that I would get is the best hour of sleep in my entire week. And I've always felt safe and I've always felt like, yeah, it's like I'm going back to my parents' house for an hour of rest, two hours of rest, I don't have to do a single thing, I don't have to talk to my dad, we can just be there together, and I'll feel safe dozing off and not have to worry about anything happening to me. Don't

have to watch my back, don't have to care what's around me. Just let it be, right? That's what church is.

While Sherman's sleeping experience is not one that most parishioners are proud of admitting themselves, what he holds in common with other interviewees corroborates the literature that has argued that the ethnic church is often a "home away from home," a home in Canada away from Hong Kong (Ley, 2008: 2063). Indeed, as Waters (2003: 230) has shown, such churches and the social networks that they provide have served as sites that help "astronaut wives" whose husbands shuttle between Hong Kong for work and Vancouver for family to settle in Vancouver. I repeat here what Jackson, a former "astronaut" in Hong Kong, described as his wife and son grew distant (see chapter 4): **"Both of them were not eager to go back to Hong Kong, even a short visit and that kind of thing. It seems both of them got very involved in Vancouver."**

What Jackson leaves unspoken (and his wife's interview makes explicit) is that his wife's involvement in Vancouver, apart from her day job as a school administrator, took the form of becoming a prominent church leader at St. Matthew's Church. Much of "involvement in Vancouver" was in fact involvement at church. As Jack, another interviewee, put it, the congregation served as an **"extended family"** to the nuclear family, a home away from home because one is related to fellow Christians both by faith and by geographical imagination. Such social bonds, as Waters (2003), Jackson, and Jack show, are sometimes even as strong as the immediate family and can position immediate family members who are geographically distant (such as astronauts) as outsiders. To create a Christian congregation is to create a home; to join a congregation is to join a family.

What these transnational Hongkonger Christians must do in the family is to spend time with the family and maintain the home. Touched by his sister's change, for example, Robert now sees the church as his extended family and spends most of his time in church:

I didn't look at it [this way]. This is my time, within my time, I spend this much at church. I didn't think of it this way. I think I only have this much time in church. The rest of the time is wasted. So it's not like I sacrifice this time at church. I still have a lot of opportunity besides here. I can hang out more with the church people.

For Robert, church was the main source of his social interactions in Vancouver because it was family. Time spent at the church was not wasted at church; it was spent maintaining family relationships. Jimmy also stressed that part of what it meant to be a Christian was to serve the church as his family:

You can see, right, Christian values, if I could come to work or maybe I go to church, people ask me to do something, I don't mind to do it because I always don't mind to help people. You know, some people say, "Very costly if you do it this way," there's no personal benefit or personal gain for you, but I don't mind it, why not? Because I do that, I don't have the selfish mind, I build lots of friendships. So people will think the normal population won't do this, why do you do it? Then I gain more respect, I gain more friendships, people's trust. So that's, "Oh, there's this guy called Jimmy, he don't mind, he's a good guy." So that's one of the Christian values. So I have it [the values], lots of people don't.

For these Hongkonger Christians, St. Matthew's Church is their extended family, a set of relations that they must maintain. This congregation that is seen as a Christian family has two elements. First, as Sherman and Robert told me, a family is a space of rest amidst a hectic work schedule because of the familial relational bonds at church: church is like a parent's house, a place to relax and spend time with people intimate to oneself. But second, as Jimmy also demonstrates, a family is also a space of *work*. Chores need to be finished; caregiving and relationship-building require time and energy. The congregation is not merely a space where religious adherents gather only on Sundays; it is a home that must be maintained in the everyday lifeworlds of many Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church. Time in one's everyday life spent this way, Robert emphasized earlier, is not wasted. Active maintenance must be performed so that the church can continue to function as a space of rest, peace, and serenity for the whole family of God.

Indeed, St. Matthew's Church is not a family that simply meets together weekly as a social network: it is a family that worships God together for the sake of maintaining Christian spirituality. Friends were by-products of attending church, most interview subjects insisted, although they were also very important by-products. Johnny, a Hongkonger in his 40s, described the distribution of spirituality and friendship as 60-40, 60 percent of what church was for was a spiritual experience of inner peace, 40 percent was for friendship. For him, the church existed as **“my place to grow my spirituality and to share my spiritual experience with other people and to worship.”** Indeed, Harrison complained that some people saw the church as a place for consumers to find friends or to even host a concert:

They come here for somebody to entertain, you just go watch Madonna or Mike Jackson or Cheung Hokyi, but you come to see a star. But you forget the church, the most important is God. God makes the person to send his message to us through him. If he's not doing it well, it's nothing to do with God. He may not be able to communicate fully or the more you can pick up, it's fine, it's nothing to do with God.

Harrison voices a common sentiment at St. Matthew's Church that opposes church searchers who do not want to settle here as home. The church, he and others insist, is primarily a place to meet God to nurture one's own spirituality. To use the church for any other reason is to forget that the church is *God's* family, the *Father's* house. Social networks at St. Matthew's Church are indeed part of the everyday lifeworlds of these Hongkonger transmigrants, but the church family is never treated only as a social network. It is a sacred space that extends Christian space into the everyday lives of the Hongkonger Christians who find peace and rest in its homey sanctuary and who maintain the relational and day-to-day tasks of home to preserve its peacefulness.

Indeed, what it meant to find such a church home, while some remained Anglican, was to switch denominations after migration. For these denomination-switchers, St. Matthew's Church

is also a home to which one has to adjust. Such a shift toward Anglicanism, in the case of St. Matthew's Church, was difficult for most people who switched from more non-liturgical denominations that were less formal in their worship.³⁵ Originally from a free church, Jane's first encounter with the formality of the Anglican service caused her to voice her initial concern bluntly: **"But for me, it's totally new. And then I asked him [her husband], 'Is it a cult?!' [laughs] Because I never do those type of things!"** It was not a cult, she discovered, and after adjusting, she contributed her service to the family by becoming a mentor to several young women for several years. Cindy, also originally from a free church, reported a similar feeling until she came into contact with the church's spirituality through the pastor's sermon:

And I went there and looked at it, and I said, you asked me to go to this church, so tiny and old! But I went anyways. And I didn't like the service [laughs]...I didn't like the service, but I liked the sermon....I liked it. I said, wow, it has been a while. I couldn't hear such a substantial, such a good sermon. So because of the sermon I stayed.

Cindy then served her church home after about ten years of attendance by becoming a council member. Indeed, as Cindy suggested by citing the pastor's sermon, the feeling of home is not manufactured emotionally: it is an encounter with God—for Hongkonger Christians, the spiritual reality of Christian faith—that makes this place home. Sarah, raised Baptist in Hong Kong with strong memories of how Baptist fellowship life shaped her knowledge of Scripture as well as her ability to run church groups,³⁶ described her entry into St. Matthew's Anglicanism through a Bible study. When she adjusted to the reality that she was attending a formal, liturgical church different from her Baptist upbringing, she began serving over 20 hours a week in the church.

³⁵ As I discussed in chapter 3, this was my experience as well.

³⁶ Sarah described at length how her upbringing in the Baptist church taught her to chair church committees from a young age. She was also taught the entire Bible thoroughly after four years of Sunday school. Because St. Matthew's Church did not have an English-speaking youth group at the time she began attending, she was worried for her daughters' commitment to Christianity, fearing that they would not have the same kind of nurture she was privileged to have during her youth.

Her daughters gave her the go-ahead, even though she knew that they would not have the same kind of Baptist fellowship culture that she thought that they needed to nurture their Christian spirituality:

They said, ‘Mommy, we don’t want to leave. We want to stay here.’ So when I saw that they had this kind of thinking, and they wanted to stay here, I didn’t need to think about anything else. And with regards to support not being enough, I give that to Shang Ti [the Sovereign Above]. Shang Ti will take care of it. So I stayed here at St. Matthew’s. How do I contact brothers and sisters to have relationships? We all work together to do the church’s work, Shang Ti’s work, and then we have sharing. When you get into the church and do Shang Ti’s work, you will have relationships. When you remove yourself and you’re not there, your relationships will slowly go away.

Although some have described St. Matthew’s Church as a typical Chinese mission for lonely Chinese people who need relationships, even these Hongkonger Christians who switched denominations after migration to Canada switched not primarily because they were lonely but because they found a home away from home in the Father’s house at St. Matthew’s Church. As Jane, Cindy, and Sarah’s cases demonstrate, they did not stay outsiders. They became activity participants in the maintenance of their congregational peace, the harmony of the Father’s house.

Linguistic Peace: A Cantonese Christian Home Away from Home

As St. Matthew’s Church is the Father’s house, many interviewees insisted that going to church every Sunday was for finding inner peace in communion with God. Several interviewees shared their mystical encounters with the divine, encounters that they claimed could transcend geography. Sherman recalls that while sharing the Christian Gospel with non-Christian friends and family was a matter of Chinese church piety that he rarely followed, the times he has done it were accompanied with mystical experience:

...whenever I’ve had to do this, and whenever I have the urge to do this, I’ve always said a prayer. And the prayer has always been: “Speak, speak, Lord, you know,

I'm here, I'll open my mouth, please put words in there." All of them. Just kinda comes out...Just think: who the hell am I? Quite honestly. If it would be me trying to convince them to believe in God, yeah, I'm not that good of a salesman. But if it was God speaking to them, that's a different story. So...actually, it's strange, come to think of it...I can't even remember what I said.

Johnny spoke about his own personal encounter with God when a Hong Kong prominent evangelist, Paul Ng, prayed with him at one of the revival meetings that St. Matthew's Church hosted in 2008. But he insisted that his connection with Paul Ng was no different from his encounter with the divine through an American charismatic preacher, Jack Deere. On Paul Ng, he said,

He even don't know me. But in the prayer, he told me things that were very stunning. So at that level it's not because of whether he's coming from where, it's because God was using him in that particular instant to talk to me, like talk to other brothers and sisters, so there's no difference whether he's from Hong Kong or China or so, even he could be a Caucasian, it won't make any difference.

Johnny continued to insist that in spiritual encounters, geographical boundaries were always broken, often through physical touch and intuitive prayer. As Johnny would have it, St. Matthew's Church should not be exclusive toward non-Hongkongers because a Christian geography transcends all barriers between humans. Sherman put it pointedly: as long as God spoke, it did not matter that the church was mainly full of Hongkongers or that his personal imagined geographies of what Christianity was framed by Hong Kong. Because of its spiritual reality and their own openness to mystical phenomena, Christian spirituality was thought to transcend geography.

However, as much as these interviewees emphasized geography-transcending spiritual encounters, *language* was still a critical issue for spiritual encounters and experiences. Indeed, although Sherman evangelizes based on mystical promptings, all of these promptings have been to share the Gospel *in Chinese* (read: Cantonese). While defying geography in his spiritual

encounters with both transnational Hongkonger and American speakers, Johnny also admitted that he is “**so used to the Chinese way**” of doing church and also insists that his daughter follow him to a Cantonese service so that they can be with each other at least once during the week. On why he attends a Chinese service in particular, he answered that he does not want to be with the “**young kids**” at the English service but framed the matter ultimately linguistically: “**Yeah, maybe just I was born as a Chinese, born in Hong Kong, so my root is Cantonese. God particularly uses Cantonese to talk to me. I don’t know.**” Johnny voiced a common concern among most Hongkonger Christians: the unfamiliarity of biblical terminology and terms to describe spiritual experience in English. A fourth-generation Anglican from China, another interviewee, Jimmy, grew up in Christian circles. He also speaks fluent enough English to work in a Canadian government agency. But asked if he would attend an English-speaking liturgical service or Christian event, Jimmy has a tendency to decline:

Because when I was young in Hong Kong, all the liturgy is in Chinese, so familiar, I like it. Once you change to English, oh, something’s missing, doesn’t click, you know, it’s the cultural. It also has the same effect as I prefer to read the Chinese Bible, not the English. The major reason is because when I was young, when I read the Chinese Bible, I knew the name, I know the place. Once you change to English, I have no idea about what the name is, what the place is, so I have to read the Chinese Bible, so that’s why in the liturgy, it has to be the Chinese...That English. [wincses] The point is if I cannot be used to write the English term, you know, the name, the place in the Bible by speaking English, I can’t do the transition. So I can communicate with you in English, but speaking English, I can’t do the transition. So I can communicate with you in English, but I cannot tell you an English Bible story. That’s my reason. So if you have an English event, I probably cannot go. You know, I am not as smooth as I am, because in Cantonese, I can do, *VROM!*

Jimmy went on to use the term “charismatic” as an example: during a series of discussions over the church’s position on ecstatic manifestations of the divine, Jimmy found himself lost because some of the discussion took place in English. Even when I interviewed him, he did not know the English term for the Cantonese *lingyan* (“charismatic”): he misspoke by saying

“*charistamystic*.” Jimmy voiced an all-too-often heard regret. While intellectually knowing that Christianity is supposed to transcend geographical barriers, language is an issue not in the sense of mere everyday communication but everyday *religious* conversation. Geographies of where Christians are from still matters because language matters. Language in turn matters because it tends to limit how far afield a Hongkonger Christian can go to pursue Christian life with another Christian, to have fruitful theological discussions with one’s brothers and sisters in the Father’s house, or to proselytize those outside the fold. For Hongkongers, the limits of such geographical transcendence tend to be drawn at the inability to go beyond expressing Christianity in Cantonese. St. Matthew’s Church may be the Father’s house, but all of his children who live at this house have to speak Cantonese to communicate about the Father.

Transnational Urban Peace: Social Conservatism, Sexual Purity, and the Extension of Christian Territorialities to the Cit(ies)

The geographies that this chapter has described are not confined to the personal imaginations or even the congregational life at St. Matthew’s Church. They are part of a larger “bubble,” a node that is most clearly seen not simply at the metropolitan scale in relations among Chinese congregations but at the transnational scale, between Hong Kong and Vancouver. From here, this chapter advances directly from the congregational scale to the transnational scale, although the social action described in this section also emphasizes the metropolitan scale. St. Matthew’s Church may be a Cantonese Christian home where many of the family members are Hongkonger Christians who were first exposed to Christianity in Hong Kong. But as I shall now demonstrate, transnational networks between Christian circles in Hong Kong and Vancouver are still very live. These networks, I argue, not only reinforce Cantonese as the *lingua franca* but

advocate a socially conservative activism to extend Christian territoriality with an emphasis on Christian conversion from personal geographies and congregational homes to public urban space.

Wedlock Day illustrates the transnational network of which St. Matthew's Church is a part. On 11 November 2008 (11-11), St. Matthew's Church, along with several other Chinese churches in Richmond, hosted Wedlock Day, a transnational celebration between Hong Kong and Vancouver of traditional marriage. The quadruple "one" date was picked for the slogan, "One Man, One Woman, One Life, One World" (idiomatically, "One Man, One Man forever"). The event featured ushers dressed as maids of honour, two children who began the ceremonies as flower girl and ring bearer, and choir presentations of church music and children's songs. Held in Cantonese with broken Mandarin translation on the part of most of the speakers, the event gathered about 1400 to 1600 Chinese Christians in Vancouver to celebrate the goodness of traditional marriage, to discourage divorce, and to rally against legalized same-sex unions in Canada. The event also celebrated the longevity of Christian marriage: a couple that had been married for 74 years stood up and was given a prize after the ceremonies. Chinese media outlets such as Channel M, Fairchild, *Ming Pao*, and *Sing Tao* pre-advertised the event on radio, television, and newspaper, were at the event recording it, and provided editorial reflections afterward.



Figure 5.2: Ushers at Wedlock Day Dressed as Maids of Honour (Source: *Wedlock 夫妻節*. 11.11., 2009)

2008
第一屆
加拿大
夫妻節
11.11
一夫一妻·一生一世

恩愛傳承

Love Passing On
Love In City

全城恩愛

讓夫妻恩愛的情絲，
交織着基督的慈繩；
作子女婚姻的引線，
全城得恩愛的傳承。

日期：2008年11月11日
時間：晚上七時三十分
地點：Fraserview MB Church 11295 Mellis Drive, Richmond
對象：全城夫妻、未婚下一代
內容：愛歌洋溢·珍愛信息·山盟海誓·慈繩傳情
講員：吳振智牧師（夫妻節11·11創立人）
回應：謝仲賢博士（婚姻及家庭輔導專家）
分享：葉承基伉儷（前入籍法庭庭長·現任主禮官）
音樂：以馬內利堂讚頌團
查詢：604-328-3286
網頁：wedlock11-11.org
自由入座·額滿即止·費用全免

聖公會以馬內利堂 主辦

讓我們紀念風雨同路的另一半
提醒大家重視夫妻關係
並藉著每年的節期去慶祝·培育和修補關係
同時匯聚各方家長推動貞潔運動
在社會上重新肯定家庭婚姻的核心價值

協辦：家庭更新協會加拿大分會·加拿大中信中心·影音使團
〈蒙恩得大衛城文化中心授權同步舉行〉

Figure 5.3: A Poster for Wedlock Day (Source: *Wedlock 夫妻節. 11.11.*, 2009)

Two video presentations were given in untranslated Cantonese. One was from the conservative Member of Parliament who represented Richmond, Alice Wong, who had a significant number of Chinese Christians (including some of my interviewees) campaigning for her during her election campaign in 2008. She and her husband spoke in Cantonese about the preciousness of marriage to an adoring audience; audible sighs of admiration from many of the women and roars of laughter from the entire gathering could be heard throughout their entire presentation. They emphasized the importance of communication to avoid misunderstanding in marriage and the need to learn to live together based on the biblical principle of self-emptying love and helping a neighbour in need. The traditional family was important, they said, because—even though they had no children of their own—young people needed to grow up in a warm family. Her emphasis on the family, I argue, contributed to Alice Wong's victory in 2008 (when she defeated her contender, another Hongkonger Christian, Raymond Chan, of the Liberal Party) on a platform of family values with a campaign run by many Hongkonger Christians who shared the family-oriented geographical imaginations I have described in this chapter. Wong not only taught the audience about marriage; she represented their conservatism in Parliament.

This was followed by a transnationally-videoed presentation by a prominent Christian evangelist and activist in Hong Kong, Paul Ng, the spearhead behind the youth-oriented Purity Movement in Hong Kong that discourages premarital sex. He was also the organizer of the simultaneous Wedlock Day gathering in Hong Kong and had visited St. Matthew's Church earlier in May 2008 with a series of talks, some of which emphasized sexual purity and marital union. From Hong Kong, Ng encouraged the Vancouver gathering to learn from the love of Jesus, to get married, and to spread the love of Jesus in marriage to the city—and for students, in their schools. He ended the presentation calling the gathering to sing a militant song, a song that

named the city and the schools—both in Hong Kong and in Vancouver—the holy land where the love of God would be spread through the practice of traditional marriage, a display of Christ’s love that would encourage Christian conversions:

**Hosanna, the King of Kings
Rebekah and Isaac sing
In God, we own the holy ring
Wherever I go I will bring.**

**My city/campus, the holy land
Will glorify Jesus again
O Lord, my Father, here I stand
I stand on the Promised Land.**

Following a trumpet call that led into the American anthem, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” married couples renewed their wedding vows, and singles were encouraged to purchase purity rings at the door to ensure their virginity until marriage.

Wedlock Day represents the metropolitan and transnational scales of which Hongkonger Christians both within and without St. Matthew’s Church are inevitably a part. Indeed, these personal connections with Hong Kong have led St. Matthew’s Church itself to participate as a congregation in a transnational bubble of Hong Kong Christian relations that flew three speakers to Richmond in one year and to be heavily involved in the organization of the first transnational annual Wedlock Day in Vancouver. One such speaker the congregation flew over was Paul Ng himself. The other two were a couple, Peter Ho and Shirley Loo, the husband a pastor of the 4000-person Hong Kong megachurch Tung Fook Evangelical Free Church, the wife a popular columnist in a Hong Kong Chinese Christian periodical read by Hongkonger Christians both in Hong Kong and transnationally.

In another presentation at St. Matthew’s Church in May 2008, Paul Ng had presented a model of sexual abstinence to young, unmarried people. Presenting a humorous slide, he told the

audience about how forms of physical touch between a man and a woman could advance to unwanted, illicit sexual intercourse: a boy and a girl (or so young people were called) would first get close to each other (here he pressed his remote, and an icon displaying “getting close to each other” in Chinese characters appeared on the slide), proceed to hand-holding (another icon), engage in an embrace (another icon), advance to a kiss (another icon), push up to fondling (another icon), take it up to the level of sexual contact (another icon), and wind up in sexual intercourse (the last icon). The further a boy and a girl went, the further they would push the boundaries. “How far will you go before you stop?” he asked rhetorically. “If you don’t want to have sexual intercourse,” he continued, “then don’t have sexual contact,” he said, eliminating that icon from his slide, to roars of approving laughter. “If you don’t want to have sexual contact, don’t fondle. If you don’t want to fondle, don’t kiss. If you don’t want to kiss, don’t embrace. And if you don’t want to embrace, then don’t hold hands.” He paused as the audience finished their shrieks of laughter. “All you should do,” he concluded, “is to get close to each other, and even then, be careful.” Mei Ling approved of this session, a speech that was similar to ones that Ng had made in schools in Hong Kong through his parachurch organization, the City of David. Mei Ling argued that Ng’s work was particularly important in decreasing the rate of premarital sex among young people because, she said, premarital sex would cause the family to fragment. The family, she argued, was the “most basic” unit of society and its dissolution would turn citizens into “selfish” subjects: **“It can be like musical chairs, everyone will just trade spouses, trade partners, you don’t need to commit.”** Her religious concern is not merely *moral*, then, but is related to the peace of the city, a peace that can only be found in keeping the family intact. She praised Paul Ng because she saw him as a figure who could extend Christian territorialities to keep more families intact throughout society and stabilize the city socially.

Indeed, one could argue that it is precisely because of her sexual ethics that she later said that refused to let her husband live a transnational astronaut lifestyle: fearing the distance cited by Waters (2002), Mei Ling values her marriage and bases her understanding of how society can be stabilized on the peace that she experiences in her marriage, a peace in which, as she puts it, one is relaxed enough to “**have a chat on the bed at night.**” Imagining the peacefulness not only at the congregational scale but at the *metropolitan* scale to be at stake, she supports Ng’s *transnational* efforts to promote premarital abstinence in Hong Kong’s schools and public spaces as well as his talks in Vancouver and his later video appearance at Wedlock Day. As Mei Ling argues, social stability is connected to sexual purity in traditional Christian marriage because sexual purity holds the family together. What happens at intimate personal scales has macro-geographical social implications.

The transnational bubble of which Paul Ng and Wedlock Day represent in turn frames the everyday lives of Hongkonger Christians because it is these transnational Cantonese voices advocating social conservatism, sexual purity, and the extension of Christian territorialities to the cities and schools that feed Hongkonger Christian geographical imaginations. Indeed, with the exception of Southern California megachurch pastor Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* as an American text, an overwhelming number of interviewees cited Li Shi-king of Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong as a Christian authority whom they trusted to nurture their Christian spirituality. Sophie gave voice to this geographical attachment:

And also those people usually...those people that I listen to more have a more similar background as I am. When I say similar, they are from Hong Kong. They are not...they have very strong Western influence, just like Li Shi-king, just like all those people, they have degrees from overseas, and I feel the pulse, it’s just the pulse, if you ask me exactly what that is, I don’t know, I just feel that he understands me and I understand how he’s feeling when he expresses a certain idea in a certain way, and the examples that they teach, that they pick, are sort of the same social status that I am in. And it clicks. But let’s say, I was exposed to those

conferences run by Willow Creek a few years back, I went to their small group conference, I went to their Summit Conference, they were good because those speakers are brilliant speakers, they could catch your attention, they are very self-confident, but still, those examples, the life examples and everything, their families, they're different from mine. The examples that they quote, the neighbourhood that they live in, the church people that they meet, so very different from mine, and for those Chinese preachers and so on, the way that they identify with the difficulties of the Hong Kong people they are facing, I can readily transform them and then use it for the people that I meet everyday who face a dilemma, just like I am, where do you call home? Work first? Family first? All those struggles are so real, so personally related to me.

Sophie's sentiments were indeed voiced by Johnny earlier about how he felt that God speaks to him in Cantonese. Underlying this linguistic and cultural geography is a way of imagining the world as a Hongkonger, a way of being a Christian given linguistic—and cultural—constraints. Goh (2003) has noted that Singaporeans educated in Singaporean Christian schools that taught them English were most likely to enter religiously into youth ministries situated in a global Anglophonic evangelical bubble with its various English-language Christian media. A parallel on which I have been elaborating may be the trans-Pacific Cantonese-speaking evangelical bubble in the Hong Kong-Vancouver case. Given both the linguistic and the imagined cultural values, Hongkonger Christians may find themselves in a Hong Kong-Vancouver trans-Pacific Christian bubble, a bubble that advocates for the extension of Christian territories through social conservatism and sexual purity.

But such social conservatism was not simply about family preservation; as I have shown earlier, this Christian geography is maintained and extended through *Christian conversion*. Indeed, such socially conservative concerns stem from a desire to see the Christian faith spread through the city, whether in Vancouver or Hong Kong, through Christian conversions. It is here that the exchange between the transnational and metropolitan scales can be more clearly seen. For the speakers who came to St. Matthew's Church as well as during the celebration of

Wedlock Day, “the city” (the metropolitan scale) may well have been a conflation of both Hong Kong and Vancouver (the transnational scale). Another transnational speaker, Peter Ho, called the congregation to Christian social action like the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. “My prayer,” he said, “is that in Hong Kong, all the prisons will be out of business. I believe it. I pray for it.” He explained how this would happen: all the Christians would put into practice the teaching of Christ through the Good Samaritan to treat all fellow human beings as one’s neighbours. This would affect all the mob bosses (Cantonese, *dai goh*, literally, “big brothers”) in Hong Kong, who (being spiritually moved by Christian love) would all convert to Christianity, and their gangs would all cease to engage in organized crime. There would be no more reason to put them in jail, for Christ would reform them. “Do you want to see the prisons emptied?” he asked the congregation. “If you want to see the prisons emptied, we have to spread the love that Jesus is talking about here to the city.” A parishioner in her 30s approached me after the talk, puzzled as to which prisons in Vancouver Ho could have been referring to, to which I responded that I was also at a loss for an answer. The parishioner laughed, explaining to me that perhaps emptying the prisons was a concern for Hongkongers in Hong Kong, but not for Hongkongers in Vancouver. But for Ho, the two cities may well have been one, for the extension of Christian territoriality at the metropolitan scale would certainly result in social benefits such as the emptying of the prisons. The core issue was *Christian conversion*: Christian space would be extended by making more people Christian converts. The more converts there were, the better society would become.

The same reasoning applied to a more pertinent concern that Ho expressed, an issue that this section has also been implicitly discussing with Wedlock Day and Ng’s campaigns for sexual purity: the Canadian legalization of same-sex unions. “The legalization of same-sex

unions,” he said publicly, “is a very grave [*yimjong*] matter. It shows how far Canada has gone away from God.” He continued, “I had tears in my eyes while singing the Battle Hymn of the Republic,” a song that was repeated on Wedlock Day to signal the militancy of this transnational network’s conception of Christian marriage (*i.e.* that Christian marriage would extend Christian territorialities into the city), “but I know that God loves you all. I want to give Canada a blessing because this is where we studied.”³⁷ He exhorted the congregation to faithfulness in the battle for traditional marriage. Such faithfulness, he implied, would improve marriage, and the love that spilled over from these marriages would create more changed lives (read: Christian conversions) from which healthy traditional marriages would be the norm. These statements from Ho (both on the prisons and on the issue of same-sex unions) seem to advocate socio-political aims, but the motivations behind them both were *religious*. For Ho, God calls Hongkonger Christians to empty the prisons in the same way that he calls for Hongkonger Christians to restore sexual morality to Vancouver. However, these calls to action are not merely calls to political action: they are calls to extend Hongkonger Christian territoriality from the home to the city. It is not enough to build a “home away from home” in which Hongkonger Christians can gather; it is important for this home to be a base from which to extend Christian peace to larger scales, not only for the conversion of parishioners’ families but for the conversion of the *city*. The question, of course, is: which city, which metropolis? The answer of this thesis is this: while there are inter-church gatherings among the 106 Chinese congregations in Vancouver such as Wedlock Day, these churches are locked into a larger bubble that is trans-Pacific and Cantonese-speaking and that advocates a political extension of Christian territoriality both to Hong Kong and to Metro Vancouver. The answer is *both* cities because Hong Kong and Vancouver are two major nodes in trans-Pacific Cantonese Christianity. Political action is

³⁷ Peter Ho and Shirley Loo had earned their undergraduate degrees in Calgary.

religious action, and religious action is the extension of the Father's house through converting the city to Christian faith as advocated by the transnational religious network. Such an extension of Christian territorialities would produce the social changes—empty prisons, thriving traditional marriages, families living in harmony—that are demonstrations of Christian peace.

Conclusion: Spiritual Peace, Linguistic Home, and Transnational Urban Politics

This chapter has argued that parishioners at St. Matthew's Church imagine Christianity as a religion that is able to bring peace first to themselves, then to their families, then to the congregation, and finally to the city (both Hong Kong and Vancouver) by engaging in a network of trans-Pacific Cantonese Christianity. Both Hong Kong and Vancouver need the Christian territoriality that they desire to spread, these parishioners contend, because of what they see as social unrest, especially in the breakdown of the traditional family. But they find Christianity specifically to be the way toward to social stability because of their upbringing in Hong Kong. Hong Kong was a British colony where Christianity was the religion of the colonizers as well as of most of the prestigious schools. Far from having Christianity imposed on them, these parishioners felt from personal encounters with Christians, both Chinese and non-Chinese, that not only were Christians kind, gentle, and generous but that Christianity was the religion of the only true God who, unlike Chinese folk idols (such as Guan Yin), could give true, lasting, and eternal peace. This peace, they argued, brought stability to their families for eternity, and it is this peace that they promoted on Wedlock Day. In the same vein, St. Matthew's Church is a congregation where this peace is concentrated because it is a family of Christians who serve each other through the maintenance of personal relationships with each other and by volunteer service at the church, but this congregation is not merely a social network. It is a spiritual home, the

Father's house, but one in which Cantonese is the *lingua franca*. In this chapter, then, we journeyed from the most personal scale of the geographical imaginations of education, emotions, family, and migration logics and saw how these imaginations materialized into a Cantonese version of the Father's house known as St. Matthew's Church. At the end of the chapter, I also demonstrated that St. Matthew's Church is involved in a larger transnational network of Hong Kong Christianity that is interested mostly in social conservatism, sexual purity, and the extension of a Christian territoriality to the city. Such a spreading of the faith, I have suggested, would extend a spiritual peace experienced by parishioners who are themselves converted Christians to the experience of the entire city, both Hong Kong and Vancouver.

However, as we began this chapter, this peace is specifically rooted in a Hongkonger imagination of Christianity. Alexis, the one Singaporean interviewee, felt out of place at St. Matthew's Church among parishioners who had been exposed to Christianity in Hong Kong especially through religious schooling although she too grew up in religious schools in Singapore. Like the Hongkongers, Christianity for Alexis is a discipline in which one finds communion with God:

I think it's a time when you can really reflect on the sins that you have committed. Because communion sort of reminds you that you have to come in front of God and sort of tell him, repent, repentance, and ask him for forgiveness. Once you don't have the communion, you lose track of all this somehow. It sort of asks you to be in the presence of God. And every time we have communion I have a dialogue with him. So I find that it's very good for me. I have dialogue with him. And I ask him for forgiveness. And I take the communion, it's sort of like washing up, asking him to cleanse me. So I find that I like the communion.

These thoughts are reminiscent of the Hongkonger mysticism we have examined in this chapter. But unlike the Hongkongers who maintain St. Matthew's Church as a Cantonese Christian home, Alexis has always been looking for an *English-speaking* Chinese church, not a Cantonese one, because, as she explained, her first language in Singapore was English, as encouraged by Prime

Minister Lee Kuan Yew to promote business connections between Singaporeans and the Anglophonic business world. Because of her higher comfort level with English, she has sought in vain for an English-speaking Chinese church in Metro Vancouver.³⁸

I want an English-speaking Chinese church, which I have no problem in Singapore finding one like that. But here, you feel it's very paradoxical. Coming to an English-speaking country, and you can't even find a church like that. You know, well, Singapore is mostly 80% Chinese. And most of the churches, the services are conducted in English or Mandarin. So it's no problem for me. I do have this problem, because I don't want to be in an English church. I've been to a couple of them. I find that I can't...somehow there's a barrier when you want to get into the groups, I just can't...I have difficulty with that. I don't feel welcomed. But if I come to a Chinese church, I do feel welcome, but the only problem, I grew up in an English-speaking environment, and I come to Chinese, it's like people like you, you're educated here, there's no connection at all.

Alexis signals her “out of place” feelings with a transnational Hongkonger Christian faith, a way of religious practice that is not confined to St. Matthew’s Church but makes up 74% of the Chinese churches in Metro Vancouver and is operationalized on nights like Wedlock Day. Such signs point to the particularity of transnational Hongkonger Christian faith. The spiritual peace that is actively being spread by transnational Hongkonger Christians may indeed seem geographically transcendent. As Levitt (2006) rightly notes, many people in North America may feel nervous about the spread of such transnational religious networks, networks that in many North American imaginations are bigoted and cause social tension. The active (and at times militant) network that I have described may seem especially troubling to some who are unfamiliar with evangelical religious imaginations and logics.

But I argue that there is little cause for nervousness. The linguistic, political, cultural, and urban geographies that are specific to Hong Kong and that intertwine with Christian territoriality create a geography of religion that is contingent on Hong Kong, although it may

³⁸ According to the Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship’s (2007) directory, there is only one such church in Metro Vancouver. It is in Richmond on No. 5 Road, commonly known as “the highway to heaven” because of all the religious institutions represented on that road between Blundell Road and Williams Road.

have similarities with non-Hongkonger conceptions of Christianity. St. Matthew's Church and its parishioners, I have argued, are best understood in this Hong Kong-Vancouver geographical context. Indeed, as much as there is talk about conversionism and urban politics, such work is limited by the reality that St. Matthew's Church is a *Cantonese* version of the Father's house involved in a transnational *Cantonese* Christian network with other *Cantonese*-speaking congregations in Metro Vancouver. Christian spirituality may seem to transcend geography, but its territoriality is limited by a Chinese dialect that was only spoken as a mother tongue by 6% (125,940) of the total population (2,097,960) in Metro Vancouver as of 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007b). Placed in the Canadian metropolitan context (not only the Hong Kong one), *pace* Levitt, there is nothing to be feared about Hongkonger Christians, militant as some might be. With the exception of Alice Wong's minority voice in the Canadian Parliament, the conversionism and political geographies in which St. Matthew's Church may be engaged may well be limited by the Chinese population in Vancouver, if not only the Cantonese-speaking segment of this population. Indeed, as the next chapter will show, the active spread of these socially conservative, conversion-focused territorialities is hampered by the reality that the Chinese population, much less the Hongkonger population, is still a visible minority in multicultural Metro Vancouver.³⁹ The spread of these Hongkonger Christian territorialities is perhaps more about preserving their voice in a multicultural discussion about social change than about imposing their hegemonies on Canada. After all, transnational Hong Kong Christianity is not a hegemon; rather, it has become part of the Canadian mosaic.

³⁹ I am indebted to Howard Stewart, a Ph.D. student at UBC Geography, for sharing this insight at a home seminar. To more fully flesh out this insight, while the militant conservatism of some Hongkonger Christians may be distasteful to some readers, the *Canadian* context in which they find themselves to be visible minorities may mean that they are sometimes victims of racism. As such, they are not dominating voices, but voices that need to speak louder to be heard. While I may not agree with all of the theological and political imaginations of these Hongkonger Christians, I agree that this Hongkonger Christian conservatism should not be written off as simply distasteful, but should be thoughtfully examined and engaged for a richer multicultural discussion on Canadian social politics.

**Chapter 6:
The Bubble Is Bursting:
Challenges to the Hongkonger Christian Territoriality in Multicultural Canada**

While the previous chapter examined through my interview data and ethnographic work the territorialization of Hongkonger Christianity at multiple scales, this chapter focuses on the challenges to that geography. What peace is found in Canada, established in Cantonese Christian congregations, and networked in trans-Pacific Hongkonger Christianity is also challenged by life in Canada. As we have shown earlier, despite some interviewees' insistence that in the Christian faith, geography does not matter, for practical reasons of language and imagined political boundaries, geography still matters, often painfully, as in the case of St. Matthew's Church. This chapter presents two challenges to the Hongkonger Christian "bubble," signs that perhaps the bubble is bursting. The first is a more obvious challenge in terms of the second generation at St. Matthew's Church that speaks a mixture of English and Cantonese. The second, however, strikes at the heart of what it means to be a Hongkonger Christian: the influx of a Mainland Chinese migrant population into the Hongkonger church. Indeed, I contend that the real challenge lies in maintaining an exclusive Hongkonger Christian geography framed against an uncivilized Mainlander who has made his or her way to Canada. Maintenance of the Hongkonger Christian geography is a challenge because "bubbles" built however fervently in multicultural Canada remain porous because of the *de facto* pluralistic way of life in a multicultural society. The issue at stake is not merely that the church wants to remain geopolitically Hongkonger. Rather, the issue is the defence of what Hongkonger Christians have sought to maintain through their geography of religion that is intertwined with their personal linguistic and political geographies: a Cantonese Christian "home away from home."⁴⁰ After

⁴⁰ While it would be tempting to toy with the idea of the second generation and Mainland Chinese migrants as being in what Agamben (1998) would call a *state of exception*, I note that such a move would be inappropriate in the case

exploring these issues, this chapter assesses attempts by Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church to reconceive what their church home may look like with Mainlanders in their midst. The key issue that is needed for a new family harmony, parishioners concede, is not merely a socially-conservative, conversion-focused political geography of religion that extends through Metro Vancouver and across to Hong Kong. It is rather that in multicultural Canada, they need to develop trust with people from whom they have divergent political, if not religious, geographies.

The Second Generation: An Immediate Challenge

The challenge of an English-speaking second generation in the ethnic church is not unknown to the literature on congregational studies, nor is it unknown to the literature on migration studies in its assessment of the segmented assimilation⁴¹ of the new second generation (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller, 2005). Carjaval (1994) first coined the term "silent exodus" on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times* in reference to the efforts of Korean churches in Southern California to stem the tide of second-generation Koreans leaving Korean Christian congregations. Such a "silent exodus," many have noted, occurs because the second generation neither possesses the same native language competence as the first generation does nor do they have the same social needs. Chong (1998) suggests that such a phenomenon might

of Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's. These groups in multicultural Canada present *challenges* to a Hongkonger Christian imagined geography. At times, this results in exclusion, but at other times, it results in an evaluation of the spiritual validity of the imagination. The second generation and mainland Chinese migrants certainly are *not homo sacer*—they are not seen as outside of the church's spiritual jurisdiction—and the church, while inadvertently ostracizing some of these non-Hongkongers, seeks not to exclude them but to change them by including them in church life. These assimilative approaches are quite the opposite of Agamben's *homo sacer* whose state of exception can lead to their merciless death by anyone because they are no longer under the protection of the Roman state.

⁴¹ *Segmented assimilation* is the sociological concept that holds that the second generation of migrants to North America may follow different trajectories of assimilation into the host society, some choosing a life of socio-economic success, others trapped in a life of poverty.

also be occurring because ethnic and religious practices appear to be intertwined in the Korean church so that religious practices support ethnic identity. She argues that the Korean church at which she did her ethnography used the Bible selectively to provide “a powerful religious sanction and legitimation for traditional Korean morality.” A Bible study she was at for junior high boys stressed the development of a submissive mind; the Bible study leader, she records, “pontificated” after the study of a biblical passage:

Do you listen to your parents? Are you submissive to your parents? How can Jesus Christ’s example teach us how to be more obedient to our parents? God has to be within you for you to be motivated to be obedient. To obey God and to have Him in you is to obey your parents! (Chong, 1998: 276).

In addition, Chong argues that the authoritarian framework of the Korean church, its unwritten rules of social etiquette, and its reinforcement of traditional Korean gender roles made it appear that “one ‘must be Korean to become Christian’” (1998: 275). Chong suggests that the second generation experiences ambivalence with regard to the Korean identity because they may “feel that the cultural aspects of the Korean church hinder them from becoming ‘true’ Christians.”

One of Chong’s interviewees observes that many of the second generation throw the baby (Christianity) out with the bath-water (Korean culture) when they leave the church:

You know, many of them [church-goers] can’t distinguish between Koreanness and Christianity. Their idea of Christianity is bound up within the Korean church. To them, their image of God is often their pastor. So when they reject Korean culture, Christianity often goes along with them. (Chong, 1998: 281).

In this Korean case study, Chong suggests that members of the second generation are silently leaving the immigrant Christian church because they feel oppressed. Some may want to become Christians, she implies, but the patriarchal regime (she argues) in the Korean church in the context of their North American experience cannot be stomached by the second generation that has been educated in North America. The North American experience with its anti-patriarchal

politics is what can make the second generation a challenge to the first.

Indeed, as Chong hints, the second generation often seeks a way of being Christian that is not as overtly tied to being East Asian. Chai (1998) argues that there is enough *Christian* competition for the second generation in the case of her Boston Korean church between the church and parachurch campus ministries. The Korean church often “loses” in competition with these parachurch ministries, often to English-speaking college clubs that offer intellectual discussion and free meals. Such a loss is not unique to the American context. In a Canadian context, Beattie and Ley (2003) and Ley (2008) argues that while the first generation benefited from the social services of the ethnic church in Vancouver, the second generation can already speak English by virtue of being raised in Canada and is not in need of the social services that the ethnic church provides; this is true, they demonstrate, not only in the German church in Vancouver in the 1960s-1970s but in contemporary Chinese and Korean congregations in Vancouver. Such ethnic churches face extinction, they suggest, if they refuse to change. What the second generation needs, such studies have often rightly argued, is a *distinctiveness*, their own identity apart from the first generation’s (Chai, 2002). Such pursuit of distinctiveness has sometimes led to the planting of Asian American churches that either seek racial justice or a contemporary evangelical worship context with English-speaking people of the same race and colour (Jeung, 2005). The second generation in transnational churches in North America, such studies demonstrate, must develop their own sense of ethnic identity in the English language and with the tools given to them by their North American experience.

But in the case of St. Matthew’s Church, a unique distinctiveness has emerged in that some of the second generation themselves encourage each other to keep an open mind to the Hongkonger Chinese first generation in the name of Canadian multiculturalism. After observing

several teens in the service falling asleep or playing handheld video games, I asked two older CBCs, Tom and Jerry, what they would say to them, as they had also been raised in English-speaking Canada but were active participants in the Cantonese service. Instead of encouraging them to attend the English service at 5 PM, they invoked Canadian multiculturalism and advised them to keep an open mind:

I think there's a bunch of them that understand it. It's whether or not they choose. If they choose to go to a Chinese congregation, then they'll get something. It's all about the mind. If your mind really wants to go for the Chinese, you'll get something. Having an open mind. I mean, there's a lot of people, especially the younger ones who really are...can I say narrow-minded? Just narrow-minded. They're just not open to the Chinese service. Sometimes it's frustrating. And...but...you just shake your head and just say, "OK, fine." Definitely, they'll get benefit out of it. If they understand the benefits of having multiculturalism and being able to multiculturalize yourself, huge gain! They become mature.

Their sister, Julia, a 20-year-old CBC, takes them further to task:

I would feel...I would say, "Do you know what kind of human [*yan*] you are? Do you know what kind of human your pa is? Do you know your daddy, mommy, in China or Hong Kong sacrificed so much so that they can pay for you to study in Canada? Do you know that Hong Kong is such a different place? Have you been to Hong Kong? Do you know that they have a very civilized, cultured country? They have a very high educational standard, very high quality, very high living, do you know?"

A young newcomer, Clark, who has only been at the church for two months and grew up in another evangelical church's English service, corroborates their remarks because he can speak both Cantonese and English and attends a house group that speaks a mixture: "**So that works quite well for me,**" he emphasizes. Tom, Jerry, Julia, and Clark all invoke their own *multicultural* identities. Educated in Canadian schools, they find themselves *embodying* multiculturalism because they are able to function linguistically both in English and in Cantonese. Speaking Cantonese at church is a way of being proud of that hybrid identity. As Julia suggests, the second generation must demonstrate its pride in being Chinese people from

Hong Kong by extending their experience transnationally. Julia does this by keeping up to date with Hong Kong entertainment and politics. Tom, Jerry, and Clark simply express this pride by speaking Cantonese at church. But for these members of the second generation, it is not *merely* about being a Hongkonger. It is being proud to demonstrate that one is a multicultural Canadian able to participate both in the English-speaking mainstream and the transnational Cantonese-speaking religious bubble.

Such invocations demonstrate that perhaps speaking English is not the only way to develop an ethnic identity for the second generation in North America. David, in his mid-twenties, attended school in Richmond. He argues that the issue with the Chinese church is not so much that it is Chinese but that it is monotheistic:

Reason I say that is as a Christian, you're getting slotted into one of the many religions people accept. So if you believe in something, would you want that to be their belief? And especially in Christianity, that is a core belief, right? If you believe in this, it's because it's good. Other people should believe in that as well. And in Canada, you can't really do that. You have the freedom to go about doing that, but conversely, people will tell you, "You know what, I have the freedom to believe in other things." Again, it's difficult...[but] say, like in different countries, say, like in a Christian country...but then you don't really want that because it's too extreme. So is Canada the best place to have religion? I don't think so...in terms of, say, being a Christian.

It is hard to be a Christian in multicultural Canada, he says, because people might be offended at a Christian insistence that Christians know the truth, much less if Christians spread their faith through an insistence on Christian conversion (see chapter 5). But as I listened to David, the real issue that he felt was difficult about being a Christian in Canada was not the exclusivity of Christianity but the exclusivity of his upbringing at St. Matthew's Church. Despite his Canadian education, he (like Tom, Jerry, Julia, and Clark) also prefers the Chinese service because he was raised attending a Cantonese liturgy every Sunday:

I mean, there are things that I like doing better in one particular language over the other, say, I was just saying the other night...I was saying that I like singing the Chinese Lord's Prayer, the *jutoumun*. But that's a personal preference. I know lots of people who hate singing it...But some people will have a big struggle doing that, but for some reason, I enjoy doing it, maybe when I was a kid, I read it off the thing and sang along, and the words aren't hard in Chinese, so...and I understood all of it when I was a kid.

Such a revelation sounds similar to the statements some Hongkongers who prefer Cantonese made because they are bound by that linguistic geography in everyday Christian conversation despite their transcendent spiritual geographies. Unlike those Hongkongers, David is not bound to the Hongkonger bubble—he does not see the church as a home *away from home*—indeed, Canada is his home as he attends UBC, speaks fluent English, has taken side jobs in English, and spends time with his multicultural friends. Yet David also found himself bound by that linguistic geography because for him, the church is still a place that he can call home, a home *within a home* in Canada, so to speak. His *religious* preference comes with a linguistic geography.

This preference for the Cantonese service is often seen as a good attitude toward the Chinese church home by the first generation. For an example outside St. Matthew's Church, Janice, who had started a Chinese Anglican church in Edmonton, affirms that the second generation is very much able to worship in Cantonese:

So our church had some young CBCs. When they came, they couldn't speak one phrase of Chinese, they came with their parents. Very quickly, they knew the whole service. That time, we had no English; the service was all Chinese—Cantonese. They knew the whole thing because they memorized it. Even [my son]. He can do it even now. He can be a server, he can do everything, because he memorized everything. So he can do it. So it's possible—CBCs and people from Hong Kong—they can be mixed up.

Jamie, the woman who insisted that the church was a Chinese mission, insisted also that the ability to worship in Cantonese was a matter of “**attitude**,” that CBCs sleeping in the Chinese service was an adolescent problem that needed to be quickly resolved by their own families to

ensure family harmony. Indeed, it seemed that these “adolescent problems” needed a double conversion, conversion both to Christianity and conversion to the Cantonese language. As I have shown, this mentality was not merely the first generation imposing Cantonese on the second, but some of the second generation also seeing the Cantonese home as their Christian home in multicultural Canada. Distinctiveness for the second generation at St. Matthew’s Church seems to be pride in one’s Chinese heritage in the midst of multicultural Canada. Exercising that pride could be manifested in exercising the privilege of speaking Cantonese to one’s spiritual family.

But such distinctiveness has its fissures. Observers from the first generation tended to disagree with the assessment of these “open-minded,” multicultural second-generation Chinese Christians. What statements from those who can speak a mixture of English and Cantonese mask is that St. Matthew’s Church has actually very few second-generation Chinese Canadians who attend the church. Indeed, as Jerry confesses (from the Tom and Jerry brothers above):

Well, I think the church is more focused on Hong Kong people. I mean, you can go to another church, like on that street, No. 5 Road, there’s a ton of churches with lots of CBCs. I think it’s just our church is more focused on Chinese-speaking families, that’s all. That’s why you don’t really see that they come here.

Indeed, in 2004, many such CBCs left for the English-speaking ministries of the four Chinese Christian churches on Richmond’s No. 5 Road, commonly referred to as “the highway to heaven” for its variety of religious institutions one after another on the street.⁴² Jerry’s comment about Chinese-speaking families is exactly the source of concern for many of the older crowd. For them, the second generation in these Chinese families is educated in English in Canadian high schools, which often means that the Cantonese service is too linguistically complicated for them. Jennifer is a mother of two such children. She discusses the complexity of her daughter

⁴² There are four Chinese Christian churches (3 in Cantonese, 1 in English, as the primary language of operation), 1 mosque, 1 Vedic centre, 1 Sikh gudwara, 1 Buddhist temple, a Taiwanese Buddhist monastery in construction, 2 non-Chinese Christian churches, and a Christian secondary school on Richmond’s No. 5 Road on two large blocks between Blundell Road and Williams Road.

Bonnie's⁴³ ethnic Chinese friends in Richmond and reflects that perhaps it is because she raised them to be English-speaking in non-Hongkonger circles (aside from St. Matthew's) that

Bonnie's first language is English:

I myself have not gone back to Hong Kong. With what I told you, not that I deliberately isolated myself, it just so happens that I don't care, and my circle...my tiny circle...doesn't have that background. So we don't have Chinese TV, no Chinese radio, so my kids didn't get exposed to that part. Bonnie always says her first language is English. Ummmm...they don't have grandma to raise them. They're raised by Filipinos. So they don't have that *gong gong yeye* [grandfather] Chinese background. And the circle of friends in elementary: French immersion. There's Chinese, but the majority are *gwei* [ghost; a derogatory Cantonese idiom used to refer to non-Chinese people]. But I can see the shift, right? When they're in high school, they shift toward the Chinese, but the Chinese is not Hong Kong Chinese. They are Canadian-born. You know how it is, right? Canadian-born kind of have their own bonding. They're not really into Chinese style, speaking Chinese, speaking Mandarin. They cannot mingle with that type. Just like Bonnie says: she hates those people, walking around school, speaking Cantonese. You know, same as the workplace, you know. But I guess the circle of friends is Asian background, it's more Western Asian. It's just maybe we don't have that connection, so yeah.

But despite Jennifer's insistence on her parenting strategies, she also notes that it is Bonnie's friends who are English-speaking but ethnically Chinese. Such an insight means that Jennifer and Bonnie's experience is not limited to their family. Johnny sought to raise his daughter in the North American context but is consistently frustrated by a rebellion that he does not explain in terms of her adolescent psychology but her geographical context. He begins by complaining that he could not spank his daughter Amanda:

We can't do anything like that here. Even I tried to lecture, the kids say, "Hey, you're lecturing me. Stop." So difficult. I have to talk to a pastor about how to deal with Amanda. I think people here think of themselves, so self-centered. In Hong Kong, no one can do that, everything comes from your father and mother. You just follow what the elders are doing. But here the education system and the definition of freedom is totally different from in Hong Kong.

⁴³ As with my interviewees, I have chosen pseudonyms for members of the second generation discussed by their parents in their interviews.

The best he can do, he says, is to bring her to the Cantonese service, even though he knows that she will not understand all the Cantonese and may fall asleep (a phenomenon I consistently observed for six months until she refused to join him on Sundays). He explained that this is his attempt at creating a parent-child bond:

Johnny: Yeah, I think mainly the people surrounding you, they're all that you're used to seeing every week. But the English service is all kids!

JT: But Amanda goes to Chinese service.

Johnny: Yeah, but she don't understand.

JT: So mind if I ask, why is she...because you're her dad...so do you make her go to Chinese service?

Johnny: Yes.

JT: What's the logic behind that?

Johnny: I want to be with her. This is one of the good chances for us to get together. If she don't come to the Chinese service, I already lose half a day to be with her physically. At least after the service we can go out for lunch together, and I can say we are together, doing something together.

JT: So actually, being face-to-face together is very important for you.

Johnny: Since she's not talking to me that much, I think at least I can be face-to-face with her, at least I can see her.

The issue again is a linguistic geography. Active participation at St. Matthew's Church with one's Christian family is predicated on Cantonese competence. Johnny's situation painfully illustrates this reality. He is unable to communicate with his own daughter at home; although physically present at the church, Amanda is unable to join him in his involvement in his church home because of her inability to comprehend religious language in Cantonese. Physical presence does not guarantee emotional engagement or spiritual experience. Unlike those of the second generation who pride themselves on their multicultural identities, Bonnie and Amanda resemble the second generation described in the congregational studies literature, indicating that the multicultural pride of the second generation at St. Matthew's Church is more likely the exception, not the rule. This is not to say that these non-Cantonese-speaking adolescents have not been influenced by transnational Hongkonger cultural geographies by living in Richmond.

Indeed, Nona felt herself at a loss to explain the mysterious behaviour of her English-speaking teenage daughter, Felicia, who attends an honours program, Spectrum, at Steveston-London Secondary School in Richmond where students of Chinese descent predominate:

Because she's at London studying in Spectrum, 30 people, maybe 29 people out of 30 are Chinese. Either Hong Kong, Taiwan, or China Mainland. So it becomes that the close friends are from Hong Kong maybe, and then things they want are the things that they want. We didn't like the Hong Kong materialistic culture, respecting people because of their status by looking at your clothes or how much money you have, I actually don't like that.

Like Bonnie and Amanda, Felicia is an English-speaker whose friends are ethnic Chinese and whose material tastes may be transnational (from Hong Kong). But material tastes do not necessarily translate into linguistic preference; to put the matter starkly, Amanda (Johnny's daughter above) is an avid Korean drama fan, but this media preference does not translate into fluency in Korean either. As Chai (2002) would have it, this second generation has indeed developed a distinct identity. Unlike Chong's (1998) suggestion that (in her case) Koreanness and Christianity need to be disentangled for the second generation, the second generation at St. Matthew's Church has developed their own distinct way of being Hongkongers as multicultural Canadians, their own distinct way of participating in East Asian transnational networks, their own distinct way of maintaining ethnic Chinese friendships. But this distinctiveness does not necessarily include language, especially Cantonese Christian lingo. Because of their trouble with the language at St. Matthew's Church, the church has often been a very minute part in these adolescents' development of identity distinctiveness.

Indeed, the efforts to begin English-speaking ministries for these distinct members of the second generation have often met with resistance. Sophie describes council meetings where the issue became particularly contentious:

I don't think the language is picked up that way. I know, I know, I know there are many people, we had quite a bit of argument or discussion, and some people insisted that there will be no English service at all, make everybody go [to Chinese service], and if they listen enough, they have the language. And I don't see it that way. As I previously said, the way that you do your studies and so on really mould you. Of course, there are very bright people who can be bilingual and trilingual, but most people...most people are not. You have a dominant language for you to really reason, especially for spiritual things, especially when you want to go into deeper things, what does it have to do with my life application and so on? It's really tough. When you reach either side, you will always be in the middle of the river without reaching to either side. So which one is more important? Spirituality or the language? Spirituality. Therefore, go to the people like Jesus. Go to where they have needs. So they need to be fed. The religion has to make sense for them before they can hang on to it at a much older age. The language, there are doctors in their 30s and 40s, when they need the language, they will come to teachers and learn it. You cannot push them. So you cannot sacrifice their spirituality for the sake of the language. So I don't see it that way. It wouldn't work.

According to Sophie, the church council took a view that the second generation would pick up Cantonese from the Cantonese worship service because the church was an extension of the home and family. But for Sophie, the issue was that the second generation did not spend all their time in this Cantonese Christian home; as is the case with Bonnie, Amanda, and Felicia, they attend English-speaking schools where they might have transnational Chinese friends with transnational material tastes, but their dominant language used for thought is *English*, not Cantonese. Jason, an older retiree who is not a member of the council, shared Sophie's concern:

It's not an attitude problem. I think it's that the reality is: can they participate and gain benefit from the service? A service is multifaceted in that we worship God with one heart. But if you ask me to sing a Chinese song, I can't read. How am I praising God? Of course you can say that I can let the Holy Spirit move me and speak in different tongues. That's true, yeah. But I think the future for if we choose to live in Canada, this majority of Christians, their language should be in English. The future of a church lies in the next generation in the children. If the children shy away from a church because of a language problem, the church will die off. Maybe thirty years, forty years, fifty years, I don't know. Definitely fifty years from now, many of us won't be here. And these people miss out on the children...and the youth, if they miss out, there is no English service, they will go to another church which has the English service.

Sophie and Jason are not alone in their concerns, both in the church where it is becoming a reality that many CBCs tell me that they are bored with the Cantonese service because they cannot understand it. St. Matthew's Church, these concerned members of the first generation tell me, is in danger of its own silent exodus because the second generation that has embraced Cantonese is the exception, not the rule. The emerging norm, it seems, is that the second generation educated in English-speaking Canada retains youthful transnational Hongkonger fashion without the language. Such a gap in linguistic geographies spells disaster for St. Matthew's Church if the English ministry is not maintained.

It is unclear, however, whether the second generation is challenging the *Hongkonger* aspects of the church or a generically *Chinese* framework. There is a linguistic barrier as well as what some may call a closed-mindedness to what they perceive as the "traditional" aspects of "Chinese" language and culture. Subtly, one can argue that the second generation challenges the Hongkonger aspects of the church when most interviewees conflate "speaking Chinese" with "speaking Cantonese" and going back "home" as going to back to visit family in *Hong Kong* with China as either a side trip or a humanitarian visit. However, it is not clear that the second generation specifically challenges a *Hongkonger* framework with their Canadian multicultural values and English language; indeed, German, Korean, and Taiwanese churches have been similarly challenged. But Canadian multiculturalism does challenge the specific Hongkonger elements of St. Matthew's Church. Indeed, the Hong Kong side of St. Matthew's Church shows up in much sharper relief when Mainland Chinese migrants come into the picture.

Mainland Chinese Migrants: The Real Challenge

A standard answer to my inquiries about the differences between Hongkongers and Mainlanders was “**the background, the values, the language.**” Indeed, as my interviewees put it, Hongkongers tend to speak Cantonese, not Mandarin. But the heart of the issue, upon further probing, is one of political geography. When Hongkongers defined themselves against the Mainland in the 1970s and migrated to escape its political clutches in the 1980s and 1990s, they did so in the wake of traumatic historical events such as the 1967 riots and Tiananmen. Into the twenty-first century, these Hongkongers continue to carry such imagined geographies of the Mainland, stereotyping its people as *bokmang*, a Cantonese term that literally means “to gamble life,” a die-hard way of earning money that is even more extreme than Hongkongers making money in Hong Kong (and migrating to Vancouver for quality of life after the money is made). Hongkongers, some maintain, have more *leungsum*, roughly translatable as “compassion.” For many, this difference of *leungsum* and *bokmang* can be seen in the recent fake baby powder scandal in 2008: some PRC factories distributed fraudulent baby products that proved fatal to many infants who ingested them. Many Hongkongers felt horrified that Mainlanders could use their products to kill babies just to make a profit. As Maxine put it,

We *heunggongyan* are comparatively—like the altruistic decision-making is more important—but they, compared to foreign people, they are not as much. Unlike us *heunggongyan*, we would not come up with poisonous baby formula. But China people, they really look at money, they have no *leungsum*. For money, they can do anything.

Indeed, the reason many Hongkongers moved from Hong Kong was to escape (in their view) the politically unstable shadows of Mainland China, fleeing the *bokmang* other for the sake of their own *leungsum*.

In the twenty-first century in Canada, however, Hongkonger parishioners with self-declared *leungsum* at St. Matthew's Church are confronted with Mainlanders coming into the church. Henry and Jane, a young Hongkonger Christian couple, articulated their concern that the second generation may not be the most pressing concern for St. Matthew's Church after all. Jane said:

I don't know if they will be the mainstream, though, because having a lot of people from Mainland China here, recently I've been seeing a lot of people. So I think that it's like the second wave. These Chinese people are just like us when we first came to Canada. But then, they are luckier because they have us, we already experienced the first ten years and the way things were supposed to be when we first came to Canada. We had already learned our lesson, and when they come, we're going to teach them. And this is another group here that is going to be the major group of the Chinese church.

Asked if Hongkongers would invite these people to St. Matthew's church, Henry and Jane agree that Mainlanders often just **"show up at our church. If there are three families, they will find the people that are needy and have similar problems and just drag them...yeah, they bring friends, they bring relatives."** Jack, himself married to a woman from Guangzhou (a city on the Mainland), brings up a similar concern:

But on the other hand, if there is one thing that I might bring out is that we need to consider the development of the church from the perspective of God. Because our pastor always says we always extend the kingdom of God, Cantonese will not be the place that we really need to conquer. Coming up is the Mandarin-speaking people. We need to work on that. And actually, many people see that. But the church leaders had problems. And we really need to commit resources to the Mandarin-speaking work or services. At most we have is the Bible study...and that is only twice in a month. It's very minimal. And the group of people is not stable. And we don't have a worship service in Mandarin. I see quite a few people that they speak Mandarin that they come and then left because they don't have that kind of support. And I have this...and I put this subject to some of the council members and with some sharp force: they said it's not easy to start Mandarin services because the people, they don't commit, and it take a long time to nurture them. And I agree with that. I totally agree with that because I can see that. Those Chinese people come here: either they have lot of money (they are very rich), they come here not for work. They just a place for escape in a way. These kinds of people...they don't have the spiritual needs in the money. So it's difficult to work on these kinds

of people. Others, they really don't have any money. They come here not for real life, so they focus on their job, their earning money, a bigger house, a car, and that kind of things, and all their pursuit is in the material world, so it's also difficult. But from the perspective...if we want to get all those loose sheep back to Him, so we need to work these people in God's perspective. I know that it's difficult, and there are lots of resources, but we need to develop a strategy, and we have some...we need to start with something, and then we'll get to somewhere because St. Matthew's Church after twenty years...either it will change into an English-speaking church because all the second generation is English-speaking, or we need a good section needs to be Mandarin-speaking work. That's my opinion and my vision about the long term of the church.

What is becoming more obvious to the Hongkongers at St. Matthew's Church is that Hongkongers are not the *only* Chinese people who have migrated to Canada and are seeking religious peace. The question is then what to do with these Mainlanders that have been othered in the personal political geographies of Hongkongers at St. Matthew's Church. Indeed, Joanna states her own political paranoia stemming from the 1967 riots:

If I meet a Mainlander, I won't talk politics. Never, not. Because they're already so bitter, they came out, who knows? I still have kind of a...how do you say? Have a boundary or feeling...got to be very careful to talk with the people from China because in my mind, I never know China, they send lots of spies to everywhere all over the world, so...so far, I never get a chance to meet them, but doesn't mean I don't welcome to be friends with them.

For Joanna, Mainlanders are to be regarded with political suspicion (though not personal othering) because they may well be Chinese spies. There is an imagined political geography that creates a border between Hongkongers and Mainlanders at St. Matthew's Church. Mainlanders embody a different geopolitics. A Hongkonger emotional reaction to them is fear.

However, such political prejudices aside, three dominant narratives about what ministry to Mainland Chinese migrants would entail focus on the *behavioural* aspects of Mainlanders (an imagined cultural geography) that are seemingly non-amenable to Hongkonger ways of doing church: language, commitment, and the atheist-materialist background. Such behavioural elements demonstrate that the political geography of Hongkongers has indeed been transformed

into an imagined cultural geography. These elements often focus on what Mainland Chinese migrants are *not*: Mainland Chinese migrants are not civilized Hongkongers with exposure to Christianity in Hong Kong that has taught them to be “in place” in Christian spaces. These foci, however, are not a simple way of excluding Mainlanders from St. Matthew’s Church, as if a Christian space in a liberal multicultural society could exercise sovereign power over Mainlander “bare life” by placing them in a state of exception (Agamben, 1998). Certainly, these foci make transnational Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew’s more wary of Mainlanders. But this challenge of Mainlanders in multicultural Canada has in fact enabled transnational Hongkonger Christians to reconsider what it means to be Christian in the first place.

The first focus is on language. Hongkongers speak Cantonese but Mainlanders speak Mandarin, so there is supposed to exist a language barrier between the two just as there is a gap in linguistic geographies between the first and second generations. But for all the talk about Hongkongers speaking Cantonese and Mainlanders speaking Mandarin, the majority of my Hongkonger interviewees noted that they *could* speak Mandarin, although not well. Sarah stated a common sentiment among the Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew’s: **“[My daughter] always laughs at me. When she didn’t know Mandarin she thought I was OK. Now her Mandarin is very good, and she thinks my Mandarin is saying Cantonese a little bit crooked. Cantonese people can understand it, but not Mandarin people.”** Many also noted that the recent Gospel Camp in 2008 that targeted non-believers was populated by over half mainlanders. To their surprise, they found it easy to communicate despite the supposed language barrier. Jackie notes, **“So we had to switch: speak Mandarin. And we found that in that camp that we can blend, we can blend together, and really, it’s the first time I believe that I could be hand-in-hand with them, and speak with them, eating with them, enjoying with**

them.” Several also expressed their support if St. Matthew’s Church would one day become a Mandarin-speaking congregation, especially if Mainland Chinese migration became a steady new source of Chinese migration to Vancouver. However, council member Cindy answered immediately my suggestion that St. Matthew’s could one day become a Mandarin speaking church with a flat **“no.”** She elaborated: **“I don’t think it will be. I don’t think it will be. Cantonese-speaking is still our priority. And then we have the English ministry. And then we have the Mandarin. But then won’t be turning into a Mandarin ministry.”** In other words, some members felt that the church’s target should still be Hongkonger. Indeed, language was not the only issue in the barrier between Hongkongers and Mainlanders.

A more pertinent issue than the linguistic one was that Mainlanders acted pretentiously, and because of this pretentiousness, one could assume that they only saw the church as a purveyor of goods and services and could not be relied upon for spiritual commitment to the church. Hongkongers noted that Mainlander pretentiousness often manifested itself in how Mainlanders tried to look more **“high class”** and **“civilized”** than they actually were. In an interview that I quoted earlier in chapter 3 to illustrate interview coding, Sherman voiced a commonly held view about Mainlander pretentiousness:

You can dress a guy up real nice, but he’s still a farm dog, right? ...and I’ve met quite a few people from Mainland China who’s got a lot of money. I don’t enjoy my time with them. They’re pretending to be something they’re not. I mean, [chuckles] there was an ad that I saw a while ago where they were looking for—you know how you got English tutors? They were looking for Westerners to go back and teach etiquette to all these people who’ve got a new-found wealth. To me, that kind of stuff is not taught. It’s something you grow up with. Even go to finishing school, and you can pretend to have class, it doesn’t mean that you actually have class. It’s very snobby, I recognize that, but it’s also something I’m pretty honest to myself about. I don’t mind admitting that, I don’t. I think even in this church you can see that too. I mean, the number of Mainland people who are here, and the types of people who interact with them, and even the people who do interact with them, the way in which they have that interaction, you can see whether or not if it’s fake, and I don’t know how many people are actually on that list, but I can imagine you can

probably pick out for yourself how many of those there are, which ones are fake and which are honest.

This pretentiousness often translated at the congregation scale in terms of Mainlanders not seeking the inner peace for which Hongkongers valued Christian spirituality. Adam, a church leader, commented that although there should not be geographical boundaries for **“God’s people,”** Mandarin ministry to Mainlanders would be difficult for St. Matthew’s because he has seen so much failure due to this supposedly insincere, unspiritual Mainlander mentality. I asked him why: **“Because of those people’s culture. Yes, they will listen to you, but don’t expect them to make commitment. Because of their culture. Back home, let’s say, for example, back in China, because of their upbringing, they were being brainwashed not to trust people.”** A wider consensus that was held was that Mainlanders acted insincerely because of their life in Communist China, especially during the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution. Though the Cultural Revolution ended over thirty years ago, many Hongkongers explained that it was the Cultural Revolution that caused many Mainlanders now not to trust people, only to use people for their own benefits. Indeed, for many Hongkongers, the legacy of the Cultural Revolution is still not over, though the people who went through the Cultural Revolution were now in their 50s and 60s. As Janice explained, **“They didn’t have schools, they were the Red Army, their teaching was like that.”** Because of this uneducated, pretentious mentality, Hongkonger Christians perceived Mainlanders as coming to church only for the social services, sparking an emotionally-ridden debate between Henry and Jane for about ten minutes of their interview together. Henry emphasized the point: **“Their culture. They get, they don’t give. Commitment is about giving, right? They don’t...They just take all of it.”** Jane responded vigorously that while Mainlanders were not as idealistic as Hongkongers, who expected that if

one gave a gift, one would receive a gift in return, Hongkonger Christians should still give to Mainlanders:

Oh, they don't believe that, yeah, the people that are given to, they don't have that idealism. They don't share the same idealism. And we meet a lot of them. The Mainland Chinese do not have that idealism. They have that in their conscience, but they too expect a lot, like when they see you give, they think it's not taken for granted, it's just, yeah, when they give, you benefit because God would just...they know you give, God will reward you for what you give. They think differently.

Jane concluded that Hongkongers should be generous to Mainlanders. Henry shot back that it was Jane who was overly idealistic, that giving to Mainlanders would simply cause the Hongkongers at St. Matthew's Church to burn out. Neither of them thought of the possibility that perhaps Mainland Chinese people were not simply takers.

Hongkonger Christians often saw this presumably pretended spiritual commitment stemming from Mainlanders having been educated in Communist China in an atheistic, materialistic environment. They were not educated in the religious schools in Hong Kong where many Hongkonger Christians said that they first encountered moral discipline, inner peace, and religious experiences from the morning assembly. Benson commented that Mainlanders will “suffer more” to “find money”: **“They'll be more short-sighted. And they will be materialistic. Religion they'll think, ‘Ai, no use.’ These are not only no interest but in fact resentful. They think it will waste his time, waste his time to find money.”** Jack, the interviewee married to a woman from Guangzhou and attends a house group at St. Matthew's Church with many South Chinese migrants, furthers the point:

I have some people that I want to bring to God, and it's quite difficult: my father-in-law, my mother-in-law, and also some of my friends. They...even some of those converted and baptized Guangzhou people in our church, they are always come up with more suspicious questions than Hong Kong people. So because of the way they're trained...they don't believe in spiritual things. So it's quite difficult to really influence those Mainland people to believe in God.

At least Hong Kong people believe in the supernatural: “**they like to gamble,**” he joked. Guangzhou people, on the other hand, “**depend on themselves,**” not on spiritual forces. For many Hongkongers, the Mainlander lack of spiritual commitment stems from a lack of spiritual *desire* based on a different geography of *education*. Indeed, for many Hongkonger Christians, education, religion, and geography are conflated, and Mainlanders score unfavourably on all three counts.

The one Mainlander among my interview subjects admits that while Mainland Chinese people were educated in atheistic environments, she is uncomfortable with the Hongkonger stereotypes. Rosie, a woman in her 40s who has lived in both Guangzhou and Hong Kong before coming to Vancouver and was an English major in university in the PRC, insists that she is not the country bumpkin stereotype that most Hongkongers think that Mainlanders are, although some Mainlanders perpetuate the stereotypes with their own actions. She cites the example of some Mainland Chinese migrants hoarding free bags from the main mall in Richmond, Richmond Centre. At every entryway to the mall, there are free plastic bags with the Richmond Centre logo for shoppers to store their purchases. Some Mainland Chinese migrants, Rosie said, hoarded these bags:

This is what my mom mentioned yesterday in Richmond Centre...there’s some plastic bags hanging on the main entrance in case you may shop something that doesn’t have a bag, and you can just take one and take it home, right? When you need it. But she just saw some people who looked like they were from Mainland China just take the whole thing and hide it and walk away. I mean, still, there are people like that...I really feel ashamed of them. But what can you do? You either go up there and tell them no, you’re not supposed to take them unless you have a need that you carry a lot of things and you want to put them together or it’s raining outside, you don’t want to get your things wet, and there’s a purpose for that. And the purpose is certainly not for you to use to take it home to use by your own, right? So those are still things that bother us. I don’t want those things happening in the church, but you can’t control it, right? Something might happen.

Rosie's concern is that such prejudice against Mainland Chinese migrants is in fact perpetuated by Mainland Chinese migrants themselves. She is well aware that such prejudices are very much a part of St. Matthew's Hongkonger ethos. For her, such "uncivilized" migrants are a source of shame, and she fears that because of their actions, the entire population of PRC migrants might be seen within her beloved church home as uncivilized, uneducated pariahs for the actions of a few. Indeed, the polarization of Hongkongers and Mainlanders in the church is a source of grief for Rosie because it is in the social networks of the church that she found peace and healing after her divorce. For her, the difference in the geography of religion between Hong Kong and China is an opportunity: she wants to share with them the Christian Gospel "**because they never have a chance—like I didn't have a chance to know God, and once they're here, they're alone.**"

For her, St. Matthew's Church also is a social network, an extended family that walked with her through her divorce from a Hongkonger man who cheated on her. It is because of these relationships forged over the period of eight years that she feels that she can fit into St. Matthew's, although it is a predominantly Hongkonger church. But she also complained that while Mainlanders and Hongkongers could theoretically communicate (either with Hongkongers trying to speak Mandarin, or South Chinese migrants speaking Cantonese), it is Hong Kong urban *slang* that usually drives a wedge between Hongkongers and Mainlanders: "**I tried to remember some slang that Pastor Paul Ng used in his speech or it's his sermon, and I had a hard time to translate it into Mandarin. I tried to get the closest word, closest meaning, but it lost that part of it in the whole context.**" Her story shows that the boundaries between Hong Kong and China can be more porous than most Hongkongers think, although the boundaries are still there in terms of linguistic and cultural geography. The issue is that Hongkongers often imagine themselves to be more superior—to have a superior cultural geography—to Mainland

Chinese migrants. For Rosie, the way out of this superiority was to develop personal relationships with Hongkongers, to break down the walls between the two groups with differing political geographies at the personal scale.

Social Capital in the Congregation: Hongkongers and Mainlanders Together?

The real issue is that this Hongkonger superiority is *imagined*. Further probing often led to the realization that Hongkongers were just as Chinese as Mainlanders. As a second-generation Chinese Canadian who identified herself as Hongkonger, Julia found herself attracted to the Hong Kong entertainment scene, but not to the cultural politics:

Not to be rude, but Hongkongers are actually Chinese, because they just moved to Hong Kong. And just because they lived there for a long time, they call themselves *heunggongyan*...[derogatory sigh]...But just because Hong Kong people think they're more upper-class and stuff like that, and *dailokyan* ["big land people"], this term, it's kinda like...a downgrade...downgrades that person. So when you hear that term, you're very cautious, *dailokyan*, oh, you're [on the lookout].

Jimmy expressed his concern for the division between Hong Kong and China from a religious perspective:

For me, because I grow up in Hong Kong and the church life started in Hong Kong, so whatever the church in Hong Kong was doing, that's what I believe, what I experience the church should be. And actually that's not the way. Because my grandmother, she's from China, the whole church, she went to church in China, so when she moved to Hong Kong, she immigrated to Hong Kong, she went to an Anglican church again. She was so surprised. You know, how come Hong Kong Anglican doing things differently than the churches in China? And one day she asked...the Hong Kong pastor, "You know, in China, people often go to the sermon or the altar to give a testimony. How come it never happens in Hong Kong? Hong Kong don't do that." The Hong Kong pastor said that at that time, it's not the culture. They're more respectful. They don't want anything strange, you know, someone come to the altar, give a testimony. So they don't do that. But now at St. Matthew's, they're getting more often to do that. So you can see that's very different. But that's what I learned in Hong Kong, because what I experienced, so I believe that's the way it should be, but for me as a character, I'm more like open, I'm accepting, so whatever [the pastor is] doing, if it's good, then why don't I accept

it? Some old traditional Anglican...they think it's no, no, no, no, no, you don't ask people to go to the altar to do a testimony, that's not how Hong Kong does it.

Jimmy's concern is that Hong Kong is indeed *not* the centre of the religious universe. Religious practices, even in Chinese Christianity, are contingent on geographical context, and migration to Canada could in fact liberate many Christians from their Hongkonger-based imaginations of Christian practice. What is at stake for Jimmy is the Christian witness: are Hongkongers more Hongkonger than Christian? After all, the Hongkonger way of practicing Christianity is not the only way. As Smith (1985: 211) suggests in words eerily similar to Jimmy's, the histories of the Chinese and Hongkonger churches may have taken different trajectories since the nineteenth century, but such differences can be overcome as the two churches seek common ground as Christian institutions.

The real issue at the heart of the Hongkonger discomfort at Mainlanders coming to St. Matthew's Church is that it challenges the heart of what it means to be a Hongkonger Christian. Indeed, it strikes at the Hongkonger Christian attempt to establish a Cantonese Christian "home away from home" at St. Matthew's Church, a religious haven that would serve as an escape away from what they perceived as political insecurity with the Chinese government ruling Hong Kong. But as Christians, these Hongkongers are reluctant to outright exclude Mainlanders because they are convinced that there should be no geographical boundaries in the church of Jesus Christ, especially if the Christian mission is to extend Christian territoriality through expanding the numbers of Christian conversions throughout the city. An approach that most Hongkongers who have chosen to cross the divide have taken is to develop individual interpersonal relationships with Mainlanders who come to the church. Despite her perceptions of Mainlanders, Sarah remains convinced that the two cultures can become one:

We need to do things well together. How do we make it so that...this issue recently I think we need to not see ourselves so much but to look at them. We can't make them not look at themselves and look at us. But we can teach them to take a look at us, not to see themselves. It's a very special thing: we don't look at ourselves, but we look at them, do more things that they like to do. But at the same time when we do things with them, we teach them to get used to Hong Kong culture. That's how you make two different cultures one.

For Sarah, Hongkongers have a civilizing mission to Mainlanders, to teach them through interpersonal relationships how to fit in to St. Matthew's Hongkonger Christian home away from home. Jackie has a less imposing approach. When a Mainlander man broke his leg during a barbecue, Jackie discovered that given time over which she built trust with him and his family, Jackie convinced this man's wife to allow Jackie to drive her to the hospital to visit her husband, to drive her children to school, and to make meals for their whole family. It was through this relationship that Jackie learned emotionally that despite her stereotypes of Mainlanders as pretentious and untrusting, it was easy to become friends at an interpersonal level through mutual service and time spent in each other's company.

But to do this, Hongkongers and Mainlanders need to develop "trust," especially in light of cultural stereotypes of Mainlanders as non-committal, *nouveaux riches* refugees from a repressive Communist government, a cultural geography that is actually a political geography in disguise. Indeed, for Janice as well as for many church leaders, the problem at St. Matthew's is that people tend to form cliques along generational and geopolitical lines, lines that are often drawn hard between Mainlanders and Hongkongers. This issue is in fact so important for her that it has led her to say that Paul Ng, Peter Ho, and Shirley Loo's emphases on traditional marriage (and the celebration of Wedlock Day) did not address the real issues of everyday life in Canada for Hongkonger Christians:

I mean, for Paul Ng coming, it seems that Canada is not as right for that topic [sexual purity]. Of course, in Hong Kong, it's a very hot topic. In Canada, I

discovered...this topic is for whom to hear? For the young? Teenagers, twenties? You talk to them about sex; they're already thinking it's extraneous to pay attention to you... Peter Ho's maybe. Because he's talking about marriage. But there's a problem. With a *yee nai* [concubine] family,⁴⁴ now for some he's talking about marriage. If there's a problem with a marriage, would you guess both persons in the couple would come to listen? Not happening! How will you pull the other one to hear? This is a big problem. One person hearing is no use. One person can't do anything. It needs both sides to do anything. So this is a problem here... Here I think talking about interpersonal relationships is good. I mean, in our own church is like that, in Richmond, yes. Each person is far too...you can say you don't trust people. You can't trust any people. I've learned this. You can't trust any people.

As Janice and many others have indicated, the real challenge to the Hongkonger Christian bubble in Canada is *not* a moral one to be combated by campaigns for sexual purity and social conservatism. To give the speakers the benefit of the doubt, Janice argued that sexual purity was perhaps more of an issue in East Asia with a rising liberalism in Hongkonger sexual ethics and the emergence of South Chinese *yee nai* concubine families headed by Hongkonger men. But in Canada, the issue for Janice was not marriage or sexual purity. It was rather a matter of developing trust across both personal and geopolitical lines in the Christian church. Indeed, the logic that ran behind Janice's emphasis on trust was still the preservation of congregational harmony—peace in the Father's house—the motivation that I argued in the previous chapter that was also behind the sexual purity movements. But the maintenance of the family as a Christian space could not be simply achieved (for Janice) through conversion and ethical change: interpersonal trust had to be developed by learning to listen to one another, even if one had political and cultural differences from another. Without trust, there would be no peace.

Indeed, what is at stake for the Hongkonger *Christian* church is that Mainlanders coming to the church have forced Hongkonger Christians to re-evaluate their ethno-religious conflations and to re-think what it means to be a Christian in Canada. The challenges of living in

⁴⁴ As Mathews, Ma, and Lui (2008) have noted, a recent phenomenon has developed where Hongkonger men travel to South China (*e.g.* Guangzhou) to seek out concubines. These are called in Cantonese *yee nai* ("second breast") families.

multicultural Canada drive Hongkonger Christians not to discard their theological positions, especially on sexual morality or monotheistic worship, but to disentangle their ethnicity from their spirituality. This disentanglement has proven emotionally difficult, given all the latent geopolitical assumptions underlying the divide among Canadians, Hongkongers, and Mainlanders. But as many at St. Matthew's Church have discovered, the predominantly Hongkonger population cannot turn a blind eye to the need to address the issue of trust as their younger English-speaking second generation grows into adulthood and Mainland Chinese migrants continue to attend this Hongkonger Christian church and to bring their families. In a multicultural country, neither of these two groups can be turned away, although they present significant challenges to the Hongkonger Christian bubble. Indeed, it is in a multicultural country that one of my second-generation interviewees, David, said that being a Christian was extremely difficult because one faced the challenge of being monotheistic in a pluralistic society. Ironically, it is in this multicultural country that some of these Hongkonger Christians' Christian spiritualities are slowly being perfected as they learn to listen and to reach out across the geopolitical divide.

Conclusion: Re-working a Cantonese Christian Home Amidst Multicultural Challenge

This chapter had demonstrated that while many Hongkonger Christian parishioners at St. Matthew's Church seek to spread the Christian faith to their families, to the congregation, and to Hong Kong and Vancouver, the specificity of life in multicultural Canada challenges these efforts and forces them often to re-think what kind of territoriality they want to extend. Geography still matters. Life in Canada is a harsh reminder of the reality that transnational Hongkongers, although imagining themselves to live in a trans-Pacific space, wanting to build

live connections with Hong Kong's Christian community, and desiring to spread Christian territorialities to both Hong Kong and Vancouver, are still living in Canada. While some of the second generation may prefer the Cantonese service, the reality is that they are being educated in pluralistic Canadian schools, not religious Hongkonger *ming hao* famous schools. The West is neither the educational ideal that many Hongkongers sought, nor is it a political ideal when the Mainlanders from whom the Hongkongers fled re-appear on the doorstep of the church, questioning how Christian their religious geography actually is and how much of it comes from their political geographies that have morphed into cultural presuppositions. In short, geography matters.

What is more, these challenges to a Hongkonger Christian religious territoriality demonstrates that the geography of religion is ultimately not about isolating sacred spaces but about exploring how they are extended into public space. What this means is that sacred spaces cannot be studied in a vacuum. Religious spaces—or as Stump (2008) would have it, territorialities—often push up against public spaces. In the case of this thesis, the religious territoriality in question is a Christian geographical imagination that stresses conversion for the sake of familial harmony and social stability. The question to ask in the geography of religion is not *if* these religious territorialities are extended. The questions that this thesis, especially in this chapter, has asked are: What is the nature of the religious territorialities being extended? How is this extension received? How is it challenged? How do those challenges cause those who are extending these religious territorialities to re-think their notions of sacred space?

Indeed, transnational Hongkongers are forced in multicultural Canada to re-think their notions of Christian space because, as those who give voice to a transcendent Christian geography assert, they are Christians who do not want their Hongkonger political and cultural

geographies interfering with their faith. While this thesis has implied that such mixing is inevitable, this chapter demonstrates that multicultural confrontations to this conflation have caused the Hongkonger parishioners at St. Matthew's Church considerable distress. Some have begun to re-think their imaginations of Christian space. Perhaps, as some that I have quoted in this chapter told me, the emphasis in Christian practice and congregational life (in their view) should not be on militant conversionism or mass sex education from a Christian perspective. As they explained, the emphasis should rather be on strengthening interpersonal relationships, especially across geopolitical lines, so that a Christian ethic of love working itself out in human relationships is given primacy of place in the re-imagination of what it means to be a Christian living in space. Indeed, at the end of the day, the primary identity for which these Hongkonger Christians consciously aim is not a Hongkonger political geography but a *Christian* identity, a participation in a fuller *Christian* geography. The challenges that transnational life in Canada bring are in fact ways some of these Christians see that their transnational faith is being perfected.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: Transnational Faith Between Hong Kong and Vancouver

In conclusion, I offer prospects for what this thesis offers both for those who would consider themselves insiders and outsiders to the geography of religion. First, I answer the research question on imagined geographies by demonstrating that the faith practiced at St. Matthew's Church is both imagined and materialized transnationally between Hong Kong and Vancouver. Second, I offer these findings to geographers of religion to demonstrate the necessity of research on religion that connects the micro-geographies of personal imagination and sacred space to the macro-geographical scales of urban and transnational geographies. Third, I shall highlight the importance of the geography of religion to geographers of transnational Hongkongers, particularly in Vancouver, as a way of painting a more multidimensional portrait of Hongkongers in motion. Fourth, I call for research in what I have called the Sinophonic Christian bubble—and what this thesis has described as a trans-Pacific Cantonese-speaking Christian bubble—to understand the multiplicity of Christian geographies in what Jenkins (2007) has termed *the next Christendom* in Asia and Africa. I close with both an ethnographic illustration of congregational life in the geographical context of the Hongkonger Christian network I have unpacked and a reflection on peace for a world thought to be divided by religion.

St. Matthew's Church: A Transnational Geography of Religion

This thesis began with a research question: *what global and local sites constitute the imagined geographies of parishioners who attend St. Matthew's Church?* While it would be simplistic to typecast these parishioners simply as ethnic Chinese Christians, this thesis has argued for a more geographically rigorous approach that sees the predominantly Hongkonger

population at St. Matthew's Church in its cultural, political, and religious geographical contexts. To this end, I introduced two scale models in Figures 2.1 and 5.1.

These two diagrams help to answer the research question by tapping into the specific global and local sites that make up the transnational networks and imaginations of the Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church (Featherstone, Phillips, and Waters, 2007). As I reported in chapter 5, the specific sites in the personal geographies of Hongkonger parishioners at St. Matthew's Church tended to begin with Christian exposure in spaces of religious education in Hong Kong. These educational sites tended also to be associated with British colonialism and aspirational desirability, spaces of peace, stability, and even escape from a perceived political instability and economic competitiveness in Hong Kong. But an over-emphasis on status-based aspiration distorts the reality that Hongkonger Christians often see their religion as the one true faith. Their responsibility, as I have shown, is not simply to believe in this truth personally but to spatialize it by attempting to convert their family members to Christianity, a process imagined to ensure that family harmony will last forever in the afterlife.

This thesis has also dealt with the geopolitical and cultural migration logics of these Hongkonger Christians. Corroborating the literature, Western education was seen as a way to acquire higher cultural capital (Preston, Kobayashi, and Man, 2006; Waters, 2006), prompting a migration logic ostensibly centered on education. This ostensible focus, this thesis argues, finds its geographical context in the political geography of Hong Kong, both in its geopolitical distinctions from Mainland China and in the intersection of church and state in Hong Kong politics (see chapter 4). Christianity is seen as a religion of the West, but not as a colonial force to be opposed. Rather, it is an agent of inner serenity, political stability, and family harmony to be desired and embraced. The intersections of this geography of religion with transnational

Hongkonger political geographies have produced a cultural geography that fuses ethnicity (Hongkonger) and religion (Christian) (see Figure 5.1). Such geographies are bolstered by the family, some of which were religious but many of which were exposed to this political Christianity and moved to the West in search of geopolitical peace and a higher cultural capital in Canadian education. Many were converted to Christianity or intensified their Christian commitments when they found that they had space to reflect on spiritual matters in quiet Canada. Those who converted to Christianity either in Hong Kong or upon moving made it their mission to convert the rest of their families as well.

The self-identifying Christians who were part of this Hongkonger emigration founded congregations such as St. Matthew's Church. As the beginning of this thesis showed, they thought that they were founding generic Chinese Christian congregations, gatherings of Chinese Christians who could reach out to other Chinese immigrants to Vancouver with Christian love and social service, spreading the Christian faith throughout the Chinese population in Vancouver. But as this thesis has argued, Cantonese Christian congregations dominate the religious scene as 74% of the Chinese churches in the Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship's (2007) telephone directory are in fact Cantonese churches. As the *lingua franca* of Hong Kong and consistent with the dominance of Hong Kong migration to Vancouver in the 1980s through the early 2000s, churches such as St. Matthew's Church that are run in Cantonese and who are populated by an overwhelming majority of Hongkongers are better described as *Hongkonger* churches.

Such cultural and political geographical distinctions nuance a geographical analysis of St. Matthew's Church. Congregational life at St. Matthew's Church corroborates the literature that sees the ethnic church in North America as a service hub for new immigrants and a "home away

from home” (Beattie and Ley, 2003; Ley, 2008). The congregation is frequently described as a family where one can rest from a busy week as well as a home that has to be maintained materially, relationally, and spiritually as God the Father’s house. But there are specificities to what it means to be a Hongkonger congregation. While Christian spirituality is thought to be geographically transcendent, the congregation operates primarily in Cantonese, the *lingua franca* of Hong Kong. This linguistic geography that is often challenged by the second generation is also challenged by the influx of Mainland Chinese migrants who present ostensibly a cultural challenge to the Hongkongers. This challenge, I argue, is in fact a *geopolitical* challenge because the presence of Mainlanders disturbs the linguistic, social, and religious frames that these Hongkongers have sought to maintain in their Cantonese Christian “home away from home.” Such challenges, I argue, come into sharper focus in Canada where migration and multicultural policies enable a plurality of cultural, political, and religious geographies to co-exist. St. Matthew’s Church may well have to accept this pluralism.

But the strength of St. Matthew’s Church to remain a Hongkonger congregation does not come merely from *memories* of the city that Hongkongers left but through existing connections among Hongkonger Christians across the 106 Chinese congregations in Vancouver and across continents between Hong Kong and Vancouver. Although these networks enable congregations like St. Matthew’s Church to maintain peaceful spaces of home, they also advocate these Hongkonger congregations to spread Christian territorialities throughout Hong Kong and Vancouver. I argue that such religious exhortations are best understood as a geographical imagination that begins as micro-geographies at personal and congregational scales as Hongkonger Christians seek to convert their own families and grow the congregation numerically but have political implications when put into these macro-geographical urban

contexts. The overwhelming Chinese Christian support for the election of a Hongkonger Christian, Alice Wong, in 2008 as the conservative Member of Parliament in Richmond, the Cantonese talks on sexual abstinence and marital harmony through the three transnational speakers at St. Matthew's Church, and St. Matthew's Church's heavy participation in the inter-church, transnational gathering of Wedlock Day for social and sexual conservatism that was held mostly in Cantonese all demonstrate that the parishioners of St. Matthew's Church are involved in a larger set of relations that do not merely exist in their imaginations but in which their common religion (Christianity), geopolitical imaginations (Hongkonger), and language (Cantonese) have enabled them to participate. At these larger scales, these Hongkonger Christians can be seen as social conservatives in public space. But as I have argued, such social conservatism needs to be contextualized by the global and local sites in their geographical imaginations. With education, morality, and family harmony going hand in hand with their memories of religious education and Christian spaces, I have contended in this thesis that such social conservatism at a larger scale is consistent with their micro-scale involvement in personal conversion and congregational life as a Cantonese family that must be maintained as the Father's house. As they would put it, the family at all scales must be preserved for the sake of social stability. This family, I argue, is not merely a social geography; it is a geography of religion because this family is a *Christian* family, the congregation is the *Father's* house, and the city is the *holy land* where this family can spread the love of God to stabilize more families through Christian conversion and sexual purity. As Leung and Chan (2001) have noted concerning the prophetic shift in the role of the church *vis-à-vis* the Hong Kong state since the 1980s, such Christian practice and territorialities may seem like a political geography brought to bear on Canadian multicultural society. However, it is at the end a spiritual reality for many of its

participants. The global and local sites that constitute the imagined geographies of parishioners at St. Matthew's Church are informed by religious education and framed by imagining the congregation as a Christian family from Hong Kong living in Vancouver and participating in metropolitan and transnational religious networks to bring the love experienced in the family of Christ to the rest of the city.

Moving Between Scales of Faith: Micro-Geographies of Religion with Macro-Geographical Implications

As I have moved between scales in the execution of my argument, this thesis affirms the geography of religion's focus on scale. Kong's (2001a) foray beyond the officially sacred demonstrates why even geographers who do not explicitly study religion should be interested in religious geographies: micro-geographies of religion have political consequences at macro-geographical scales. For Hongkongers at least, not only does religion affect their imaginations of political and social geography, but religion is an undercurrent for a social conservatism that elected a Conservative Hongkonger Christian Member of Parliament and continues to play out (albeit in a specific visible minority circle) in Cantonese activist conferences for sexual abstinence, heteronormativity, and the sacredness of marriage. While current research in the geography of religion has often focused on politically motivated events at macro-geographical scales, such as September 11, 2001 and the July 2005 bombings in London, I argue that such research is also connected to the micro-geographical studies on religious and spiritual circles such as New Age spiritual networks (Holloway, 2003) or Muslim family life (Hopkins, 2006). What is done *in* sacred space is extended *out* to make even public space unofficially sacred sites.

More research needs to be done to connect these mundane micro-geographies of sacred space, congregational life, and personal religious imaginations with the larger scales of political and cultural geography. These connections highlight the importance of religion as geographers create multidimensional maps of human populations, people whose family lives, social networks, political action, economic motivations, and religious imaginations are often interconnected, sometimes without them even knowing it. Instead of limiting the geography of religion to the study of religious practices and communities and the sacralization processes of sacred sites, my research sees religion as embodied in *homo religiosus* and focuses on the imagined geographies even of human subjects who are not often seen as religious (such as transnational Hongkongers). Such research connects sites in the memory, in the imagination, and in everyday life that concern religion and asks how imagined geographies of religion have material and geographical consequences in the lives of religious subjects now. Work on the imagined geographies of religion is increasingly important in a world that finds itself not secularizing but increasingly faced with the challenge of public religions (Casanova, 1992). Indeed, as Levitt (2006) puts bluntly, one may ignore religion in one's everyday life, but as the political consequences of transnational religious networks have increasing social influences, religion should not be seen as the exception or a marginal field of study, but as a dimension on the front lines of human geography. Research that connects the smaller scales of religious embodiment and sacred territoriality with the macro-geographies of contestation in political space demonstrates that religion is a reality that will not be kept private but will continue to be spatialized as long as there are individuals who identify as *homo religiosus*. The question is not: *is religion a viable field for study in human geography?* Given the implications of the scales I have both introduced and used in this study of transnational Hongkonger Christians, the question is rather: *how do*

religious imaginations, practices, and networks continue to shape our world politically, culturally, economically, socially, and spiritually, and how should academics and policymakers respond? As this thesis has demonstrated, the geography of religion matters as a dimension of human life and as an imagination that is spatialized into transnational networks with political consequences. Such spaces demand rigorous geographical study, if only simply to understand their social and political implications.

Religion and Transnational Hongkongers: A *Homo Religiosus* Side of *Homo Economicus*

One space that demands a closer investigation in the geography of religion is the Hong Kong-Vancouver trans-Pacific network of migration. Indeed, glimpses of a religious dimension in this transnational network have been seen in the literature on the emotional geographies of transnational Hongkongers: geographers such as Ley (forthcoming) and Waters (2003) have demonstrated that one of the ways Hongkongers (such as astronaut wives) who feel lonely in Vancouver find friendship and social networking is through the Christian church. The church, as at St. Matthew's Church, is indeed very important in terms of social networking and is often seen as a Hongkonger Christian family in which to find rest and that family members must maintain.

But in this thesis, I push for a more serious consideration of Hongkongers as Christians, a form of *homo religiosus* that takes into account the reality that despite the long-lasting stereotype of Buddhism as an "Asian religion," in the Chinese community in Vancouver, there are more Christians (23.6%) than Buddhists (14.8%). While indeed many have backgrounds in folk Buddhist traditions, the research I have done shows that the boundaries between these religions are porous, that even the assertion by most in the Chinese community that they have "no religious affiliation" (69%) does not mean that they have not been influenced by Christianity

whether by the Hong Kong marketplace during Christmas, by the political action of the Christian church in Hong Kong, by *ming hao* (famous) religious schools, or by Hongkonger evangelicals actively seeking to proselytize their friends and family. A further direction for research would be to take Kong's (2001a) call to go beyond the officially sacred even further by replicating similar research at such community organizations as SUCCESS as well as in other places frequented by Hongkonger migrants. A research question for this new direction would be: *what role does Christianity have in the geographical imaginations of transnational Hongkongers outside of Christian congregations?* While the answer to such a question is beyond the scope of this project, such research would be important for further elucidating the *homo religiosus* dimension of transnational Hongkongers, an elucidation that as I have shown in this thesis has aided Hongkongers in defining their own political geography as well as helping them in social networking and spiritual well-being. Not all Hongkongers may self-identify as Christian; indeed, a minority both in Hong Kong and in Vancouver do. But most Hongkongers have been exposed to Christianity often as a political and educational force in Hong Kong. Does this exposure itself make a difference in how they construe the world politically, economically, and socially? More research would need to be done to further unpack this *homo religiosus* side of *homo economicus*.

Sinophonic Christian Geographies: Religious Networks in the New Christendom

However, the study of the *homo religiosus* side of *homo economicus* is not the only space to study the geography of religion. This thesis has uncovered a trans-Pacific Christian network bound by language (Cantonese) and often framed culturally and geopolitically as well as religiously. Such a geographical network demonstrates that a religion such as Christianity is not a global monolith. As Levitt (2006) points out squarely, what is often referred to as religion in

the public sphere is American Protestant evangelicalism. But a geography of Christianity shows clearly that Christian maps must be redrawn. Indeed, Jenkins (2007) projects that a new Christendom with a geographical centre of gravity in the Global South must be taken seriously. It is incorrect, Jenkins argues, to speak of European Christians as if they were the only Christians who exist, nor is it fair to say that Christianity is dying out to secularization because of falling numbers of attendance in Europe. As Jenkins provocatively argues,

It would not be easy to convince a congregation in Seoul or Nairobi that Christianity is dying, when their main concern is building a worship facility big enough for the 10,000 or 20,000 members they have gained over the past few years. And these new converts are mostly teenagers and young adults, very few with white hair. Nor can these churches be easily told that, in order to reach a mass audience, they must bring their message more into accord with (Western) secular orthodoxies. (Jenkins, 2007: 9).

Asia and Africa, Jenkins contends, are the next Christendom. Although the Hongkongers at St. Matthew's Church may associate Christian space with British colonialism, the picture Jenkins paints is that Christian geographies are not strictly a Western geography of religion anymore. If anything, it is rapidly becoming an Asian and African geography of religion.

But this geography of Christianity is *not* a homogeneous geography. In the study of Muslim geographies, some have called for a study of Christian geographies as a parallel to Islam for the sake of racial justice, often to note how Christians have actively participated in racialization processes that have oppressed minority groups (Carroll, 2001).⁴⁵ But racial justice needs to happen within Christian geographies as well. As Levitt (2006) argues, a Christian in the twenty-first century cannot be assumed to be merely a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) male whose Anglo-American political geography reinforces racial and gender oppression. Even

⁴⁵ This insight also emerged during a panel discussion during the 2009 Las Vegas AAG conference entitled "Muslim Identity, Citizenship and Belonging: New Questions and Approaches for Geographers," moderated by D. James McLean, a Ph.D. student from York University. Most of the panellists were geographers who had worked on Muslim identities in the Global North, including Anna Secor, Banu Gonariksel, Peter Hopkins, Betty Lininger, Rachel Pain, Catherine Alexander, Robina Mohammad, and Caroline Nagel.

though these Hongkongers are socially and theologically conservative—as are many other Christians around the world, as Jenkins (2007) points out—their conservatism and theological views are *not* all the same. Language still matters. Sinophonic Christian geographies, as this thesis has shown, affect the way that Christianity is imagined, practiced, and territorialized. Indeed, even what kind of Sinophonic Christianity (*e.g.* Cantonese or Mandarin) matters for these geographies of religion because language may also involve geopolitical distinctions (*e.g.* between Hongkongers and Mainlanders). Christian territories—especially conservative Christian spaces—cannot all be associated with neo-conservative white America. Indeed, while it is politically important to hold American evangelicals accountable for the irresponsible geopolitics that have contributed to American imperialism and political instability in the Middle East, typecasting *all* evangelicals around the world as neo-conservative, neo-colonial, and nationalistically American is—to put it mildly—geographically insensitive. Further research—perhaps even comparative research—into non-Anglophonic Christian geographies would highlight the complexities around language and show how even some American evangelical material used in non-English-speaking circles get lost in translation.

An old theological adage holds that “theology is constructed in Europe, corrected in England, corrupted in America, and crammed into Asia.”⁴⁶ But as I have suggested repeatedly in this thesis, despite British colonialism and signs of American evangelicalism at work in transnational Hongkonger Christian circles, Hongkonger Christians may be part of their own distinct geography of religion that may intersect with and may be significantly influenced by Western Christianity, *but is not politically or economically controlled by it*. Taking this seriously, several areas for serious research may include: Sinophonic Christian fundamentalisms throughout Greater China, right-wing religious NGOs in the Sinophonic sphere, self-

⁴⁶ I am unable to find a reference for this axiom.

orientalizing tendencies in Sinophonic Christian circles, and nationalist Christian missionary efforts to convert China into a Christian nation-state. Such work would be a work in translation that would illumine the intersections between the Anglophonic evangelical bubble (Goh, 2003), that is more familiar to those who would accuse Christians of being neo-colonial fundamentalists, and a Sinophonic Christian bubble that most have uncritically seen as a product of colonial regimes. Indeed, the task of a geographer of religion mapping these Anglophonic and Sinophonic Christian bubbles, I argue, is to begin the dialogue, to redraw the maps for fuller integration between the two linguistically different bubbles and to understand the social and political implications of the religious imaginations that are territorialized in these networks.

Simply Jesus: A Geographer of Religion in the Geography of Religion

In closing, I tie these geographies of religion, transnational Hongkongers, and Cantonese Christian bubbles back to St. Matthew's Church. In late April 2009, four months after my time of formal ethnographic field work ended, the college and career groups at St. Matthew's Church hosted an outreach praise-and-worship concert. It was called Simply Jesus. The leaders for the event chose songs that ranged linguistically from English to Cantonese to Mandarin. The songs themselves were from a variety of geographical origins, as diverse as the youth praise-and-worship movement called Hillsong United from Hillsong Church in Australia, Passion Worship from the Deep South, Orange County's Taiwanese Christian "Stream of Praise," the charismatic movement's Vineyard UK, and Hong Kong Canto-pop style Christian ballads. The groups managed to fill the sanctuary with a multicultural congregation of about 400. This gathering included those in their sixties from Hong Kong, Singaporean exchange students, Canadian missionaries to China from Tsawwassen, and second-generation Chinese high-schoolers from

Richmond. The Hongkonger pastor's sermon was in English: it did not focus on cultural maintenance but gave a spiritual call for those who had drifted from the church to return to Jesus. The main worship leader was a second-generation Chinese young man who spoke English and confessed to me that he could not read Chinese, although he helped to lead the songs in both Chinese dialects. Whether first or second generation, old or young, Chinese or Caucasian, the general opinion after the concert was that it was a success; it had indeed made even older traditional Hongkonger Anglicans scream wildly like teen girls at a YMCA youth camp (as they told me). The ushers who handed out water bottles with the "Simply Jesus" logo taped on were showered with thanks as we exited the sanctuary late that night.

"Simply Jesus" is a fitting ethnographic conclusion to a thesis devoted to the geographical imaginations of Hongkonger Christians in Richmond, BC. For one thing, it brings home the importance that this thesis has not merely discussed Hongkongers who happen to be Christian, but Hongkonger *Christians*—individually, a Christian *homo religiosus*. They are Hong Kong people who were exposed and often converted to Christian faith while still in Hong Kong (and if not in Hong Kong, then in the transnational Hong Kong Christian bubble). As the pastor called for those who had strayed to return, it became clear that these Hongkonger Christians see their mission not only to maintain the geopolitical frames of their congregation but to use the Father's house as a platform from which to spread the love of Jesus to the city with an emphasis on Christian conversion. For another, it opens up what Massey (1994) has called a "global sense of place," for these Hongkonger Christians at St. Matthew's Church are not geographically isolated, but rather, the four walls of the church sanctuary are porous to influences, both from Hong Kong and an Anglophonic Christian bubble (Goh, 2003). These Hongkonger Christians are indeed exposed to various forms of transnational influences *via*

media and migration (Appadurai, 1996). Lastly, the event demonstrates that it is possible for Christians to come together, albeit awkwardly, despite differences in their geographical imaginations, linguistic abilities, or generational status. The centrepiece indeed is *religion*—religion that is continually re-contextualized and re-imagined.

And yet while “Simply Jesus” appeared to be geographically transcendent, it was an interesting demonstration of how geography still matters. Even those who were not ethnically Chinese had some connection to China, either through mission work or through friends or spouses. Most were regular attendees at St. Matthew’s Church, and those who were not were brought by friends or had disappeared for a long time, a strategic crowd with whom the pastor pleaded to return to Jesus, to come home to the Father’s house. The cultural map of those who attended “Simply Jesus,” in other words, was still drawn around those who could speak Chinese—preferably Cantonese: five out of the six Chinese songs that were sung for about forty minutes were in Cantonese. Many of the people attended Simply Jesus had moved from East Asia to the Anglophonic West and were now seeking to be a part of both worlds. In short, “Simply Jesus” was a transnational Hongkonger Christian event *par excellence* that sought through language and choice of songs to transcend geography but remained nonetheless bounded by a linguistic geography and a desire to extend the Christian faith into public space.

I end here with my own positionality in this linguistic, cultural, and political geography of religion that is as young and dynamic as Simply Jesus demonstrates. I have studied my home church in the Metro Vancouver area. But what this study has done is to change me, the way I see the Chinese church, and the way that I conceive of what it means to be a practicing Christian. Indeed, before this study, I practiced Christianity with the idea that as a second-generation Chinese Christian, I needed to fight for my own distinctiveness (Chai, 2002). What was needed

(in my opinion) was either a change of generations in the Chinese church or an exodus of the second generation to start congregations exclusively for the second generation, as Jeung (2005) has documented. These new congregations would appeal to my personal fusion of Chinese and North American geographical imaginations. But as I close, I end with empathy for my brothers and sisters across Anglophonic and Sinophonic lines. For this change, I am indebted to the work of Ley (2004), who has helped me to conceive of humans in geography as multidimensional subjects who are primarily *emotional* beings, whose lifeworlds are contingent on place, who are emotionally vulnerable and limited by their bodies. The first generation “uncles and aunties” are neither the enemy nor wholly ignorant: it is simply that we have different imaginations of (and hence, different ways of territorializing) what it means to be a Chinese Christian. As the completion of this thesis that has stressed hermeneutical collision with personal geographies demonstrates, these differences need not hinder dialogue between these two generations who have divergent imagined geographies.

Indeed, I have approached St. Matthew’s Church hermeneutically, as a second-generation Chinese Christian in Canada and America coming into dialogical collision with ostensibly older first-generation Chinese Christians whom I found were in a different but very vibrant (if not *young* and *youthful*) transnational network (Ley and Duncan, 1993). Aware of my position as a second-generation insider in these congregations, I sought to come to a place of meaning with people whom I found did not share my positionality and perhaps even differed with my intellectual and religious convictions. I certainly did not share everyone’s geographical imaginations or ways of practicing Christianity in space. But coming to the place where I could begin to understand Hongkonger Christian geographical imaginations—imaginations that I only partly shared—has helped me to see that what is at the heart of these imaginations is a search for

peace, a desire for home, a prayer for harmony. These realizations enabled me to see these people not as oppressive “uncle and aunties,” nor as colonial social conservatives, nor as geopolitical fundamentalists, nor even as the outdated “first generation,” but as *humans* in space trying to maintain a place away from home that they could call their own home and to spread the good news to the cities in which they lived about the peace that they had finally found in Jesus Christ.

These final reflections on positionality and hermeneutical encounter as a geographer of religion lead me to end this thesis with my own statement of peace, my own desire for home. Religion has often been seen by secularists as militaristic, challenging peace with its fundamentalist irrationality. But as I have shown in this thesis, such violence has often been a result of the maintenance of a territoriality one can call home, a home that is contingent on one’s geographical imaginations. As we seek to understand religion better, then, we are driven to understand peacemaking, to perhaps even make peace with religion. Perhaps with more understanding, we can avoid Huntington’s (1993) seemingly inevitable “clash of civilizations” and come into a space where religion, tradition, and spirituality can make peace at the table of dialogue. We may have different geographical imaginations fueled by differing religious motivations and spatialized into different religious territorialities. But if it is peace that we seek and a home that we desire to live in, then perhaps religion may lead us into true human encounters that make the world a better place for all of us to live in together, not only sheltered in the Father’s house but delighting together in the Father’s world.

Bibliography

- Abbas, A. 1997. *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Abusharaf, R.M. 1998. Structural adaptations in an immigrant Muslim congregation in New York. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 235-262.
- Agamben, G. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. London and New York: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Asato, J. (Producer) and Lin, J. (Director). 2003. *Better Luck Tomorrow* [Motion picture]. United States of America: MTV Films.
- Baker, H. D. R. 1983. Life in the cities: The emergence of Hong Kong man. *China Quarterly*, 95, 469-479.
- Barber, B. 1995. *Jihad vs. McWorld*. New York: Times Books.
- Beattie, L., & Ley, D. 2003. The German immigrant church in Vancouver: service provision and identity formation. *Die Erde*, 134, 3-22.
- Berger, P. 1967. *Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Brace, C., Bailey, A. R., & Harvey, D. C. (2006). Religion, place and space: a framework for investigating historical geographies of religious identities and communities. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30, 28-43.
- Brace, C., Bailey, A. R., & Harvey, D. C. (2007). Disciplining youthful Methodist bodies in nineteenth-century Cornwall. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97, 142-157.
- Brimicombe A.J. 2007. Ethnicity, religion, and residential segregation in London: evidence from a computational typology of minority communities *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 34(5), 884-904.
- Brubaker, R. 2000. The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its

- sequels in France, Germany, and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24, 531-548.
- Bunnell, T. 2004. *Malaysia, Modernity, and the Multimedia Super Corridor*. London: Routledge.
- Burawoy, M. 1991. The extended case method. In M. Burawoy, *et al.* (Eds.), *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 271-287.
- Burawoy, M. 2001. Grounding globalization. In M. Burawoy, *et al.* (Eds.), *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press. 337-350.
- Buttimer, A. 2006. Afterword: Reflections on geography, religion, and belief systems. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96, 197-202.
- Carroll, J. 2001. *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Carvajal, D. 1994, 9 May. Trying to halt 'silent exodus.' *Los Angeles Times*. May. A16.
- Casanova, J. 1992. Private and public religions. *Social Research*, 59 (1), 17-57.
- Cernetig, M. 2007, 30 Jun. Chinese Vancouver: A decade of change; How the Lower Mainland became the leading Asian metropolis on the continent. *Vancouver Sun*. A1.
- Cha, P. 2002. Ethnic Identity Formation and Participation in Immigrant Churches: Second-Generation Korean American Experiences. In Kwon, H. Y., & Warner, R. S. (Eds.). *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press. 141-156.
- Chai, K. J. 1998. Competing for the second generation: English-language ministry in a Korean Protestant church. In Warner, R. S., & Wittner, J. (Eds.). *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 295-331.
- Chai, K. J. 2002. Beyond "strictness" to distinctiveness: Generational transition in Korean Protestant churches. In Kwon, H. Y., & Warner, R. S. (Eds.). *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press. 157-180.
- Chan, W.-k. 1991. *The Making of Hong Kong Society: Three Studies in Class Formation in Early Hong Kong*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Chen, C. 2006. *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

- Cheng, M. M. and Wong, S.-l. 1997. Religious convictions and sentiments. In Lau, S-k, *et al* (Eds.), *Indicators of Social Development: Hong Kong 1995*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Chong, K. H. 1998. What it means to be a Christian: The role of religion in the construction of ethnic identity and boundary among second-generation Korean Americans. *Sociology of Religion*, 59, 259-286.
- Chu, C. 2009. Model settlements for "Better Class Chinese": The development of the Garden City concept in Colonial Hong Kong, 1919-1939. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, 2009, at Urban Geography: Gentrification and Class (Paper Session). Las Vegas, NV.
- Chu, Y. 2003. *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland, Self*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- CIA World Factbook. 2009. Hong Kong.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hk.html>. Accessed 23 July 2009.
- Cresswell, T. 1996. *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dunn, K. 2004. Islam in Sydney: contesting the discourse of absence. *Australian Geographer*, 35, 333-353.
- Dunn, K. 2005. Repetitive and troubling discourses of nationalism in the local politics of mosque development in Sydney, Australia. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23, 29-50.
- Ebaugh, H. R., & Chafetz, J. S. (Eds.). 2000. *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, and Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Ebaugh, H. R., & Chafetz, J. S. (Eds.). 2002. *Religion Across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks*. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, and Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Edgington, D.W., Goldberg, M.A., and Hutton, T.A. 2006. Hong Kong business, money, and migration in Vancouver. In Li, W. (Ed.), *The New Asian Immigrant Community: From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 155-183.
- Eliade, M. 1961. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Trans. William R. Trask. New York: Harper and Row.
- Faure, D. 1997. *Society: A Documentary History of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

- Faure, D. 2003. *Colonialism and the Hong Kong Mentality*. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.
- Feher, S. 1998. From the rivers of Babylon to the valleys of Los Angeles: The exodus and adaptation of Iranian Jews. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 71-95.
- Ferber, M. P. 2006. Critical realism and religion: objectivity and the insider/outsider problem. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96, 176-181.
- Fish, S. 2005. One university, under God? *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51, C1.
- Foner, N. 2005. Transnationalism old and new. In N. Foner, *In a New Land: A Comparative View of Immigration*. New York University Press: 62-88.
- Francis, L.J., Lewis, C.A., and Ng, P. 2002. Assessing attitude toward Christianity among Chinese speaking adolescents in Hong Kong: The Francis Scale. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 4(3), 431-440.
- Gadamer, H.-G. 2004. *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed. Weinsheimer, J. and Marshall, D.G. (Trans.). London and New York: Continuum.
- Geertz, C. 1973. Religion as a cultural system. In *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books. 87-125.
- George, S. 1998. Caroling with the Keralites: The negotiation of gendered space in an Indian immigrant church. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 265-293.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., and Blanc-Szanton, C. (Eds.). 1992. *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Goh, B. 2002. *Modern Dreams: An Inquiry into Power, Cultural Reproduction, and the Cityscape in Contemporary Urban Penang*. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.
- Goh, R. 2003. Deus ex machina: Evangelical sites, urbanism, and the construction of social identity. In Bishop, R., Phillips, J., and Yeo, W. W., *Postcolonial Urbanism: Southeast Asian Cities and Global Processes*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Gregory, D. 1994. *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

- Gregory, D. 2004. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. 1997. Discipline and practice: 'The field' as site, method, and location in anthropology. In A. Gupta and J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries of a Field Science*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press. 1-45.
- Hamilton, G. (Ed.). 1999. *Cosmopolitan Capitalists: Hong Kong and the Chinese Diaspora at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
- Han, J. 2008. Missionary. *Aether: The Journal of Media Geography*, 3, 58-83.
- Han, J. forthcoming. Reaching the unreached in the 10/40 window: The missionary geoscience of race, difference and distance. In Dittmer, J. and Sturm, T. (Eds.), *Mapping the End Times: American Evangelical Geopolitics and Apocalyptic Visions*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Harvey, D. 1973. *Social Justice and the City*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Harvey, D. C. 2002. Constructed landscapes and social memory: tales of St. Samson in early medieval Cornwall. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20, 231-248.
- Hepner, R.L. 1998. The house that Rasta built: Church-building and fundamentalism among New York Rastafarians. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 197-234.
- Ho, E. 2008. 'Flexible citizenship' or familial ties that bind? Singaporean transmigrants in London. *International Migration*, 46 (4), 145-175.
- Holloway, J., & Valins, O. (2002). Editorial: Placing religion and spirituality in geography. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 3, 5-9.
- Holloway, J. 2000. Institutional geographies of the New Age movement. *Geoforum*, 31, 553-565.
- Holloway, J. 2003. Make-believe: spiritual practice, embodiment, and sacred space. *Environment and Planning A*, 35, 1961-1974.
- Holloway, J. 2006. Enchanted spaces: the séance, affect, and geographies of religion. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96, 182-187.
- Hong Kong 2006*. Hong Kong: Information Services Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government.
- Hopkins, P. E. 2006. Youthful Muslim masculinities: gender and generational relations.

- Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31, 337-352.
- Hopkins, P. E. 2007. Young people, masculinities, religion and race: new social geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31, 163-177.
- Huntington, S. 1993. The clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22-49.
- Ivakhiv, A. 2006. Toward a geography of 'religion': mapping the distribution of an unstable signifier. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96, 169-175.
- Jenkins, P. 2007. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jeung, R. 2005. *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Joppke, C. 2004. The retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal state: theory and policy. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 55, 237-257.
- Kong, L. 2001a. Mapping 'new' geographies of religion: politics and poetics in modernity. *Progress in Human Geography*, 25, 211-233.
- Kong, L. 2001b. Religion and technology: refiguring place, space, identity and community. *Area*, 33, 404-413.
- Kong, L. 2002. In search of permanent homes: Singapore's house churches and the politics of space. *Urban Studies*, 39, 1573-1586.
- Kong, L. 2005. Religious schools: for spirit, (f)or nation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23, 615-631.
- Kong, L. 2006. Religion and spaces of technology: constructing and contesting nation, transnation, and place. *Environment and Planning A*, 38, 903-918.
- Ku, A. and Pun, N. (Eds.). 2004. *Remaking Citizenship in Hong Kong: Community, Nation, and the Global City*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Kurien, P. 1998. Becoming American by becoming Hindu: Indian Americans take their place at the multicultural table. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 37-70.
- Kwon, H. Y., Kim, K. C., and Warner, R. S. (Eds.). 2002. *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

- Lau, J. 1989. A cultural interpretation of the popular cinema of China and Hong Kong. Ph.D. dissertation. Northwestern University.
- Leon, L. 1998. Born again in East LA: The congregation as border space. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 163-196.
- Leung, B. and Chan, S. 2001. *Changing Church and State Relations in Hong Kong, 1950-2000*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Levitt, P. 2003. 'You know, Abraham was really the first immigrant': Religion and transnational migration. *International Migration Review*, 37 (3), 847-873.
- Levitt, P. 2006. *God Needs No Passports: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape*. New York: The New Press.
- Ley, D. and Duncan, J. 1993. *Place/Culture/Representation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ley, D. and Kobayashi, A. 2005. Back to Hong Kong: return migration or transnational sojourn? *Global Networks*, vol. 5, 111-128.
- Ley, D. and Samuels, M. (Eds.). 1978. *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*. Chicago: Maaroufa Press.
- Ley, D. 1995. Between Europe and Asia: The case of the missing sequoias. *Ecumene*, 2, 187-212.
- Ley, D. 2002. Mapping the metaphysical, plotting the pious: Four new atlases of religion. *Church History* 71, 143-151.
- Ley, D. 2003. Seeking *homo economicus*: The Canadian state and the strange story of the Business Immigration Program. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93(2), 426-441.
- Ley, D. 2004. Transnational spaces and everyday lives. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 29, 151-164.
- Ley, D. 2005. Post-multiculturalism? Working paper for Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis, Vancouver Centre of Excellence.
- Ley, D. 2008. The immigrant church as an urban service hub. *Urban Studies* 45, 2057-2074.
- Ley, D. forthcoming. *Millionaire Migrants: Trans-Pacific Life Lines*.
- Li, P. 2005. The rise and fall of Chinese immigration to Canada: Newcomers from Hong Kong

- Special Administrative Region of China and Mainland China, 1980-2000. *International Migration*, 43(3), 9-34.
- Li, W. 1998. Anatomy of a new ethnic settlement: The Chinese ethnoburb in Los Angeles. *Urban Studies*, 35(3), 479-501.
- Livingstone, D.N. 1994. Science and religion: Foreword to the historical geography of religion. *Journal of Historical Geography* 20, 367-383.
- Lui, T.-l., and Chiu, S. 1999. Social movements and public discourse on politics. In Ngo, T.-w., *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule*. London and New York: Routledge. 101-118.
- Ma, E. k-w. 1999. *Culture, Politics, and Television in Hong Kong*. Culture and Communication in Asia. London and New York: Routledge.
- Malinowski, B. 2001. Rational mastery of man of his surroundings (from *Magic, Science, and Religion*). In A. Lehmann and J. Meyers (Eds.), *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. 270-275.
- Marcus, G.E. 1995. Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95-117.
- Massey, D. 1994. A global sense of place. In *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 146-156.
- Mathews, G., Ma, E. K-w., and Lui, T.-l. 2008. *Hong Kong, China: Learning to belong to a nation*. New York and London: Routledge
- MacDonald, F. 2002. Towards a spatial theory of worship: some observations from Presbyterian Scotland. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 3, 61-80.
- McAlister, E. 1998. The Madonna of 115th Street revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the age of transnationalism. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 123-160.
- Migration News. 2002. *China, Hong Kong, Taiwan*. *Migration News*, 8(4). Available at http://migration.ucdavis.edu/MN/comments.php?id=2585_0_3_0. Accessed 13 August 2009.
- Mills, C. W. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Min, P.G. and Kim, J.H. 2001. *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities*. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, and Oxford: AltaMira Press.

- Mitchell, K. and Olds, K. 2000. Business networks and the globalization of property markets in the Pacific Rim. In K. Olds and H. Yeung (Eds.), *The Globalization of Chinese Business Firms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 147-173.
- Mitchell, K. 2004. *Crossing the Neoliberal Line: Pacific Rim Migration and the Metropolis*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Munn, C. 2001. *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880*. Surrey, UK: Curzon.
- Naylor, S. and Ryan, J. 2002. The mosque in the suburbs: Negotiating religion and ethnicity in South London. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 3(1), 39-59.
- Ngo, T.-w. 1999. *Hong Kong's History: State and society under colonial rule*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nonini, D. M., and Ong, A. 1997. Chinese transnationalism as an alternative modernity. In A. Ong and D. M. Nonini (eds.), *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. New York and London: Routledge. 3-33.
- Olson, E. and Silvey, R. 2006. Guest editorial: Transnational geographies: rescaling development, migration, and religion. *Environment and Planning A*, 38, 805-808.
- Olson, E. 2006. Development, transnational religion, and the power of ideas in the High Provinces of Cusco, Peru. *Environment and Planning A*, 38, 885-902.
- Ong, A. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ong, A. 2003. *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Orsi, R. A. 2001. Snakes alive: Resituating the moral in the study of religion. In *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader*. Edited by Elizabeth Castelli and Rosamond C. Rodman. New York: Palgrave.
- Pacione, M. 2001. The relevance of religion for a relevant human geography. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 115, 117-131.
- Palmer, C. (2002). Christianity, Englishness and the southern English countryside: a study of the work of H. J. Massingham. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 3, 25-38.
- Park, C. 1994. *Sacred worlds: An introduction to geography and religion*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Portes, A., Fernandez-Kelly, P., and Haller, W. 2005. Segmented assimilation on the ground:

- The new second generation in early adulthood. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(6), 1000-1040.
- Peach, C. 2006. Islam, ethnicity and South Asian religions in the London 2001 census. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31, 353-370.
- Phillips, D. 2006. Parallel lives? Challenging discourses of British Muslim self-segregation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24, 25-40.
- Polanyi, M. 2003. *Personal Knowledge: Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
- Preston, V. and Kobayashi, A. 2004. Transnationalism through the life course: Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 48(2), 151-167.
- Preston, V., Kobayashi, A., and Man, G. 2006. Transnationalism, gender, and civic participation: Canadian case studies of Hong Kong immigrants. *Environment and Planning A*, 38, 1633-1651.
- Proctor, J. 2006a. Introduction: theorizing and studying religion. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96, 165-168.
- Proctor, J. 2006b. Religion as trust in authority: theocracy and ecology in the United States. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96, 188-196.
- Raivo, P.J. 1997. Comparative religion and geography: Some remarks of the geography of religion and religious geography. *Temenos* 33, 137-49.
- Raivo, P.J. 2002. The peculiar touch of the East: Reading the post-war landscapes of the Finnish Orthodox Church. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 3(1) 11-24.
- Rose, J. 2001. Contexts of interpretation: Assessing immigrant reception in Richmond, BC. *The Canadian Geographer* 45, 474-93.
- Said, E. 1984. *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. London: Faber.
- Said, E. 2003. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.
- Sinha, A. 1995. Guest editorial: Landscapes of religion. *Landscape Research* 20, 1-2.
- Sinn, E. 2003. *Power and Charity: A Chinese Merchant Elite in Colonial Hong Kong*, rev. ed. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Smith, C. T. 1985. *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church in Hong Kong*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, T. 1978. Religion and Ethnicity in America. *American Historical Review*, 83, 1155-

1185.

Soja, E. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Sopher, D. 1981. Geography and religion. *Progress in Human Geography* 5, 510-524.

Stark, R. 1996. Religion as Context: Hellfire and Delinquency One More Time. *Sociology of Religion*, 57, 163-174.

Statistics Canada. 1997. Richmond, British Columbia (table). 1996 Population Statistics. 1996 Census. Ottawa. <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/Profil/details/details1pop1.cfm?> (accessed July 17, 2009).

Statistics Canada. 2003. Religion (95) and Visible Minority Groups (15) for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2001 Census - 20% Sample Data. 2001 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 97F0022XCB2001005. Released May 13, 2003. <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&PID=55825&APATH=3&METH=1&PTYPE=55440&THEME=56&FOCUS=0&AID=0&PLACENAME=0&PROVINCE=0&SEARCH=0&GC=0&GK=0&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=&FL=0&RL=0&FREE=0&GID=431656>. (accessed July 17, 2009).

Statistics Canada. 2007a. Immigrant population by place of birth, by census metropolitan area (2006 Census) (Kelowna, Abbotsford, Vancouver, Victoria). Ottawa. Released December 12, 2007. <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/cbin/fl/cstprintflag.cgi>. (accessed July 17, 2009).

Statistics Canada. 2007b. Population by mother tongue, by census metropolitan area (2006) (Kelowna, Abbotsford, Vancouver, Victoria). Ottawa. Released December 12, 2007. <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo12g-eng.htm>. (accessed August 14, 2009).

Statistics Canada. 2007c. Richmond, British Columbia (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 17, 2009).

Statistics Canada. 2008. Vancouver (CMA) (map). Percentage of visible minorities by 2006 Census Tracts (CT). Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 92-173-XIE. Ottawa. Released July 23, 2008. http://geodepot.statcan.gc.ca/2006/13011619/200805130120090313011619/031301_0320_13011619/05140712091908/220114031521220518220919090212051309141518092025_0503-eng.pdf (accessed July 17, 2009).

Statistics Canada. 2009. Place of birth for the immigrant population by period of immigration,

- 2006 counts and percentage distribution, for census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations - 20% sample data. Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 97-557. Ottawa. Released March 27, 2009. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-557/T404-eng.cfm?SR=1#tphp> (accessed July 17, 2009).
- Stump, R. 2008. *The Geography of Religion: Faith, Place, and Space*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Sturm, T. 2006. Prophetic eyes: The theatricality of Mark Hitchcock's premillennial geopolitics. *Geopolitics*, 11(2), 231-255.
- Sturm, T. 2008. The Christian right, eschatology, and Americanism: A commentary on Gerhardt. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26 (5), 929-934.
- Takaki, R. 1998. *Strangers From a Distant Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, rev. ed. Boston, New York, and London: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Tsai, J.-f. 1993. *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tse, J. 2007. *Wai, hai mai lam yun lei ga?* [Hey, you a man or not?]: The Hui Brothers' 1970s films and what it meant to be a man in Hong Kong, 1974-78. B.A. Honours thesis. University of British Columbia.
- Tsing, A.L. 2005. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Tu, W.-m. 1990. Cultural China: The periphery as the center. *Daedalus*, 120 (2), 1-32.
- Tu, W.-m. (Ed.). 1998. *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Tuan, Y.-f. 1976. Humanistic geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66, 266-276.
- Valins, O. 2000. Institutionalised religion: Sacred texts and Jewish spatial practice. *Geoforum*, 31, 575-586.
- Valins, O. 2003. Defending identities or segregating communities? Faith-based schooling and the UK Jewish community. *Geoforum*, 34, 235-247.
- Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship. 2007. Telephone Directory.
- Warf, B. and Vincent, P. 2007. Religious diversity across the globe: A geographic exploration. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 8(4), 597-613.

- Warner, R. S., & Wittner, J. (Eds.). 1998. *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Warner, R.S. 1993. Work in progress toward a new paradigm for the sociological study of religion in the United States. In Warner, R. S., *A Church of Our Own: Disestablishment and Diversity in American Religion*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 18-62.
- Warner, R.S. 1998. Introduction: Immigration and religious communities in the United States. In Warner, R. S., & Wittner, J. (Eds.). 1998. *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 3-34.
- Warner, R. S. 2000. Religion and new (post-1965) immigrants: Some principles drawn from field research. In Warner, R. S., *A Church of Our Own: Disestablishment and Diversity in American Religion*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press. 232-252.
- Warner, R.S. 2005. *A Church of Our Own: Disestablishment and Diversity in American Religion*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Waters, J. 2002. Flexible families? 'Astronaut' households and the experiences of lone mothers in Vancouver, British Columbia. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 3(2), 117-134.
- Waters, J. 2003. Flexible citizens? Transnationalism and citizenship amongst economic immigrants in Vancouver. *Canadian Geographer*, 3, 219-234.
- Waters, J. 2006. Geographies of cultural capital: education, international migration and family strategies between Hong Kong and Canada. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 31, 171-192.
- Weber, M. 2003. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. T. Parsons. Mineola, NY: Dover.
- Wedlock 夫妻節. 11.11. 2009. Retrieved 20 March 2009, from <http://www.wedlock11-11.org>.
- Wellmeier, N.J. 1998. Santa Euliana's people in exile: Maya religion, culture, and identity in Los Angeles. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 97-122.
- Wolfe, T. 1987. *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. New York: Picador.
- Wright, N.T. 2003. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Yang, F. 1998a. Tenacious unity in a contentious community: Cultural and religious dynamics in

- a Chinese Christian church. In Warner, R.S. and Wittner, J. (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Congregations and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 333-362.
- Yang, F. 1998b. Chinese conversions to evangelical Christianity: The importance of social and cultural contexts. *Sociology of Religion*, 59, 237-257.
- Yang, F. 1999. *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Yeoh, B. and Willis, K. 2005. Singaporean and British transmigrants in China and the cultural politics of 'contact zones.' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (2), 269-285.
- Zelinsky, W. 1961. An approach to the religious geography of the United States: Patterns of church membership in 1952. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 51 (2), 139-193.
- Zhao, S. 2003. Beijing's wait-and-see policy toward Taiwan: An uncertain future. *East Asia: an International Quarterly*, 20(3), 39-60.

Appendix 1: Behavioural Research Ethics Board Approval Certificate



The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - FULL BOARD

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: David F. Ley	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT: UBC/Arts/Geography	UBC BREB NUMBER: H07-02793
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:		
<small>Institution</small>	<small>Site</small>	
N/A		N/A
Other locations where the research will be conducted: Interviews and participant observation will take place at: [Redacted] St. Matthew's Church (edited for anonymity)		
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Justin Tse		
SPONSORING AGENCIES: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) - "Place-making in Chinese Churches in Vancouver"		
PROJECT TITLE: Diverse Geographical Imaginations among Generations in a Chinese Canadian Church in British Columbia		
REB MEETING DATE: June 12, 2008	CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: June 12, 2009	
DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:		DATE APPROVED: July 2, 2008
<small>Document Name</small>	<small>Version</small>	<small>Date</small>
Protocol:		
Protocol for Project Authority Bubble	v. 1	May 12, 2008
Consent Forms:		
Parent Consent Form	v. 2	June 21, 2008
Parent Consent Form	v. 1	May 12, 2008
Subject Consent Form	v. 1	May 12, 2008
Subject Consent Form	v. 2	June 21, 2008
Assent Forms:		
Subject Assent Form for Minors	v. 3	June 23, 2008
Subject Assent Form for Minors	v. 1	May 12, 2008
Subject Assent Form for Minors	v. 2	June 21, 2008
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:		
Interview Script	v. 1	May 12, 2008
Letter of Initial Contact:		
Letter of Invite	v. 2	June 21, 2008
Letter of Invite	v. 3	June 23, 2008
Letter of Invite	v. 1	May 12, 2008
The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.		

**Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
and signed electronically by one of the following:**

Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair
Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
Dr. Daniel Salhani, Associate Chair
Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair

Appendix 2: Interview Questionnaire

THEME 1: PLACE OF ORIGIN

LEAD QUESTION: Where did you grow up?

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- What are some of your key memories of where you grew up?
- Did you grow up with any religious affiliations?
- Where did you go to school? Was it a religious school?
- Do you think that religious schools are more prestigious schools in Hong Kong? Why or why not?
- Do you ever wish you could go back to the time and place when and where you grew up?
- What contact do you have with that place today? How? How often?
- Do you consider yourself a Hongkonger?
- What does it mean to be a Hongkonger?
- What are your perceptions of people from mainland China?
- What are your perceptions of Canadian-born Chinese (CBC)?

THEME 2: PLACES WITH PEOPLE YOU FEEL CLOSE TO

LEAD QUESTION: Who are the people you would say are the closest to you in your life?

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- Who do you hang out with in Vancouver? Where are they from?
- Do you have people close to you in Hong Kong? How many? How close?
- Would you invite these people to church? Why or why not?
- How close do you feel to the people at St. Matthew's Church (SMC)? Which people at SMC?

THEME 3: GEOGRAPHY OF AUTHORITY

LEAD QUESTION: What about a person in your life would make you respect them?

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- Who are some people in your life that you respect? Where are they from?
- Who are some Christians that you respect? Where are they from?
- What are your views on the revival speakers from Hong Kong this year?
- What are your views on the appropriate role of church leadership?

THEME 4: LANGUAGE COMFORT

LEAD QUESTION: What language do you principally use in everyday conversation?

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- Why are you more comfortable with that language?
- Which language is more comfortable for listening to sermons?
- Which language is more comfortable for doing the liturgy?
- When someone says, "Oh, you understand English/Chinese, so come to this event," how do you react?

THEME 5: MEDIA PRACTICES

LEAD QUESTION: What is your favourite television show?

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- In what setting is that show set?
- In what language is that show?
- What kinds of music does that show usually play?
- What kinds of music do you generally enjoy?
- If you were to sing karaoke, what kinds of songs would you want to come up?
- Does that show or music tend to feature religious themes?
- What is your favourite newspaper?

THEME 6: TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

LEAD QUESTION: Which service at SMC do you usually attend?

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- Which liturgical style at SMC do you prefer (Canto-pop, traditional Anglican, English service, coffeehouse)?
- How did you become a Christian?
- Where did your conversion happen?
- Into what community were you drawn after you were converted? Why were you drawn there?
- Which sorts of people would you be more drawn to evangelize?
- What would make SMC a better place for you to worship and hang out?