

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AMONG CHINESE CANADIAN EVANGELICALS IN SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

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*Dedicated to my wife Anna,
and our children Cadence, Kyrie, and Azure.*

Abstract

This thesis examines how Chinese-Canadian evangelicals (CCEs) maintain social solidarity through short-term missions (STMs) to China. STMs are pilgrimage-like service trips that entails an individual to travel to a distant place to engage in social service for one or two weeks. This research draws on theoretical insights from Randall Collins' interaction ritual chains (IRC) theory to examine the intersections of ethnicity, religion, and emotions at the macro-, meso-, micro-, and situational levels. This study involved over 131 in-depth interviews with 48 STM participants, observations of four STMs in 2015, and a two-year ethnography of a sending church north of the Greater Toronto Area in 2015-16. My first empirical chapter takes a macro-level perspective to investigating the global missions phenomenon. My findings reveal that the religious discourses that motivate the collective actions of transnational Chinese fundamentalist organizations are unstable, and this unity based on a religious pan-Chinese ethnicity is challenged by linguistic, geographic, generational, and ideological fractures. In my second chapter analyzing the meso-level CCE congregations, I observed how they maintained their organizational focus by operating cyclically and how each congregation's members actively participated to maintain the pursuit of their mission. In my third chapter, I focus on the micro-level motivations for CCEs to engage in STM action. I connect contemporary neuroscience to IRC theory's conception of IR "chains," and suggested the concept be revised to "entangled chains." I discuss how acknowledging the emotional entanglement of various identities should drive the analytical discussion of the self in modernity. My final chapter examines how situations of putative spiritual conflicts allowed STMers to generate various collective-effervescence outcomes. This thesis contributes to the sociology of religion and emotions and our understanding of communities by uncovering how social solidarity is generated and sustained at multiple levels of social organization.

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List of Abbreviations

ARMD	Action Research Model Development
CCE	Chinese Canadian evangelical
CCCOWE	The Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism
CMA	The Christian and Missionary Alliance
ECAC	Eastern Chinese Alliance Church
EE	Emotional energy
FCAC	Faith Chinese Alliance Church
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
IB	International Baccalaureate
IR	Interaction ritual
IRC	Interaction ritual chains
LTM	Long-term mission
LTMer	Long-term missionary
MCAC	Mercy Chinese Alliance Church
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTRO	Negotiated transnational religious organization
NSYR	National Survey of Youth and Religion
PCAC	Peace Chinese Alliance Church
RAB	Religious Affairs Bureau
RNGO	Religious non-governmental organization
STM	Short-term mission
STMer	Short-term missionary
TSPC	Three-Self Patriotic Church

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis addresses the overarching question of how the short-term mission enterprise within the Chinese Canadian evangelical (CCE) community affects their social solidarity. People's ongoing search for meaning, and the transient, fragmented nature of their sense of social solidarity, have historically been concerns of sociology, starting from the works of its founding fathers (de Tocqueville, 1835; Durkheim, 1897; Weber, 1905). This thesis follows the same line of inquiry by examining the case of Chinese Canadian evangelicals. It involved over 131 in-depth interviews with 50 STM participants, observations of four short-term missions (STMs) in the summer of 2015, and a two-year ethnographic study of a sending church north of the Greater Toronto Area in 2015-16.

In this introductory chapter, I first introduce the STM phenomenon and explain why it deserves sociological attention. I then present my research questions and summarize interaction ritual chains (IRC) theory. Finally, I position my study within ongoing discussions about how the sociology of emotions can contribute to the sociology of religion, and vice-versa.

1.1 What are Short-Term Missions?

STMs are pilgrimage-like service trips, typically lasting from one week to a few months, headed by Christian¹ organizations such as churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As opposed to long-term missions, which require prolonged commitment, short-term missions are an accessible version of mission participation for the layperson. The mission entails an individual leaving his or her daily routine and travelling to a distant place to engage in a type of social service usually in the fields of health (e.g. medical clinics, counseling), education (e.g. English language summer camps, skills training), or situational disaster relief (e.g. post-tsunami shelter building, food distribution).

They are focused on cultivating heightened spiritual experiences the contrast with everyday routine, and are comparable in this way to other forms of religious retreat or travel. For instance, pilgrimages are a form of religious journey described by Turner and Turner (1978) as characterized by everyday structures being subdued, resulting in moments of *anti-structure* and *communitas*. Similarly, Eade and Sallnow (1991) have argued that the destination shrine of a pilgrimage acts as a "religious void, a ritual space capable of accommodating diverse meanings and practices" (1991, p. 15). Building on Turner and Turner's work, Priest and his colleagues describe STMs as

rituals of intensification, where one temporarily leaves the ordinary, compulsory, workday life "at home" and experiences an extraordinary, voluntary, sacred experience "away from home" in a liminal space where sacred goals are pursued, physical and spiritual tests are faced, normal structures are dissolved, *communitas* is experienced, and personal transformation occurs. (Priest, et al. 2006, pp. 433-34)

In a similar vein, Richter (2008) states,

The mission trip has emerged as a contemporary form of pilgrimage among Christians of every stripe. Mission trips draw on the structure of classical pilgrimage: traveling away from home, shared liminality and practices on the road, communion with “saints” in distant lands, and returning with a transformed heart. Mission-trip veterans yearn for the life-centering community they’ve encountered while on the road.

Howell maintains that STM “is a culturally mediated form of travel with particular dynamics” (2012, p. 57). In other words, the point is not merely to perform good deeds, but to experience religious community in a particular way.

Since the 1980s, the practice of STMs has grown alongside the expansion of the infrastructure of global tourism (Howell, 2012; Priest & Howell, 2013) and the global rise of evangelical Christianity (Hunt, 2011; Jenkins, 2012; Offutt, 2014; Rah, 2009; Tam, 2018). For Christian youths, committed church participation consists of the weekly staples of worship and fellowship, with the occasional spiritual retreat. Few experiences are as exhilarating as foreign travel, and for some churches, it has been an annual commitment to send teams of short-term youth missionaries abroad. It is not an understatement to say that STMs are one of the pinnacles of the lay Christian experience.

These trips are practiced across many Christian denominations, to the extent that it is now more common for devoted church attendees to have participated than not. Beginning in the 1980s, an estimated 350,000 Americans have traveled abroad with Protestant missionary agencies; donations to these groups totalled \$3.75 billion, significantly larger than the combined budget of the four largest faith-based development agencies (G. Clarke, 2006; Moreau, Corwin, & McGee, 2004).² Priest and Priest (2008) estimated that 2 million individuals have participated in Christian STMs annually in America alone.³

The fact that churches continue to commit their resources to STMs suggests that they believe consider them worth the investment. This can be understood in two ways. First, perhaps churches are able to convert masses of people through STMs. However, that does not seem to be the case given the STMers only spend a short time at their destination and can hardly develop a trusting and deep relationship with the locals whom they seek to convert (Howell, 2012). Second, perhaps churches see STMs as a benefiting their congregations. These benefits could include spiritual growth, increased sense of engagement with mission work, or anything else the churches deem positive. When STMers return from abroad, they are often given the opportunity to publicly share transformative stories in the form of testimonies, a practice which suggests that the STM is viewed by church leadership as an emotionally powerful experience (Howell, 2012; Priest, 2008).

Rhetoric surrounding STMs suggest they have a long-term transformative effect on participants’ spiritual lives. Christian practitioners, missiologists,⁴ and some sociologists of religion have argued that the brief one to two-week long journeys are transformative experiences for its youth participants (e.g. Beyerlein, Trinitapoli, & Adler, 2011; Priest et al., 2006; Probasco, 2013; Trinitapoli & Vaisey, 2009) Anthropologists and missiologists have provided narrative accounts on how these changes come about (Howell, 2012; Priest et al., 2006; Priest & Howell, 2013). Sociologists Trinitapoli and Vaisey (2009) have also used survey data to find that many measures of religiosity increase after youths attend an STM.

It is thus plausible that STMs have some impact upon the STMers' sense of social solidarity (primarily in the form of increased religiosity) with their congregation. However, there is evidence that the spike in religiosity after STMs is temporary. Smith and Snell (2009) found that participation in one or more mission trips is not independently correlated with high religiosity and does not predict high religiosity in a few years (p. 218; also see Ellis, 2015). Instead, the strongest predictors of religiosity include strong parental religion, frequent personal prayer and scripture reading, high teenage importance of faith, having no doubts about religious faith, and having many religious experiences (p. 218).⁵ The extent to which STMs play a long-term role in increasing religiosity is thus questionable. From the perspective of a religious economies model (Finke & Stark, 2003), given that the STM is an emotional product that is exclusive to Christian congregations, questioning the nature of its influence on these congregations is a suitable entry point to understanding social solidarity.

1.2 Situating Short-term Missions in Modernity and Fundamentalism

The necessity for STMs, and missionary work in general, can be traced to the fundamentalist movements at the turn of the 19th century. It was not a coincidence that the birth of fundamentalism overlapped with that of sociology, as both began with concerns about the rise of modernity. When I use the term "modernity" or any of its variants (e.g. modern, modernism, modernization), I follow Kumar's (1995) definition of a society that carries the hallmarks of Western 18th-century advances in industry and science. Modern societies prioritize the working philosophies of rationalism and utilitarianism and are politically organized as nation-states, often governed by a form of popular sovereignty. As a result, modern societies are constantly pulled towards the future by welcoming and promoting novelty. Current features of modernity also include globalization, migration, and the decline of the nation-state. These trends reinforce the classical features of modernity, transience, fragmentation, and the loss of the sense of meaning.

Modernity is tied to the rise of secularism, a body of principles that value rational knowledge and experience over the supernatural (Bellah, 1964). The secularization of society necessitated the rejection of the absolute submission to the authority of religion. The prominence of the discourse of secularism spurred fundamentalist movements around the globe within not only Christian faiths, but many other established religions (Almond, Appleby, & Sivan, 2003). Given that modernism prizes change over continuity, quantity over quality, and commercial efficiency over traditional values (Lawrence, 1989, p. 27), Christian fundamentalism is a religiously-based cognitive and affective orientation of the world characterized by protest against change and the ideological orientation of modernism (Antoun, 2001, p. 3). In other words, fundamentalism is the other side of the secularism diode, one that protests against the changes wrought by modernity.

The act of missions is a core tenet of Christian fundamentalism. It calls believers to action and to spread their faith to bring about the return of Christ, based on the soteriological (i.e. the doctrine of salvation) position that God's kingdom will not arrive on Earth until all have heard the gospel as written in Matthew 24:14. STMs are an important enterprise for many stripes of conservative Christians within modernity, and are thus ideal cases to study social solidarity. By focusing sociological attention on how CCEs mobilize through STMs, we can

examine mechanisms of social solidarity at work when CCEs mobilize, and also the social forces that push them apart.

1.3 Research Questions

I approach my study with the following research questions, dedicating a chapter to each:

1. At the macro level, why do missions exist? How are the Chinese involved in missions?
2. At the meso level, how do CCE churches focus the attention of their members for STMs?
3. At the micro level, why do people go on STMs? What are their personal motivations?
4. How do STM situations promote social solidarity?

Using interaction ritual chains (IRC) theory, I examine how social solidarity is created and maintained among CCEs in STMs. Rossner and Meher (2014, p. 200) define social solidarity in IRC theory:

In sociology, ritual theory is premised on the idea that meaning is generated in and by repeated social interactions. By “meaning” we refer to the forces that compel members of a society to engage in ways that maintain social and emotional solidarity despite personality differences. In the course of interactions, morals, symbols and emotions shared by a social group are exchanged, reiterated, strengthened or manipulated. In short, rituals are interactions where people mutually focus their attention on a common object, resulting in a shared reality, a sense of solidarity, and symbols of group membership (Collins, 2004). Rituals can be large and small, formal and informal, planned or spontaneous, and are at the heart of all social life; from world-scale spectacles like the Olympic Games, through identified rituals like graduation ceremonies, down to such banal interactions as “liking” a friend’s content on Facebook. Through ritual, collective sentiments are solidified, comprising a felt effect, whether that is nationalism, the poignancy of a rite of passage, or the simple confirmation that one’s contribution to the social network has merit.

In the chapters that follow, I examine the shared emotional experiences within STMs that promote social solidarity. I further elaborate upon IRC theory in the next chapter.

1.4 Secularism and Individualism in the Sociology of Religion

Since the dawn of sociology, its founders have identified the sociology of religion as fertile ground for studying social life. Weber (1905) predicted that the rationalization of society and science would minimize the role of religion. Durkheim (1893) similarly wrote that the social solidarity functions of religion in traditional societies would be displaced by other forms of membership. A fundamental question that underlies their inquiries is how the consequences of modernization (e.g. industrialization, urbanization, enlightenment) affect groups’ social solidarity.

This line of inquiry developed over half a century (Bellah, 1964; Parsons, 1944) and culminated in the “secularization thesis,” wherein Peter Berger (1967) and other sociologists of religion (e.g. Luckmann, 1967) advanced that modernization necessarily leads to a decline of

religion because of rationalization, individualization, and improved material conditions. Berger was not alone in this position, as many intellectuals since the Enlightenment have also posited similar ideas, such as Nietzsche (God is dead) and Freud (the illusion of religion). Berger's (1967) central argument was that the "sacred canopy" of Christianity in Europe is being torn to shreds by modernity.

In the following decades, many sociologists of religion accepted the secularization position *a priori*⁶. Ultimately, though, the empirical data made it untenable, culminating in Berger (1997, 2008) and others to recant the core premise and acknowledging that despite advances in modernization, global religiosity had not declined (Hefner, 2009; Jenkins, 2002; Pew Research Center, 2015; Sherkat & Ellison, 1999; Stark, 1999, 2015).⁷ Debates on secularization's uneven and fragmented outcomes, and attempts to develop a more nuanced theory, continue to this day (Bibby, 2012; Casanova, 2001; Chaves, 1994; Martin, 2005; Thiessen, 2015). For example, Smith (1998) argues that instead of Berger's (1967) "sacred canopy" giving a shared meaning to communal life, portable pockets of Christian conservatism now exist as "sacred umbrellas" in America.

Since the 90s, research has focused on the resilience of religion. Two concomitant and interrelated streams of development emerged as a result; the first involved the study of institutional religion's retreat from public spaces to individually based religious beliefs and practices, and the second was the development of a "new paradigm" in the sociological study of religion emphasizing the resilience rather than inevitable decline of religion. Both will be discussed below.

1.5 Religious Individualism

Much of the groundwork for the study of individualism in the sociological study of religion was set by Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), who observed in *Democracy in America* that individualism is embedded in the social behaviour of American citizens. Bellah and his colleagues (1985), grounding their work upon Tocqueville's observations, focused on religious individualism in their now-seminal book *Habits of the Heart*, one of the few sociology texts to have achieved mainstream success. The book's core argument is that in a post-traditional modern society, the burden of shaping one's destiny falls upon the individual and, as a result, individuals adopt an individualistic approach in religion. What arose was the iconic term "Sheilaism," derived from a passage nurse Sheila Larson describes her faith to the interviewer: "I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It's Sheilaism. Just my own little voice". Since *Habits of the Heart*, other studies in the sociology of religion have consistently replicated the finding that individuals create their own meanings in religion (Ammerman, 2014; Roof, 1999; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith & Snell, 2009; Thiessen, 2015). A relatively recent development in the sociology of religion involves examining the heterogeneity among "religious nones" (those who claim no religious preference) and the resilience of personalized religion (Ammerman, 2014; Baker, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2012; Thiessen, 2015; Wilkins-Laflamme, 2015). As Ammerman (2014) has demonstrated, there are subjective sacred elements to be found in the daily lives of Americans.

Of particular interest within the context of individualization of religion is the religious lives of youths and emerging adults in the West. This direction of research has garnered interest from scholars studying youths and emerging adults in America (Clydesdale, 2007; Flory & Miller,

2007; Wuthnow, 2007), Britain (Savage, Collins-Mayo, Mayo, & Cray, 2006), Australian (Mason, Webber, & Singleton, 2008), Canada (Penner, Harder, Anderson, Désorcy, & Hiemstra, 2012; E. Wong, Tam, Hung, Tsui, & Wong, 2018) and around the world (Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence, 2008). However, to date, the most extensive research on the religious lives of youths in America come from Christian Smith's National Survey of Youth and Religion (NSYR, 2012), the largest database to date dedicated to studying youth and emerging adult religiosity in America.⁸

The NSYR's findings in America reveal a cohort replacement phenomenon in which the current generation of youth and emerging adults are less likely to be religious (also see Pew Research Center, 2013). This is opposed to a life-stage phenomenon in which individuals go through periods of increased or decreased religiosity associated with ages (Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith & Snell, 2009; also see Pew Research Center, 2012). Smith and his co-authors provide numerous explanations for cohort replacement, such as the struggle to reconcile religion with science, challenges from the new atheism movement (e.g. Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris), life-stage transitions (e.g. moving to another city for college), and disagreement with the church on social issues (e.g. homosexuality, premarital sex, abortion, cannabis). Within Canada, these findings have largely been corroborated (e.g. Penner et al., 2012; Thiessen, 2015; Wong & Tam, 2018). Most importantly for this thesis, one of the strongest factors involved was poor experiences and negative emotions in religious institutions.

Researchers have also found evidence of the startling resilience of the religious faithful. Although Christianity in general has been declining in emerging adult participation, the percentage of emerging adults in conservative denominations has remained quite constant, with 15-20% of 18- to 23-year-olds being identified as high in religiosity, the same number as in the 1970s. Smith and Snell (2009, p. 241) theorized that a number of relationship-based mechanisms in highly religious youth increased religiosity in early adulthood: socialization, avoidance of relationship breakdown, enjoyment of participation rewarding continuation, and conserving accumulated religious capital. These mechanisms are controlled by the mutually constitutive and reinforcing variables of highly religious parents (also see Bengtson, Putney, & Harris, 2013; Roof, 2009; Sherkat, & Ellison, 1999), reliable religious adults, meaningful religious experiences (also see Manglos, 2010; Nelson, 2005; Singleton, 2001; Trinitapoli & Vaisey, 2009), religious capital (i.e. opportunities for youth to exercise their abilities), developing personal prayer and scripture reading habits, and mitigating religious doubts.

The resilience of conservative evangelical denominations has also been found in Canada, where religious trends largely mirror those in the U.S. (Reimer, 2003).^{9 10} In Reimer and Wilkinson's (2015) study of Christianity in Canada, the researchers found a similar outcome to those of NSYR (year), that among all denominations of Christianity, only conservative evangelicals have been able to withstand shrinkage by keeping their growth at replacement levels. This low rate of shrinkage is likely due to the higher religiosity (Wilkins-Laflamme, 2016) and conversion rates (Hirschman, 2004; see also Connor, 2009) of immigrants, especially among the ethnic Chinese, compared to white Canadians (Park, 2009; Reitz, Banerjee, Phan, & Thompson, 2009; Skirbekk, Malenfant, Basten, & Stonawski, 2012; Yang & Tamney, 2006).

Nonetheless, the overall story of religiosity in Canada seems to be one of decline, and immigrants alone cannot keep making up for the difference (Bibby, 1987; Bowen, 2004;

Brenner, 2016; Connor, 2009; Reimer, 2017; Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015; Thiessen, 2015). Many researchers have observed the trend of declining religiosity have been observed among youths and emerging adults in Canada. Penner and his colleagues' (2012) nationwide study found that evangelical congregations are losing one-third of their childhood affiliates, with Catholics and mainline Protestants losing one-half and two-thirds respectively. These former childhood affiliates are not converting to other religions; rather, they are declaring themselves to be agnostic, atheist, or a religious "none." However, there are critical limitations to Penner and his associates' findings in terms of accounting for life-stage and the impact of immigrant congregations, as will be discussed below.

Evidence suggests that in Canada, religiosity is highly correlated with life-stage and immigration. In terms of life-stage, Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS), which has been tracking religiosity since 1985, found that religiosity is the lowest among Canadians from their mid-teens to late twenties (Clark, 2000), with those between 25 and 34 being the least religious (Clark, 2003). Major life events like marriage and children also make a difference in terms of religiosity, as parents between the age 25 and 34 (the least religious age) are more likely to bring their children to church because of the benefits (e.g. imparting good values, free childcare) it offers to children (Clark, 2003; Wong et al., 2018). In fact, researchers have coined the term "boomerang effect" to describe Asian young adults who leave the church only to come back upon having children (Lee, 2014). In other words, Penner and his associate's findings cover only the least religious phase of Canadians, while a long-term longitudinal project may tell another story about religion in Canada.

Canadian immigrants have also been found to be consistently more religious than their Canadian-born peers (Clark, 2000, 2003; Clark & Schellenberg, 2006; Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015; Wilkins-Laflamme, 2016). In addition, over 20% of the Canadian population consists of immigrants (compared to America's 13 percent estimate, which includes illegal immigrants), resulting them having a greater impact on Canada's religious landscape (Pew Research Center, 2013). Penner and his associate's study did not account for the immigrant or ethnicity variables, which seem to factor heavily in determining the religious landscape of Canada.

Identifying this limitation, Wong, myself, and our colleagues (2018) conducted a follow-up study modeled after the studies of Penner and his associates (2012) and Smith's NSYR (2012), but with an emphasis on examining how ethnicity and culture affect the religiosity of Chinese Canadian evangelical youth and young adults. We concluded with four ideal types:¹¹ the highly engaged, the less affiliated, the spiritual "nones" and "dones," and the agnostics or atheists. These findings echoed those of the NSYR, revealing a complex web of factors that affects a youth or young adult's identification with CCE churches.

In our study, those who stay highly engaged in the CCE church indicated mentorship and a sense of belonging and connectedness with a vibrant and authentic community as important factors for staying in their CCE church. The less affiliated, those who still identified as Christian but had become more reluctant to engage their faith community, cited dysfunctional leadership and disenfranchisement as reasons for their sense of disconnection. Spiritual "nones" and "dones" indicated life transitions and romance as reasons for leaving the church altogether. Finally, the agnostic or atheist cited the intellectual complexity of God and conflicting liberal ideology as reasons for their leaving. Echoing Smith's NSYR's findings, this study found that the variables of Chinese ethnicity and culture played a critical role in the emotional experiences

affecting whether youth or young adults chose to remain within the immigrant church (Wong et al., 2018).

Sociology's concern with secularization has moved beyond the simple narrative that modernity necessitates the decline of religion. Instead, much of the recent literature has been focused on religion's resilience, shifting the emphasis away from institutional to individualized religion, and examining the sectors where religion is weakening or experiencing a resurgence. Trends observed in America were largely mirrored in Canada. Furthermore, indications exist that secularization has actually been the trend only in Western Europe, and religion is alive and well in other parts of the world (Pew Research Center, 2015).

1.6 Sociology of Religion's "New Paradigm"

Another key development in the sociology of religion is what Warner (1993) called a "new paradigm" for studying the sociology of religion grounded in rational-choice open-market theories and the empirical analysis of religious vitality (rather than strictly religious decline).¹² This type of scholarship has departed from grand theoretical claims and turned to examining the individual contexts in which religion is situated. James Beckford (2012) argued in his 2012 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) presidential address that the sociology of religion needs to step away from grand religious theorizing (e.g. secularization theory) and focus on describing the social reality of the religious. For example, America's unique pluralism and denominationalism is distinct from religious practice other parts of the world (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Warner & Wittner, 1998). This paradigm calls for religions, institutional or individualized, to be studied based on their own local conditions.

Since Warner's call for a change in paradigms, an increased focus has been placed upon the "new immigrants" (Ebaugh, 2003; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Levitt, 2007; Warner & Wittner, 1998). Asian congregations have become a focal point in the sociological study of the multicultural mosaic in America¹³ and Canada (see Guenther, 2008; Ley, 2008; Reitz et al., 2009; Tse, 2013). This is especially the case for post-1965 immigrants, since the passing of the Hart-Cellar Act greatly increased the racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. (Min & Jang, 2015).¹⁴ Similarly, Canada's adoption of the point system in 1967 spurred the growth of Asian immigration mirroring their southern neighbour's development (Li, 1998, 2005). For the post-1960s Asian-American and Canadian populations, the majority are currently in the second to third generation. While most of the literature discussed below is drawn from studies of Asian congregations in the U.S., once again the key themes largely overlap with those in Canada (Reimer, 2003).

Being a first-generation immigrant, or having been raised by immigrant parents, are both crucial factors affecting the way a person experiences religious community in their new homeland. Jerry Park's (2009) review of the literature of Asian American Christianity divides the sociological studies of Asian American congregations into two general categories: the significance of religion for the 1) first generation and 2) second generation. For the first generation, the advances have examined how religious communities facilitate the socialization of immigrants into their destination countries. Ebaugh and Chafetz's "Community Center Model" (2000b) outline the five main functions of Protestant immigrant congregations: 1) celebrating secular holidays, 2) providing a community center for social gatherings, 3) offering recreational facilities, 4) offering native-language or ESL support, and 5) secular services. These

congregations address the material, cultural, and spiritual needs of immigrants during their transitions to their new homes (see Bankston & Zhou, 1996; Ley, 2008; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang, 1999).

Children of immigrants are distinct both from first-generation immigrants and from those with native-born parents. There are various definitions of this “new second generation” (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut, 2004; Zhou, 1997), but the general consensus is that regardless of whether the second-generation individual was born in North America or immigrated over at a young age, he or she faces different challenges than his or her parents in navigating the social landscape of North America. It is important to note that in this literature, the “second generation” refers to those who grew up in the 1990s following the aforementioned immigration reforms in 1960s. As such, the extant literature on their religiosity defines this group of people both in terms of life stage (youths or young adults) and in terms of the social forces of the period in which they grew up.

The second generation do not share the same need for material and social support as their parents. Growing up in America affords them the English-language and cultural repertoire to navigate social life. As a result, for many members of the second generation, participating in a congregation is less a matter of survival in a new home (as was the case for their parents), and more of identity construction (Kurien, 1998). There are longstanding concerns of a “Silent Exodus” among ethnic congregations, where the second generation is slowly leaving the ethnic churches in which they grew up (H. Lee, 1996). However, immigrant churches may still serve critical functions for working-class or refugee Asian-American Christians, such as improving educational outcomes and mitigating deviant behavior (Bankston & Zhou, 1996; Cao, 2005; Guest, 2003). For the second generation that arrived through the socioeconomic class filters of immigration, the immigrant church retains the social function of being a site of transmitting ethnic language, culture, and traditions.

This fear of a “silent exodus” parallels the aforementioned secularization of the next generation of believers (see Bengston et al., 2013; Penner et al., 2012; Roof, 2009). Scholars of the new paradigm have also examined the retention of the next generation within ethnic congregations. Yang (1998b) observed what he calls a “tenacious unity,” wherein religious centers may remain largely united despite the presence of numerous “schisms” (Shin & Park, 1988). In the first chapter of this thesis, I argue that these “fractures” may be split along linguistic, generational, geographical, or ideological lines (also see Tam, 2018). Similar findings appear in other studies examining CCE congregations in Canada (Tse, 2013; Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018). The reasons for the next generation leaving the church are complex and is grounded on the complex identities at the intersections of faith and nationality,¹⁵ ethnicity,¹⁶ gender,¹⁷ social class,¹⁸ and life-stage (see above). These factors inevitably affect the emotional experiences of the second generation in their immigrant churches.

1.7 The New Paradigm and Transnationalism

The new paradigm for sociology of religion has affected studies at the transnational as well as the local level. This position echoes the call of Cadge and Ecklund (2007) for the discipline to step outside of institutional walls. More recently, Fenggang Yang (2016) stated in his 2016 SSSR presidential address that sharpening the conceptual and methodological tools to understanding

globalization would be a major feature of the social scientific study of religion in the coming decades.

With the explosion of global migration and affordable travel, scholars have begun to prioritize the study of transnational linkages of migrants and the implications for both the sending and receiving communities (Cohen, 2008; Levitt, 2001; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Levitt (2009) argues that being planted in transnational social fields socializes the second generation to the values and norms of their ethnic homeland.¹⁹ Interest in the transnational lives of the religious faithful has been part of this development (see Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002; Levitt, 2007; Nagata, 2005; Tam, 2018; Tam & Hasmath, 2015).

The burden of helping one's ethnic homeland is well-documented in other studies of monetary remittances (de Haas, 2007; Levitt, 2001) and social remittances (Levitt, 1998; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). When immigrants send resources home, these resources are often funneled through religious channels (Levitt, 2007; Tam, 2018; Tam & Hasmath, 2015). A study I co-authored (Tam & Hasmath, 2015) of religious non-governmental organizations (RNGOs) found that Chinese-Canadian Christians leverage their privileged socioeconomic status in their global engagement with development in Mainland China.²⁰ Specifically, North American supporters fueled these RNGOs' economic and educational capital to navigate the uncertain sociopolitical landscape. RNGOs' being run by the ethnic Chinese was perceived by congregation members as an asset (compared to white-led RNGOs) in building *guanxi* (loosely translated as relationships) with China (see Tam, 2018).

The literature points to a clear emotional bond between migrants and their countries of origin that motivates their involvement in transnational religious action. Given the social force of secularization in modernity and the desire of the religious faithful to give their religion meaning through transnational ties, STMs play a crucial role in stimulating emotional involvement among church members.

1.8 Intersecting the Sociology of Religion and the Sociology of Emotion

One of the key strains of inquiry within the sociology of religion has been how the membership of religious institutions is maintained in the face of rising secularism. Rational-choice theories (i.e. the religious economies model) have been a major feature of this paradigm (Iannaccone, 1990; Stark & Finke, 2000). However, sociologists of emotion have found that humans are not entirely rational beings, but are instead driven largely by emotions (Bericat, 2015; Elster, 2009a; Kahneman, 2011). As Collins points out in his version of IR theory, interaction ritual chains (IRC) theory's interaction ritual market model is entirely compatible with rational-choice theory once one takes into account emotional energy (Collins, 2004a, pp. 143-150; also see Summers-Effler, 2006). In other words, individuals make a rational choice to take part in the rituals that stimulate positive emotional energy for them. Similarly, Hamilton (2009) argues that rational-choice theories in the sociology of religion are best used as a heuristic in understanding religious provision and consumption.

Given that STMs are clearly a major enterprise of contemporary churches, there is a strong case for examining the emotional impact of this church "product." Applying IRC theory to understanding emotions in STMs and its effect on the social solidarity of CCE congregations effectively addresses the emotional impact on the sense of social solidarity STMs have with their congregations.

Some sociologists of religion have embraced IRC theory in studying religious social solidarity. This is not surprising given its Durkheimian roots and versatility as “humanity’s basic social act” (Rappaport, 1999; also see Bellah, 2003, 2006; Collins, 2004). My study adds to the growing list of scholars who have applied IRC theory to the sociology of religion, using it to examine worship (Draper, 2014; Heider & Warner, 2010; Inbody, 2015; Robbins, 2009; Wellman, Corcoran, & Stockly-Meyerdirk, 2014), non-governmental organizations (Summers-Effler, 2010), campus fellowships (Hausmann, 2011), friendship networks (Cheadle & Schwadel, 2012), strictness (Baker, 2010), conversion (Abel, 2006b, 2008), and building space and structure (Brenneman & Miller, 2016). However, mine is the first ethnographic study to address the Chinese evangelicals and global missions.

Another contribution this study adds to the sociology of religion is an ethnography of a transnational religious phenomenon. As some scholars have noted (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Clarke, 2011), a historic limitation in the sociology of religion has been its predominant focus on religion within institutional contexts. This is especially the case in the global west, where white churches are often the subject of study. My study helps fill this lacuna in the sociology of religion through studying the mission activity of the Chinese.²¹

My study also adds to the growing list of studies that have applied IRC theory in the relatively young but burgeoning field of the sociology of emotions. While the sociology of emotions literature has made significant theoretical strides in the last 40 years, the consensus is that more empirical cases are needed to support its theoretical developments (Bericat, 2015; Stets, 2010; Turner, 2009; Turner & Stets, 2006). This limitation applies to IRC theory as well, as Collins’s ambitious sociological program was only laid out in full relatively recently (Collins, 2004). Given that most such studies have been conducted in the U.S., my study would be the first to use IRC theory in a Canadian context and to study the ethnic Chinese²² within a global and transnational frame.²³

1.9 Understanding Communities Beyond Religion

This thesis also lends itself to deepening our sociological understanding of how communities influence individual behavior. Durkheim (1897) suggested in the early days of sociology that behaviors (like suicide) may spread through social contagion. A decade ago, Christakis and Fowler’s (2007) landmark study on obesity found that an individual’s weight is strongly correlated to social ties (i.e., those with obese friends tend to be obese themselves). Therefore, it is likely that community social networks will have some effect on an individual’s socialization into group membership.

By using IRC theory to examine voluntary religious communities in both mundane and emotionally charged experiences, we see at work the mechanisms of social solidarity in communities. These findings can contribute to our understanding of how other communities, especially those with a social purpose, maintain their social cohesion.

For example, vegans uphold the mission to stop the use of animal products. Veganism has been analyzed from the perspective of a cultural movement (Cherry, 2006), and similar to Protestantism, socialization to veganism can begin in the family.²⁴ Studies of vegan adolescents have found that along with a person’s internal commitment to the ethics of veganism, supportive social networks were essential to sustaining ongoing willpower, motivation, and vegan identity (Cherry, 2015; Larsson, Rönnlund, Johansson, & Dahlgren, 2003). Vegans youths

also negotiate their identity by employing a variety of Goffmanian strategies to maintain their membership identity in their community (Greenebaum, 2012).

The mechanisms of social solidarity also apply to less benign communities like the neo-Nazis. Similar to vegans and evangelicals, socialization into these groups can begin at an early age, but really solidifies in adolescence. Specifically, studies of male youths' participation in neo-Nazi groups had found that they tend to be socially disillusioned and isolated individuals who were in search of a community, and for whom neo-Nazi rituals served as male rites of passage (Ezekiel, 2003; Kimmel, 2007; Sela-Shayovitz, 2011). Group dynamics are shaped by complex negotiations of identity; for instance, leaders may be more driven by their thirst for power than their hatred of others (Ezekiel, 2003), while female members of these groups adapt the community ethics to fit their experiences and stories (Blee, 1996). As with the vegans, communities are essential in sustaining their membership.

Even communities that are not social movements share similar mechanisms of social solidarity. In recent years, the "fitness revolution" has taken off globally (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014). Despite the impression that fitness is a highly individualized preoccupation, gym communities are actually essential to maintaining participation. Bodybuilders (i.e. those seeking to build the perfect muscular body) and members of CrossFit (i.e. the "sport of fitness") are cases in point; in both cases there is a highly interpersonal dimension of socializing an outsider into a community member. Bodybuilding communities involve group rituals in which novices learn from the experts on matters such as lifting weights, taking supplements, revering icons (e.g. Arnold Schwarzenegger), and "juicing" (i.e. steroid use) (Andrews, Sudwell, & Sparkes, 2005). Similarly, CrossFit has been regarded as a "cult" that emphasizes voluntarism, performance regulation, and mutual surveillance as part of the social process of identity and self-transformation (Dawson, 2017).

Social experience in the communities of vegans, neo-Nazis, and fitness aficionados parallel those within CCEs in numerous ways. First, CCEs have a mission they regard as sacred, and take the form of a social movement. Second, CCE community rituals are used to socialize non-members into becoming core members of the community. Third, CCE community members engage in processes of negotiating various layers of membership identities. IRC theory is thus a valuable tool to examine the mechanisms of social solidarity within CCEs pursuing their mission in STMs.

1.10 Thesis Outline

This thesis is organized as follows. In the second chapter, I outline the theoretical framework of IRC theory. After describing the version laid out by Collins 15 years ago, I supplement IRC theory with some of the key advancements and findings in the last two decades. I also insert perspectives from the sociology of emotions, cognitive and cultural sociology, sociology of religion, psychology, evolutionary biology, neuroscience, and other disciplines. I then describe the methodology I used, how the data were collected and analyzed, and some of the ethical questions involved.

In my third chapter, I address the question "Why do missions exist at the macro level? How are the Chinese involved in missions?" I examine transnational discourses motivating CCEs to collective missionary action and discuss two discrete streams, one being mainstream evangelicalism and the other grounded on the pan-Chinese elect. However, I found the latter to

be unstable, and argued that the tenuous unity grounded on a religious pan-Chinese ethnicity is challenged by linguistic, geographic, generational, and ideological fractures with CCEs.

In my fourth chapter, I tackle the question “At the meso level, how do churches focus the attention of CCEs for STMs?” I examine how local CCE churches manage their congregations’ emotions for STMs by illustrating how the religious socialization of the youth is channeled through the many avenues of the official church programs. Churches operate cyclically in a predictable manner, and the church members conduct ‘emotion work’ (Hochschild, 1983) to sustain the organization’s pursuit of its goals in missions. I maintain that CCE churches primed the expectations of those who went on the STMs to believe they would experience God.

My fifth chapter asks the question “At the micro level, why do people go on STMs? What are their personal motivations?” I present the interview accounts that motivated the CCE STMers to go. I found that the STMers had their own reasons, despite the call for missions under the spiritual conflict discourse. In addition, the parents also encouraged them to go for a variety of reasons not necessarily rooted in evangelism. I connect neuroscience to IRC theory’s conception of IR “chains” (Collins, 2004) and suggest “entangled chains” as a revision. I suggest that acknowledging emotional entanglement should drive our analysis and understanding of the self in modernity.

My final chapter address the question “How do STM situations promote social solidarity?” I examine the different mechanisms that generated group cohesion on the STMs. Conceptualizing the STM team as a vortex of social organization (Summers-Effler, 2007), I argue that the team vortex churns against the social forces encountered in China. These encounters are then framed by the team as spiritual adversities, triggering its mechanisms of stabilization, team meetings and collective prayer. Given that conflict situations enhance the situational intrigue (Collins, 2004; Coser, 1956), I argue that these conditions become what Collins (2004) calls the “ingredients of interaction rituals” to generating emotional solidarity. To explain the differences in collective effervescence outcomes from different STMs, I use the variables of severity of adversity, intensity of IR, and number of IR participants

In my conclusion, I present my final thoughts and outline its contributions to ongoing discussions in the sociology of religion and emotion. I then acknowledge the limitations of the study and suggest areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Theory and Methodology

In this study I apply Collins' interactional ritual chains (IRC) theory (Collins, 2004) to assess how social solidarity is promoted by CCEs during STMs. IRC theory is useful in understanding the sense of social solidarity among CCE youth, given the youth are a demographic considered at risk of leaving the church (Penner et al., 2012; Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018).

I divide this chapter into two sections. In the first, I elucidate IRC theory and provide a summary of its essential ingredients and outcomes. I will also explain how different ingredients lead to variations in ritual outcomes, and provide concrete examples drawn from Collins. In the second section, I discuss the methodology of the study, and how the theory applies to the study at hand.

2.1 Interaction Ritual Chains Theory and Social Solidarity

Durkheimian sociology asks the fundamental question: How is social solidarity affected by modernity? Interaction ritual chains theory (IRC) as developed by Collins (2004) answers this question with rituals. IRC theory is often situated in the relatively young and burgeoning field of the sociology of emotions, which has been the subject of numerous reviews (e.g. Bericat, 2015; Rossner & Meher, 2014; Stets, 2010; Turner, 2009; Turner & Stets, 2006), edited volumes (Stets & Turner, 2006, 2014; Weininger, Lareau, & Lizardo, 2019), and monographs (e.g. Summers-Effler, 2010) published in the last decade. It follows the microsociological lineage of Durkheim (1912) and Goffman's (1959, 1967, 1974) study of interaction rituals (IRs), and borrows from Mead (1934) symbolic interactionism. According to IRC theory, social solidarity is the result of ritual participation leading to emotionally charged symbolism.

To understand IRCs, especially their chains, it is necessary to provide a clear definition of rituals. This term has many meanings, given it has been embraced and used in multiple contexts by scholars of religious studies, anthropology, and sociology (Bellah, 2003, 2006; Deacon, 1997; Rappaport, 1999; V. Turner & Turner, 1978). The definition provided by Collins (2004) includes all the key elements of the concept that are relevant within this context. Collins defines rituals as "a mechanism of mutually focused emotion and attention producing a momentarily shared reality, which thereby generates solidarity and symbols of group membership" (Collins, 2004, p. 7).²⁵ Rituals do not have to be religious and can encompass a wide range of micro- to macro-sociological phenomena.

In analyzing how rituals succeed in producing shared reality for their participants, Collins follows the Chicago school of sociology's tradition of focusing on situations. He maintains that an individual's change in behaviour, feeling, thought, and belief can be attributed to one situation shifting to another because of a prior ritual experience, a link within the "chain" of ritual interactions (Collins, 2004). Tracing the history of an individual's chains reveals situations where their body and cognitions have been charged with emotions that inform future encounters. In other words, whether a ritual will be emotionally compelling to an individual depends on their past experiences.

Not only can rituals spark changes in behavior, thought, feeling, and belief; these changes are fundamental to their appeal. IRC theory explains that the fundamental motivation of individuals' behaviour lies in their search for emotional energy (EE) from one situation to the next. An individual's evaluation of whether a ritual is attractive or not is based on whether they anticipate the IR could successfully supply EE. In effect, IRs can be understood using rational

choice theory, in that they operate as markets that compete for the participation of the individual (Collins, 2004, pp. 149-58). Collins summarizes the main thrust of IRC theory as follows:

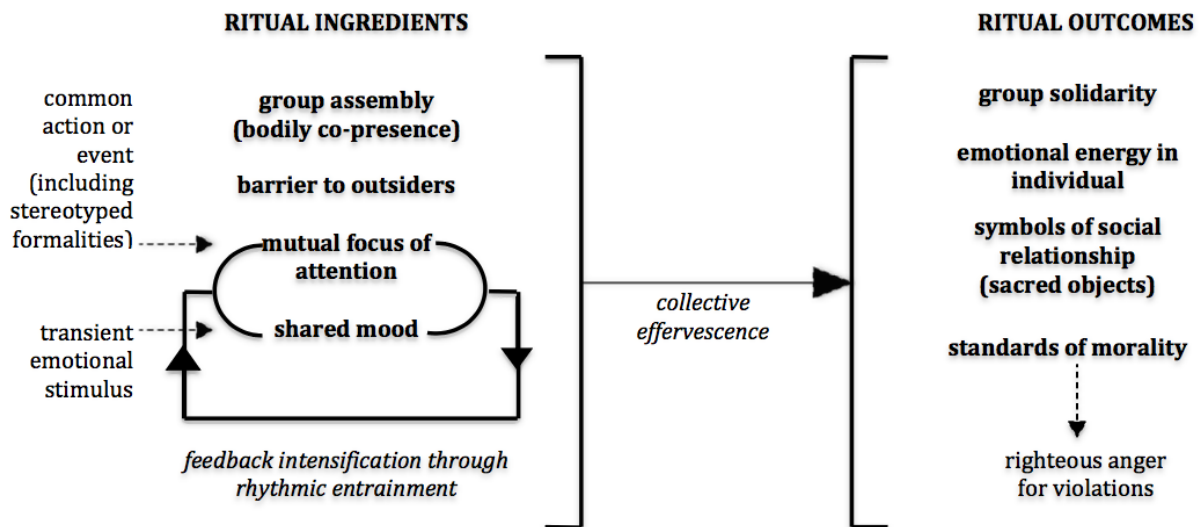
The central mechanism of interaction ritual theory is that occasions that combine a high degree of mutual focus of attention, that is, a high degree of intersubjectivity, together with a high degree of emotional entrainment—through bodily synchronization, mutual stimulation/arousal of participants' nervous systems—result in feelings of membership that are attached to cognitive symbols; and result also in the emotional energy of individual participants, giving them feelings of confidence, enthusiasm, and desire for action in what they consider a morally proper path. (Collins, 2004, p. 42)

Thus the point of departure for analyzing a ritual is the situation, and the extent to which it can successfully create EE and the symbolism to carry from one situation to the next. This emphasis on the situation was famously summarized by Goffman: “Not then, men and their moments. Rather, moment and their men” (Goffman, 1967). IRC theory is thus a “full-scale social psychology” within the sociology of emotions that explains all situational behaviour and cognition (Collins, 2004).

2.2 The Ingredients and Outcomes in Interaction Ritual Chains

According to Collins (2004), the “ingredients” of an IR determines its success, and there are four ingredients to a ritual (see Figure 1). First, there is the *group assembly* of two or more participants in the same place, so their presence affects one another. It does not matter whether the participants are aware that they are being affected (Goffman, 1967, 1971). Second, there is a *barrier excluding outsiders*. Such a barrier could be physical, symbolic, or ideological—so long as the participants have some idea of who is participating in and excluded from in the ritual. Third, there is a *mutual focus of attention* among the participants upon a common object or activity, and participants are able to communicate this focus to one another, so they are mutually aware of one another's focus of attention. Fourth, there is a *shared emotional mood* among the ritual participants.²⁶ When these four ingredients are present, they successfully generate social solidarity. Especially when the third and fourth ingredients are strongly present, the observable result is rhythmic entrainment (i.e. speech, laughter, body; see Collins, 2004, pp. 65-78; also see Richman, 2001) leading to collective effervescence.

Figure 1: Interaction Rituals



From Collins 2004, p. 48.

A successful IR generates four outcomes. First, it creates the *feelings of membership and social solidarity*. Second, successful IRs also allow the ritual participants to be injected with *emotional energy*, long-term emotions which are “confidence, enthusiasm in carrying out their repeated round of rituals and in a course of life-conduct oriented towards its symbolic goals” (Collins, 2011, p. 2). Third, these emotions are stored in *sacred objects or symbolic emblems* (see Mead, 1934). Finally, the community is charged with *moral feelings* of right and wrong. These four ritual outcomes have been supported in various studies of ritual (e.g. Durkheim, 1912; Rappaport, 1999; Summers-Effler, 2010; Weininger et al., 2019).

2.3 Explaining Variability in Interaction Ritual Outcomes

Not all IRs produce the same results (e.g. social solidarity and membership, commitment to symbols, EE intensity, sense of morality), and the presence and strength of the ingredients are central in explaining this variability in outcomes. It is important to emphasize that IRs are complex and dynamic processes, with the outcome variables being interrelated. For example, EE from the previous links in the IR chains frames a participant’s expectations about the upcoming ritual and affects their proclivity to seek or avoid it (Elster, 2009a). The intersubjectivity of ritual participants also impacts the EE output. EE is stored in symbols, and strongly charged symbols are elevated to become sacred (Durkheim, 1912; Rappaport, 1999).

When symbols become sacred, they take part in the world-building function that Berger (1967) calls *nomos* (meaningful), in contrast to Durkheim’s (1897) *anomie* (meaningless). They provide a moral framework for how an individual is to navigate their social world—certainty about how to behave. IRC theory argues that morality and symbol reverence delineate groups. These differences are often sources of group conflict, and conflict is one of the best ways to

facilitate powerful emotional situations (Collins, 1974; Coser, 1956; also see Simmel, 1908). I will discuss these elements in detail below.

2.3.1 Emotional Outcomes: Collective Effervescence and Emotional Energy

Collins (2004) classifies two types of emotions as outcomes of rituals: collective effervescence (i.e. short-term emotions) and emotional energy (i.e. long-term emotions). The short-term emotional product of IRs is from the intensification of emotions, leading to what Durkheim (1912, p. 46) defines as “sacred time.” It is a “sort of electricity” that the group experiences in its state of “collective effervescence,” and it can lead to the intensification of any emotion.²⁷ Participants experiencing collective effervescence are aware of each other’s dominant mood and begin the rhythmic entrainment of synchronizing their emotions to one another in their mutual focus of attention.²⁸

Rituals result in a short-term intensification of emotions, but can also affect participants’ emotional life in the long term. “Emotional energy” (EE) is the long-term emotional outcome of rituals. Overall, EE “is a continuum, ranging from a high end of confidence, enthusiasm, good self-feelings; down through a middle range of bland normalcy; and to a low end of depression, lack of initiative, and negative self-feelings” (Collins 2004, p. 108). The “middle level” of EE is what allows normal social situations to occur. It is the mellow humdrum of what Garfinkel (1967) calls “mundane reality” or what Durkheim (1912) called “profane time.” Collins distinguishes between high (positive) and low (negative) EE in mundane reality as opposite ends of a continuum (e.g. enthusiasm versus depression), and argues that the moments of intensification in rituals imprint themselves into the minds and emotions of individuals, resonating into the future long after the ritual is over. High EE from IRs generates high Durkheimian social solidarity. The opposite applies to low EE.

2.3.2 Intersubjectivity

A critical consideration that determines the outcome of a ritual is intersubjectivity—people’s interactions and group dynamics. For rituals to be successful, what Collins calls the “ultra micro-sociological mechanism” (Collins 2004, p. 118) of rhythmic entrainment is necessary for ritual participants to build a crescendo of emotional energy (see Richman, 2001). The composition of the ritual participants, how they interact, the power dynamics within (e.g. who is at the center of the ritual and who is at the periphery), and the resources at their disposal, all play a role in how rituals will turn out.

As a heuristic to intersubjectivity, Collins lays out two of rituals: power rituals and status rituals (also see Kemper, 2011; Kemper & Collins, 1990). The two are not mutually exclusive. Power and (membership) status rituals are analytical ideal types because both involve power asymmetry. All individuals need to consider power and status effects from one situation to the next.

Power rituals reinforce the unequal power distribution among the ritual participants, allowing some to dominate while others conform or leave. The focus of power rituals is on the process of giving and taking orders, and Collins distinguishes between “order-givers” and “order-takers”—two ideal types that lie on opposite ends of an order-taking continuum. Order-givers are at the center of the rituals, and dictate how they are to be executed.

Order-givers maintain the Goffmanian “frontstage performance” (Goffman, 1959) by upholding the symbols, not necessarily because everyone looks up to them, but because of the lack of power resources order-takers wield. These individuals are attached to their front-stage roles, and their position in the IR can in turn transform them into symbols of the membership. Order-givers enhance or sustain their EE because their asymmetrical power allows them to dominate the rituals and determine how EE will be distributed.²⁹

Order-takers participate in the rituals because of circuitous (e.g. a paycheck) or raw (e.g. at gunpoint) coercion. Coercion is alienating, and order-takers often take on Goffmanian “backstage personalities” (Goffman, 1959) where they criticize and ridicule those in power, or perform “mail it in” routines for work. When the ritual occurs, order-takers are coerced into being present and conforming (Asch, 1956; Boudon, 1989; Rydgren, 2009a). As a result, they often draw minimal EE or even develop an aversion toward the ritual because of ambivalence or resentment from their forced conformity.³⁰

Power rituals are complex because of the dominance, anger, fear, and other emotional states involved. The most important aspect of power rituals is showing respect to the order-giving process. Often, the result is the maintenance or incremental gain of EE for the order-givers and the general loss of EE for order-takers—especially if the power ritual does not coincide with a status ritual. Because of all these factors, it is difficult to generate solidarity from power rituals.

Status rituals take place based on membership status of inclusion or exclusion. Four factors determine the outcome of the ritual, the former two being micro-level characteristics and the latter two being meso-level. The first factor is the *ritual intensity*. Did the IR build up high, medium, or low levels of collective effervescence? The emotion that is generated from ritual intensity carries short- and long-term effects, thus operating as a multiplier for the other three factors. Second, what is the “network position” of the ritual participants? This factor can be presented as a *central/peripheral participation* continuum of group membership that determines situational stratification.³¹

The third and fourth considerations at the meso-level are social density and social diversity. *Social density* is defined as the proportion of time people physically spend in each other’s presence of the ritual. The higher the density, the more likely group members will exert or feel pressure to uphold conformity (Rydgren, 2009a, 2009b; see also Asch, 1956). Finally, to what extent are the ritual participants socially diverse? As predicted by Durkheim (1893), increases in *social diversity* in modernity necessitate a decrease in social solidarity because of the presence of different symbols. These four factors for status rituals determine the distance of an individual from the focal point of rituals. Being closer to the center raises one’s EE, while floating in the margins or experiencing exclusion lowers it.

The parameters of power and status rituals have significant implications for the intersubjectivity of individuals. Specifically, the EE from prior chains serves as the input for the next ritual. Thus the impact of IR chains is cognitive—those engaging in power rituals expect to dominate or be dominated; those engaging in status rituals expect to be a central, marginal, or non-member. High levels of EE come from exhibiting control in power or status rituals, low levels of EE from being dominated in power rituals or excluded in status rituals.

These dynamics reproduce themselves in future rituals. Collins maintains that EE tends to accumulate either positively or negatively over time, leading to its stratification (Collins,

2004, pp. 131-133). He argues that EE stratification is also what sustains other forms of stratification (e.g. education, economic).³² For example, rich people become richer because of the inherent satisfaction from engaging in wealth-building behavior.

2.3.3 Symbols and Sacred Objects

As a result of these long- and short-term emotional outcomes, successful rituals produce social and moral solidarity, which are crystallized through symbols. Given that emotions, memories, and experiences in rituals are fleeting, individuals inject EE into symbols that serve to engrave its significance into their minds and memories. Symbols are often nouns, ranging from objects (e.g. flags, emblems), people (e.g. the Pope), icons (e.g. the hammer and sickle), and songs (e.g. the national anthem), to ideas (e.g. libertarianism)—the point is that a symbol can effectively serve as a vessel to hold EE.

Once charged with positive EE, symbols can become sacred, whereas their defamation (e.g. the burning of a national flag) may trigger outbursts of moral indignation (Durkheim, 1912).³³ IRC theory argues that groups fundamentally differ because of their symbols. For example, Protestants are different from Catholics because the Protestant Reformation stripped away many of the Catholic symbols (e.g. the crucifix, liturgy, the Pope).

Symbols can also be associated with one another and circulate in a chain of self-reinforcing IRs that further charges them with EE. There are three layers of symbol circulation: 1) initialized in the immediate situation, 2) reverberated within the community, and 3) repeated within the individual.³⁴

As suggested above, symbols can be created or pass into irrelevance. When the EE in symbols is no longer sustained by ritual practices, these symbols can fade into a memory, eventually rendering them dead. In the same way, new rituals can lead to the creation of new symbols that are charged with EE. Durkheim (1912) argues that society is filled with symbols and reverence for them, but they continue to be relevant only so long as they are charged up by ritual participation.

2.3.4 Standards of Morality

EE is also the guiding force behind what Durkheim (1912) calls “moral sentiment”—the sense of what is moral or immoral. Individuals charged with high EE experience enthusiasm and confidence in their group membership. These feelings of group solidarity drive members to defend and honour the group, and this is most obviously done by members who defend the sacred symbols.³⁵

In particular, members of the group are pressured to respect its sacred symbols, and debasing them is considered taboo. This dynamic leads to a sense of a moral outrage when group norms are violated, which in turn leads to righteous anger and the actions that may spring from it, such as persecution of group apostates and heretics (see Elster, 2009; Haidt, 2012; Rydgren, 2009b, 2009a). The outcome of this persecution can be a perpetual positive feedback loop of anger-retribution (see Scheff, 1990), or restorative justice (see Braithwaite, 1989), in which the sense of social solidarity is restored. In short, the mechanism that upholds social solidarity is the defence of group symbols.

Two twentieth century sociologists, Goffman and Hochschild, have contributed to our understanding of social solidarity by theorizing upon the practices that maintain it. First,

Goffman (1955) argues that “face-work” is what maintains social solidarity. Face is the image of the self that observes the rules and values of a particular society in which the situation is embedded. The verbal and non-verbal strategies that people employ to maintain face are attempts to mirror what others expect of them in a given situation to sustain emotions such as pride, dignity, and honour. Goffman argues that face-work is the basis for how people maintain successful and satisfying social interactions. The breaking of face may lead to moral outrage and censure.

Hochschild (1983) builds on Goffman’s face-work and calls this moral force that strengthens conformity behavior “emotion work,” a form of effort which calls on the individual to observe “feeling rules.” Feeling rules are the “standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling” (p. 18), and these are specific to the situation in which the individual is embedded.³⁶ For example, unless otherwise specified, expressions of joy are inappropriate in funeral situations. Feeling rules are the norms that inform people how to feel to navigate social relations. In her seminal study of flight attendants’ emotions being commoditized by airlines, Hochschild (1983, p. 6) differentiates between “emotion work” and “emotional labor.” The former refers to acts performed in a private context where such acts have use value. The latter refers to acts performed on a job site where they have exchange value. As with Goffman’s account of maintaining face, failing to maintain emotion work or labour usually results in negative emotional experiences.

These standards of morality are bounded and enforced in what Collins’ calls a “scene” — a notion akin to a Goffmanian “situation” (Goffman, 1959). The scene is a social space where accepted forms of self-presentation are continuously repeated in overlapping gatherings over long periods of time.

A scene is a mesh of IR chains, connected both laterally and in the flow of time. One could describe a ‘scene’ as a network with a high density of interaction and interconnection, but widely participatory insofar as it does not depend upon a constant center, and containing a great deal of indirect ties that make it easy to meet new partners. This is the structural formula for a community with a high degree of effervescence, continued over long periods of time. (Collins 2004, p. 250)

In other words, each scene has its unique symbolic constellation and its own expectations of moral behavior.

The above account of scenes describes them as relatively stable over the course of multiple repetitions. Summers-Effler (2007) offers a more dynamic interpretation of a scene by conceptualizing them as “vortexes” of social organization. She argues that scenes are like vortexes in the social stream that can be created, stabilized, and collapsed. This interpretation explains how scenes can rub against other eddies, obstacles, or other vortexes—what she calls social entities (i.e. anything that can exert force onto a vortex). These force the vortex to engage its mechanisms of stabilization. Stabilization requires the intensification and solidification of vortex barriers, making it rigid and brittle over time until it collapses.

2.4 The evolutionary biology and cognitive science of IRC theory

One criticism researchers have made of EE is that it is an unempirical construct, or even a tautology. However, there is mounting evidence from the fields of neuroscience and evolutionary biology to empirically support the existence of collective effervescence and EE. Almost two decades ago, Massey (2002) argued in his 2001 Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association that sociology should no longer treat biology as a “black box” that should be ignored (also see DiMaggio, 1997) given the overwhelming evidence from neuroscience that emotions are inextricably linked to the biological brain (Franks, 2006, 2014; Turner, 2000). This matters to sociologists because emotions are inextricably linked to human behavior, and dwelling on purely social constructionist theorizing will only further isolate the field from the broader scientific community. While most of the field had remained intransigent in this regard, subfields such as the sociology of emotions (Stets & Turner, 2006, 2014), sociology of culture and cognition (see special issue of Cerulo, 2014), neurosociology (Franks & Turner, 2013), and cognitive social sciences (see Lizardo, 2014) have responded to Massey’s call to account for neuroscientific findings.³⁷

2.4.1 Neuroscience, emotions, and memories

Neuroscience has contributed to the research on rituals by providing a physiological perspective on emotions.³⁸ One important finding has been research on the importance of empathy, which facilitates altruistic behavior traits among higher primates as observed by evolutionary biology. Given its universality, there must be a neurological basis that allows for the intersubjective sharing of emotions.

Neuroscientists in the past decade have identified mirror neurons as the neurological basis of emotional sharing (Iacoboni, 2011; Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2010). A mirror neuron is essentially a cell in the brain of a human or other animal that fires both when the organism performs an action, and when they see that action performed by another. Cozolino (2006) explains the resonance of mirror neurons:

Resonance behaviors triggered by mirror systems are automatic responses that are reflexive, implicit, and obligatory. They communicate potentially important information, advance social cohesion, and enhance group identification and safety. Resonance behaviors also serve learning by providing an automatic core for imitative learning. (p. 200)

Iacoboni (2008, p. 267), one of the first neuroscientists to “discover” mirror neurons, explains their operations as follows: “Mirror neurons are brain cells that seem specialized in understanding our existential condition and involvement with others. They show that we are not alone, but are biologically designed to be deeply connected with each other.” This is important to social behavior, as Summers-Effler (2010, p. 60) argues that emotions form the “social proprioception” we use to navigate social landscapes. In other words, mirror neurons allow for the social learning that people experience through shared rituals.³⁹

Accounts of emotion from the past two decades emphasize its situatedness within the physical body. Damasio’s (1994) somatic marker hypothesis highlights the significance of embodied experiences. According to his hypothesis, emotions are invoked by “changes in body

and brain states triggered by a dedicated brain system that responds to specific contents of one's perceptions, actual or recalled relative to a particular object or event" (Bechara & Damasio, 2005). The brain system creates "as if" loops, handled by the amygdala, that allow for the quick-trigger responses that minimize response actions and lead to immediate decisions (also see Kahneman, 2011). The response to perceiving another's display of emotion (e.g. through one of voice or facial expression) is so quick that it can be described as an instinctual reflex, like jumping at the sight of a snake in darkness only to later find it was a branch. In other words, the embodied experience and emotions are inseparably connected.

From an IRC-theory perspective, somatic markers are the symbols that are loaded with EE through social interactions backed by personal experiences (Summers-Effler et al., 2015, p. 456). The embodied experience affords the encoding of emotional memories to be stored and retrieved as chains of experiences.⁴⁰ These chains establish what cultural and cognitive sociologists like Cerulo (2014a) argue are the brain's associative pathways for cultural scripts. People are primed to tap into those scripts when they personally experience those narratives (Abelson, 1976; R. Brown, 1995). For example, people prefer familiar situations because they know the behaviors expected of them.

The cognitive sciences, evolutionary biology, and other disciplines are prompting the social sciences to experience what Lizardo (2014) calls a "cognitive turn."⁴¹ Some sociologists are eagerly applying these advances in their own work. Cerulo (2014a) argues that sociology has a role to play in the cognitive turn, in mapping how cognitive concepts from other disciplines manifest themselves in everyday life. As explained in this section, IRC theory is well-positioned to contribute to this effort.

2.5 Applying Interaction Ritual Chains Theory

In *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004, pp. 94-101), Collins offers three concrete steps on how to apply IRC theory in empirical research. To start, it is important to identify sacred symbols, since they often carry the implicit authority of commanding rituals. Therefore, one first must determine the intensity of a symbol's value; that is, is it respected, sacred, or part of mundane life? To achieve this objective, one can evaluate the space the symbol occupies, the requirements for the individuals who can access the symbol, whether it is fervently attacked or defended, and whether it is still active or neglected.

Once a symbol has been identified, the researcher can then move on to reconstructing the rituals that previously charged the symbol. Collins (2004) suggests a handful of useful guiding questions:

Who assembled, in what numbers, with what frequency or schedule? What emotions were expressed, what activities brought a focus of attention, what intensity of collective effervescence was generated? To what degree were individual participants charged with emotional energy; and what did it motivate them to do? What were the barriers to participation: who was divided by the ritual from whom? Who was thereby ranked over whom? (p. 98)

By answering these questions, a researcher will be able to reconstruct the ritual that charged the symbol.

The first step in this endeavor is reconstructing the ritual's apex, the highest point of emotional intensity. The researcher next traces the secondary circulation of symbols. Collins provides more steering questions:

Who uses these emblems (including their verbal representations and other emblems-of-emblems) for other interactional situations beyond the actual gathering of the group of ritual participants? What are the range of situations in which these symbols circulate? Do they become topics for rounds of conversations with acquaintances; for injection into other public ceremonial; for debate with opponents of those ritual practices? (p. 98)

Symbols are not only significant for those who participate in the immediate rituals, but they also secondarily circulate throughout neighbouring social networks. Observing these symbols from afar frames others' understanding of the group and influences their choice to participate in, ignore, or shun future rituals involving the symbol. For example, a CCE youth hearing a life-changing testimony (a secondary circulation) about STMs (the primary situation) may become interested in participating in the future.⁴²

2.6 Interaction Ritual Chains Theory's approach to studying situations

Collins maintains that the study of EE in IRC theory should be grounded in studying moments of collective effervescence and the EE that individuals carry away from those experiences. He suggests ideal methods to measure EE: subjective self-reporting and objective observation (i.e. bodily postures and movements, eyes, voice, and facial expressions). It is worth providing his rationale in full:

These processes always happen in micro-interactional situations; the level of EE should always be studied in relation to the kind of situation that is occurring at the moment, and within the chain of situations from the immediate pasts. It is less useful, in using subjective measurements (such as questionnaires, interviews, or time-diaries), to ask for a global assessment: "how much enthusiasm, confidence, and energy (or depression, apathy) have you been experiencing in your life?" Such information gives an indication of the overall drift of situational outcomes, but it is more valuable to be able to show what the situational conditions are in which these observations take place. (Collins 2004, pp. 139-140)

Thus, he proposes a medium-term design in which the researcher would follow people's experiences across a chain of interactions. Collins maintains the importance of ethnographic observation given that the researcher needs to observe the rituals *in situ* (Collins 2004, pp. 133-140).

Echoing the importance of ethnography, Summers-Effler and her colleagues (Summers-Effler et al., 2015) recommend that research to tap into the "extra-deliberative processes," the "emotional and perceptual dynamics" (p. 452) of group interaction, by following a "resonance" approach. The resonance approach is when researchers fully immerse themselves into the

interaction and allow themselves to share the experiences of those being studied. They validated this by explaining that mirror neurons allow researchers to dive into the subconscious emotional levels of human interaction. For this reason, Summers-Effler and her colleagues (2015) argue that resonance approaches to extra-deliberative processes are significantly more precise than asking the research participants to recall that data.⁴³

2.7 An Ethnography of STMs

In light of these methodological requirements, designing an ethnographic approach around STMs with a two-year design made sense. The two years would be spent studying the chains of situations STMers had been in before they departed for the STM, their experiences during the STM, and their reflections after the STM. Research began in the summer of 2015. This thesis incorporates both subjective self-reporting and objective observations, with data collection taking place before the trip, and follow-ups after the STM in the near term and long term. IRC theory provides a strong theoretical framework to guide the research's analytical narrative about how STMers give meaning to the STM.

I adopted a multi-sited ethnographic approach by following four Chinese Canadian evangelical (CCE) STM teams from Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) churches in Canada traveling to China and Taiwan. Each of these churches shared similar characteristics in that they were medium to large in size (i.e. more than 250 church members) and were in major cities across Canada. Interviews were conducted before departing for the STM, shortly after the STM ended, and between 8 and 10 months after the STM. This way, I was able to track the participants' expectations before they departed for the STM, their immediate reactions and commitments immediately after the STM ended, and whether these sentiments held up after a year. For one of the STM teams, I observed its sending church, Eastern Chinese Alliance Church (ECAC) over the course of two years. This observation took place in York Region just north of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

At the beginning of my study, I adopted a grounded theory approach. I applied *sensitizing concepts* from missiology and the sociology of transnationalism. Blumer (1954) argues that sensitizing concepts are instrumental at the beginning of research since they serve as a "general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances" (p. 7). Charmaz (2003) expands on this idea this by stating, "they provide starting points for building analysis, not ending points for evading it. We may use sensitizing concepts *only* as points of departure from which to study the data" (p. 259, emphasis in original). Therefore, while sensitizing concepts guided my approach, I was open to other theoretical frameworks and I eventually adopted IRC theory after an iterative and recursive process of analysis, reading, writing, and reflection. Not surprisingly, themes from the sociology of religion also emerged and my study's theoretical thrust adjusted accordingly.

2.8 Sample

I conducted 48 case studies consisting of 23 youths and 25 adults, with most participants having completed all three interviews (i.e. pre-departure, immediately after the STM, and 8 months after the STM). Pseudonyms were used for both individual and institutional identities, and extra care was made to ensure that no identifiable information would be linked to the participants involved (e.g. not disclosing the specific time the STM took place, its location in China, or the

Canadian city the church is from). The list of participants and some of their basic information can be found in Appendix A – Profile of the STM Churches and the STM Participants.

I apply the term “youth” to subjects ranging from the ages of 14 to 27. This is a common practice. For example, the United Nations defines youth to be between 15 and 24 years of age. Only two “youths” were older than 24 (26 and 27, respectively) at the time of the study. While young adults above 18 are legally adults in Canada, they are still largely regarded as youths or even “kids” (see below) in the teams’ relational context. Observations and interviews with the youths under legal adult age were conducted with informed parental/guardian consent.

Among the youths, it is necessary to delineate two groups: the younger youth in high school (i.e. generally under 18) and the older youth and “emerging adults” (i.e. generally above 18). Smith and Snell (2009) define emerging adults as a separate analytical category from youths in that they are not quite “adults” in the traditional sense (i.e. working a relatively permanent job, bought a house, got married, rearing children), but are adults by legal definition (e.g. above 18 in Canada).⁴⁴ These two categories of “youth” generated significantly different meanings from their STM experiences.

I classified the people who were above the age of 27 as “adults” in my study. These participants were mostly in their mid-40s. Outside of myself, only one other adult outlier was in his mid-30s. The oldest members were retirees over 65 years old. These adults casually used the term “the youths” (*cing1 nin4 jan4*, jyutping: 青年人) or “the kids” (*sai3 lou6*, jyutping: 細路) in Cantonese to address all of the youth. The youth accepted this, with most telling me that the adults were uncles and aunties who have watched them growing up in church for as long as they can remember.

The STMers were thus stratified by age, with some major age groups missing. There were no participants between approximately ages 30 to 40 who had young children (except myself). Relatedly, there were no children under 10 years of age who went on STMs. There are many explanations for this. Parents with young children do not feel STMs are safe or suited for their young children to attend. Any health emergency abroad with young children is a major concern. In addition, parents may not believe STMs would be particularly worthwhile investments for their children since there are cheaper religious alternatives in Canada (e.g. Vacation Bible School, other Christian summer camps). Churches may also discourage parents from bringing children who are too young from fear of liability. Only once children enter their youth do these perceived limits disappear (e.g. the child has a more developed immune system, they can better fend for themselves and meaningfully contribute, domestic Christian summer camps may have become boring and the child needs novel spiritual stimuli). For parents with young children, it is difficult to justifying spending thousands of dollars to go on a China STM alone while leaving their partner to take care of the kids. Finally, even though some adults who went were retired, they were all in good health. No seniors with health problems participated because STMs can be laborious journeys.

2.9 Methods of Data Gathering

Data gathering consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews, participant observation and unstructured interviews, focus groups interviews, and analysis of archives and artefacts. These data-gathering methods triangulated methods and sources. Fieldwork at each of the churches began upon approval by the church gatekeepers. The STM leaders provided the contact list of

the STM participants for me to request interviews. Both the church gatekeepers and myself made clear that participation in the research was entirely optional, with no negative repercussions for refusing. Below is a summary of each data gathering method.

2.9.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants of each of the four STMs prior to their departure. I then joined each of the STMs and carried out interviews with the participants immediately after the STM in China. Interviews were conducted either in person or online (e.g. Skype, FaceTime) and recorded and transcribed. I also conducted interviews with some church pastors, elders, deacons, and church members who decided not to go on the STM. Church pastors and lay leaders have been found to be reliable resources in congregational studies (Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015). The church members who decided not to go on the STM served as negative cases (Creswell, 2007); they consisted of 1) those who have never gone or been interested, 2) those that were interested but did not go, and 3) those that have gone before but chose to not go again.

To recruit participants, I sent individual e-mails to prospective participants to describe the purpose of the study, solicit their participation, and request a convenient date and time for the first interview. Before the first interview, the interviewees were asked to review a recruitment form (Appendix B – Recruitment Form) and sign a consent form for being interviewed and observed (Appendix C – Consent Form). All interviews were audio recorded in their entirety and transcribed. There were a few instances in which interviewees requested to go off record, which I respected.

For participants who agreed to the interviews, a questionnaire was given on the day of the interview. It was designed to collect demographic data (Appendix D – Questionnaire). The benefit was that it offered a quick outline of the interviewee's background for me to probe further in the actual interview. For example, in my pilot fieldwork, Jessica (pseudonym), who I thought was simply a Chinese-Canadian evangelical born and raised in Canada, turned out to have been born in Hong Kong, immigrated to Vancouver, raised in the French Caribbean colony of Martinique, and attended university in France, and had now gone full-circle by working in Hong Kong. When she picked up the questionnaire, she said, "Well... my story is too complicated to fit neatly into this question!" Her complex backstory may not have unfolded if I did not deploy the questionnaire.

The interview questions (Appendix E – Interview Schedule for Short-term Mission Participants) were developed using a combination of literature and my personal experience participating within the CCE networks.⁴⁵ They had been honed iteratively beginning from the first version while I was doing pilot fieldwork in December 2013. In addition, I received feedback from an Ethnographic Portraits methodology class in the Education Department of the University of Oxford during the Hilary Term of 2014, from the Transfer of Status report from my assessors during Trinity Term of 2014, and from the Confirmation of Status reports in the summers of 2017 and 2018. All the feedback has contributed to the shaping and reshaping of the thesis.

The semi-structured interviews applied Small's (2009) sequential interviewing approach by treating each individual as a single case, allowing for "in-depth interview-based studies... [to] be conceived as not small-*sample* studies but multiple-*case* studies [emphases in original]" (p.

24; e.g., instead of referring to the interviewees as “sample of n=30,” the researcher should call them “a set of 30 cases”). My interview questions reflexively changed over the course of the fieldwork as other theoretical interests emerged (Charmaz, 2000). By continuously altering and refining the interview questions while observing the multiple-cases of in-depth interviews, I was able to re-evaluate my understanding of the phenomenon.

While I recognized the possibility that data saturation is ideal in sequential interviewing in multi-case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 545; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1991; Small, 2009, pp. 25-27), I set out with the goal of a minimum of 30 interviewees as a guideline to face the practical concerns of a time limit in fieldwork.⁴⁶ By the end of the study, I had doubled my goal for the amount of interviewees (60 interviewees, including STMers, church leaders, and non-goers), with most STMers participating in three interviews each. The study concluded with over 150 interviews, and I am confident that I reached data saturation. Interviews with non-STMers (e.g. non-STM church leaders, non-goers) were customized to fit the person I was interviewing.

I did not rigidly follow the questions verbatim. Instead, my goal was to follow “an important feature of [the] ethnographic interview: that, within the boundaries of the interview context, the aim is to facilitate a conversation, giving the interviewee a good deal more leeway to talk on their own terms than is the case in standardized interviews” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 110). Furthermore, as stated above about sequential interviewing, I honed my semi-structured interviews to fill empirical gaps or address emerging theoretical concerns. In short, the interview questions served as a loose guideline rather than a prescriptive approach.

The three interviews for each STM participant served to trace the subject’s emotional journey, their previous chains of experiences. In the interviews before embarking on the STM, I sought to understand the background story of the participants and the significance the STM had for them. These were triangulated with my observations while participating in pre-STM training with the subjects and my interactions with the ECAC community. However, I also recognized that the answers each subject provided might have been only regurgitation of their church norms, especially if the participant perceived me to be a representative of their church or denomination. I made clear at the beginning of each interview that my position was that of a researcher and alleviated their concerns about feeling pressured to give the “right” answer.

In the interviews at the end of the STM, I probed the subjects’ emotional reflections on the STM. I asked questions on how the STM had influenced their worldview and emotions and sought to connect their answers with an explanation for their behaviour. This data were triangulated with other sources, including my observations during the course of the STM and both their written and spoken testimonials about their STM experience within their respective churches.

I conducted follow-up interviews with all the participants approximately 8 to 10 months after the STM. This provided an opportunity for the STM participant to reflect upon their lives since the STM. Question such as “Eight months ago, you decided to/you told me... How is that going for you now?” were asked to track the STM’s cognitive and emotional impact.

2.9.2 Participant Observations and Unstructured Interviews

My fieldnotes provided “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) from observations made through “deep hanging out” (Geertz, 1998) with the STM teams. This was especially the case with the ECAC congregation I will describe below. When immersed in the field, I found it difficult to delineate observations and informal unstructured interviews, since conversations and activities often occurred at the same time (R. M. Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Van Maanen, 1988).

Noting the strengths and limitations in the different approaches of Gold’s (1958) now classic complete-observer to complete-participant spectrum (i.e. complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, complete observer), I varied my degree of participation on each STM to capitalize on the different perspectives. I indicate my degree of participation in the STM teams’ profiles in Appendix A.

Central to my fieldnote writing process was making “headnotes”—mental notes of impressions or details (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011, pp. 24-29). Often, the quickest way to make headnotes is through jottings. The strategies to effective jottings that I adopted included writing down my initial impression, focusing on what I felt to be significant or unexpected, moving beyond my own feelings to prioritize the significance of the experience of those in the setting, and focusing on the *how* instead of the *why*.

I used a smartphone to record fieldnotes. I found the software Evernote invaluable given its versatility in allowing for the full integration of text, audio, video, and photography. This approach was useful given there were certain social situations where writing notes was socially out of place, while video recording was completely acceptable (fieldnotes would be written after the video was recorded). Often, I was able to take notes during or immediately after the informal conversations or events took place. The research participants became accustomed to me always typing on my cell phone while maintaining eye contact during conversations. Additional benefits of recording fieldnotes on the smartphone included synchronization between the smartphone and the computer in the cloud, streamlining my workflow and automating data backups. When I was in China, backups were done using Dropbox via a Hong Kong issued SIM card using cellular data to minimize threats to privacy through Wi-Fi.

Fieldnotes were taken both over the STMs to China and within Canada. My smartphone was constantly used to record situations involving STMers, such as team meetings and the actual STM itself. In-depth field notes were also recorded while visiting the churches that deployed the STMs. For Eastern Chinese Alliance Church (ECAC), I observed its Sunday worship, Sunday school, youth and university fellowships, and some of their weekly sporting events (e.g. basketball, ping pong) for almost two years to track the lives of STM participants and understand their social world.

2.9.3 Focus Groups

I conducted focus group interviews with three groups of youth from the different churches during the STMs. The sessions were done in the STM accommodations or over long commutes. Given that each STM team’s destination and activities were different, I designed the focus group questions on the trip after building a stronger rapport with the participants.

Focus groups are effective because group dynamics may reveal data that would otherwise be hidden in individual interviews. For example, Wight (1994) found that when adolescent males are in groups, they played up their “macho-ness.” Interviewing these STMers together brought out what it means to go on a STM. Group contexts allow for the members’ meanings to be represented and observed in a natural social context (Emerson et al., 2011, pp. 134-151). In IRC theory, they would bring forth and circulate the STM sacred symbols as an interaction ritual. Furthermore, focus group interviews relax those who would otherwise be reticent or intimidated in a one-to-one interview (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 112). Interviewees may pressure another fellow interviewee to “spill the beans” that would otherwise not have surfaced.

2.9.4 Archives and Artifacts

While conducting fieldwork, I collected a range of artefact and archival data to supplement the interviews and observations. These included items published by religious institutions and congregations, such as brochures, posters, testimonials, yearbooks, blogs, budget reports, and websites. I collected physical copies or took photos with my smartphone in the field.

2.10 Data Analysis

The interview transcripts and fieldnotes were analyzed using NVivo and were initially coded for emergent themes, or “nodes.” The qualitative content analysis approach was effective in uncovering key themes to develop the analysis (see Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Krippendorff (2013, p. 25) defines content analysis to “tak[ing] content to *emerge in the process of a researcher analyzing a text* relative to a particular context” (emphasis in original). Altheide (1987) echoes similar sentiments that ethnographic content analysis needs to be reflexive to be both theory-driven (by the analyst) and sensitive to the meanings attributed by the communicators studied.

I used Krippendorff’s (2013) six principles to guide my content analysis. First, the text needs a reader to interpret its meanings. Second, the content being analyzed may have multiple meanings. Third, these multiple meanings may not be shared. Fourth, the meanings themselves communicate something other than just the given text. Fifth, the content requires context to interpret its meanings. Finally, inferences must be drawn from the content analyzed from its context of analysis. These principles guided my ethnographic task of teasing out the key analytical themes using IRC theory.

Each participant was conceptualized as an independent case, for a total set of 48 cases of STM participants for within-case and cross-case analysis (Yin, 2013; see also Eisenhardt, 1989). Interviews with non-STMers (e.g. church leaders, parents, some non-goers) were treated separately to inform the analysis and not included in the 48-case count.

In addition to content analysis, I first performed within-case analysis using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2003; Charmaz & Mitchell, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to allow for themes to emerge. For example, a typical within-case analysis of an individual case would involve the three interviews (i.e. pre-STM, short-term post-STM, and long-term post-STM), mentions of the individual in the fieldnotes, and any other instances this individual was mentioned in the study (e.g. the STM team leader mentions the individual). NVivo’s word-searching, case-labeling, and annotation functions were instrumental in allowing me to quickly

find and streamline all the instances an individual's name or keywords were mentioned. Focusing on how an individual's story unfolded over the course of a year gave a comprehensive understanding of the key themes that motivated their involvement in the STM.

I then applied cross-case analysis to compare and contrast the findings among different cases. After I completed the within-case analysis, sub-nodes under a parent node required further deconstruction. For instance, almost all the STMers mentioned their desire to "experience God." However, upon deconstructing the "experiencing God" node, I found that different individuals had different assumptions about what that means. By comparing and contrasting the cases under parent nodes, I observed common and divergent themes to crystallize, and discerned individual variables (e.g., STM "rookies" and "veterans" held different expectations on what it meant to "experience God").

2.10.1 A Multi-Scalar Approach to Multi-Sited Ethnography

I also made use of Xiang's (2013) multi-scalar approach in my analysis of the multi-sited ethnography. One of the main problems with multi-sited ethnography is that it is, by definition, difficult to know where the researcher should be at any given moment and what action is relevant. Xiang proposes that the analysis should lie where the taxonomical and emergent scales intersect. He follows Delaney and Leitner's (1997, p. 93) definition of taxonomical scales as "the building blocks of the nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size, such as local, regional, national, and global." Classic examples of taxonomical scales involve governments that define superior-subordinate relationships based on the breadth of influence that particular scale may have in bounded spaces (e.g. provincial premier is higher up in the hierarchy than a municipal mayor because of the breadth of influence).

However, life is much more complicated than a taxonomy of bounded spaces. An emergent scale "is the scope of coordination and mobilization that arises from collective actions, which in turn generates new capacity for the actors" (Xiang, 2013, p. 284). Emergent scales are "by definition actor-centric and activity specific," and what matters is how the scale "is made into reality, what it does for the actors, and the consequences it leads to" (p. 284). By examining the intersections of the double scalar positions, I teased out where the actors and structures within the taxonomical space intersect, where the cracks are in the current bounded systems, and the meanings the actors attributed to their experiences there. This analytical tool was especially useful in analyzing the ethnographic data.

2.10.2 Adopting Interaction Ritual Chains Theory

Typical to qualitative research, I arrived at my findings through an iterative and recursive process. During the course of the analysis, I continued reading pertinent literature from analytical sociology, the sociology of religion, the sociology of tourism, missiology, the sociology of transnationalism, and the sociology of emotions to inform the development of a conceptual framework. With the valuable feedback from the assessors of my confirmation of status exams in 2017 and 2018, I reoriented my study to emphasize social solidarity as the study's unifying sociological theme.

Given IRC theory's emphasis on social solidarity, I adopted it as the theoretical framework and reframed the study's data accordingly. Specifically, I directed the analysis towards whether STMs were experiences that increased the sense of social solidarity of their

participants with their CCE identity. As stated in the literature review above, this was because an underlying interest in this study was the concern about declining social solidarity of religious organizations in modernity.

To perform this analysis of STMs' effect on solidarity, I followed Collins' three rules on how to unravel symbols: 1) judging the symbolic intensity of the IRs, 2) reconstructing the IRs that surround the symbol and tracing its secondary circulation within its social network, and 3) assessing the degree to which individuals maintain the circulation of the symbols within their lives (see Collins, 2004, pp. 95-101).⁴⁷ In Chapter 3, I argue that global missions are a sacred symbol associated with a constellation of other sacred symbols within the transnational Chinese evangelical community.⁴⁸ In Chapter 4, I demonstrate that similar sacred symbols also reverberate within the CCE communities and reveal the mechanisms that keep the symbols charged with EE. In Chapter 5, I illustrate the third degree of circulation, in which the STMs iterate the importance of STMs in their private lives. In Chapter 6, I go directly to examining the source of the IR situation of STMs.

In my analysis, I found that the sacred symbols of the CCE network emerged from key nodes that emerged from the within- and cross-case analyses. I identify these throughout the dissertation. These include the identities of pan-Chineseness, Canadian, Evangelical, participating in global missions, responding to the calling, engaging in spiritual conflict, carrying the "last baton," experiencing God's providence, and suffering for Christ. Making this connection, I reframed the nodes accordingly using IRC theory. To identify the IRs that charged the sacred symbols, I reconstructed the situations using the details of my observation fieldnotes. I then traced how these symbols were circulated via IRs at the secondary level within their respective church communities, and at the tertiary level in self-reported instances of maintaining the symbol. Once again, the NVivo's search functions of case labelling, word searching, and annotations of all the data and my research notes were highly instrumental to challenging and supporting my research intuition.

2.11 Ethical Concerns and Positionality

Ethical research practices and transparency were of utmost importance throughout the study. The recruitment and consent forms provided the outline of my study to the participants. Informed consent was a priority and written consent was received from each interviewee. For participants below 18 years of age, informed consent was also received by the parents/guardians. All my research instruments (i.e. the interview schedule, questionnaire) were made available to the participants and their community. The gatekeepers of the respective STMs and churches also received the research dossier, and they were helpful in introducing me into their community as a researcher.

In all circumstances, I made my position as a secular researcher explicit. While I was at ECAC, parents were aware of my researcher status and that their participation in my research was entirely optional. In addition, my participation in the STMs' mission was strictly limited to research work, secular activities (e.g. teaching English, leading group games), and team activities (e.g. team meetings, hanging out).

I paid special care in dealing with minors under the legal adult age of 18. Given the conservative nature of the CCEs, I took similar precautions with female subjects. All interviews were conducted in public spaces that afforded a reasonable degree of privacy (i.e. to not be

overheard), such as restaurants, a conference room (with windows), or an empty room with indoor windows in a church. In situations where privacy in public spaces was unavailable (common in China), I conducted the interview in a room where people could see the interviews taking place (e.g. in a hotel's empty indoor gym with glass walls) or left the door ajar. In all the interviews, I made explicit that the decision to answer any of the questions remained optional and without any personal consequences.

The rights and interests of the participants were of primary importance in every choice I made regarding the reporting and dissemination of data. All names and other significant identity characteristics of the sample organization were kept confidential and have been represented through pseudonyms. The storage of research-related records and data was safeguarded, with nobody other than the researcher having access to the material.

Another central ethical concern throughout the study was how I handled the researcher bias that may emerge given my father was formerly an executive administrator in the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) denomination. First of all, the influence of my father had already been greatly mitigated as he had no longer been an administrator at the CMA at the time of the study for almost four years. In addition, my research participants were mostly lay members of the church rather than pastoral staff, and therefore their understanding of the workings at the administrative level of church politics was limited—many of them did not even know who my father was. Furthermore, I did not research STM teams from my father's church. In short, my father's influence was limited to my introduction to the gatekeepers of the churches.

In the field, I adopted some additional safeguards against this bias. First, since the pastoral staff of the church provided my access to the STM teams, I asked the gatekeepers to refrain from referring to my father to the STM team. I emphasized that my goal was advancing scientific understanding of STMs and not advancing religious goals of my faith. Naturally, I was forthright about my relationship with my father on the rare occasions when he came up in conversations with the STMers. The multiple methods of data collection afforded triangulation of data that circumvented the problems of participant reactivity (Maxwell, 2013).

Chapter 3: Renegotiating Religious Transnationalism: Fractures in Transnational Chinese Evangelicalism⁴⁹

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the question “Why do missions exist?” It also introduces the broader discourses that drive Chinese-Canadian evangelicals to be engaged with the STM enterprise. An additional layer of concern lies in whether future generations of diaspora communities will continue to engage in practices of religious transnationalism. The purpose of the discussion below is to provide a road map to the rest of the thesis, something that would be useful to those who are unfamiliar with the Chinese evangelical social scene.

To do this, I examined at the macro level the sacred symbols of Chinese-Canadian evangelicals (CCEs) who participated in the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE) Movement—currently one of the largest transnational Chinese evangelical networks. Extant literature has emphasized describing the activities and characteristics of transnational religious networks (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002; Levitt, 2004, 2007; Vásquez & Dewind, 2014), but less has been said about the disconnects within. This chapter attempts to shed new light on the phenomenon using a negative case by observing the “possibility principle,” that is, that there is the possibility of a break in CCCOWE’s practices of religious transnationalism because of its internal fractures (Mahoney & Goerts, 2004). Furthermore, relatively little has been written about Chinese Christian transnationalism between North America and East Asia compared to Latin America and Africa.⁵⁰

This chapter has three objectives. First, I explain why missions exist by discussing the origin of the CCCOWE Movement (representing Chinese evangelicalism) and the Lausanne Movement (representing mainstream evangelicalism) and how they are “negotiated transnational religious organizations” (NTROs; Levitt 2004) and “scenes” that employ discrete sets of symbols (Collins, 2004) to promote global missions. These transnational religious organizations are also the structures that maintain what Wong and Levitt call deterritorialized religions, “religious movements with universal claims around which a religious community forms” (Wong & Levitt, 2014, p. 349). This chapter explains what Chinese evangelicalism and what its goals are to readers who may not be familiar with this type of Christianity.

Second, I highlight the fact that the ethnically based NTRO CCCOWE propagates the sacred symbols of “pan-Chineseness,” the “Chinese elect,” the “last baton,” and “creative access platforms,” along with its fundamentalist orientation. These combine to drive the transnational Chinese evangelical community to engage in missionary work in a uniquely Chinese way. Nonetheless, there are “symbol mismatches” within the transnational institution that form what I call “fractures.” I present the four ideal types of fractures observed as linguistic, geographical, generational, and ideological.

Third, I speculate on whether ongoing cooperation within the transnational Chinese evangelical movement will continue into the future generations of Chinese diaspora congregations. I argue that there will likely be a period of “renegotiation” in the future for members of the religious transnational network affected by the four fractures. Furthermore, I maintain that despite the fractures and renegotiation, these members would likely retain their fundamentalist characteristics (Almond et al., 2003; Almond, Sivan, & Appleby, 1995).

To achieve these objectives, I first provide the backdrop by synthesizing the literature on religious fundamentalism, religious transnationalism, and Chinese churches in North America,⁵¹ and compare the global evangelical movements led by the NTROs Lausanne and CCCOWE. Afterward, I examine the perceptions of the CCE leaders engaged in the global CCCOWE Movement and elucidate the mechanisms of each of the fractures.⁵² I conclude with a discussion on the future of religious transnationalism and recommendations for further study.

3.2 The Rise of Global Religious Fundamentalism

As discussed previously, fundamentalism is a pushback against the conditions of modernity. In the 1970s, fundamentalist Christianity experienced a global revival in the face of the rapid expansion of liberalism (Emerson & Hartman, 2006). It was not alone, as many other faiths (e.g. Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism) developed fundamentalist strains as well. The explosion of fundamentalism as a global phenomenon puzzled many sociologists at the time because the dominant paradigm of secularization failed to explain it. Ammerman (1987) was the first to identify a clear link between modernity and fundamentalism, and Lawrence (1989) set the groundwork for it to be understood as a transcultural global phenomenon.

During the rise of global fundamentalism in the 1970s, conservative evangelicalism began to separate itself from far-right fundamentalist branches with the rise of the charismatic-leaning leadership of Billy Graham and John Stott (Hunt, 2011). Nonetheless, it preserved many of the embattled perspectives of its fundamentalist roots (Smith, 1998). Some sociologists of religion argue that the strict characteristics of fundamentalism are what allows it to thrive. For example, Iannacone (1994) argues that minimizing free-riders in the religious community allows more devout followers to participate.⁵³ Almond and associates' (1995) nine interrelated characteristics of fundamentalist groups (see Table 1: Nine characteristics of fundamentalist groups) serves as a useful tool to understand the phenomenon.

Table 1: Nine characteristics of fundamentalist groups

Ideological	1. Reactivity to the marginalization of religion: Fundamentalism is first and foremost a defense of a religious tradition, a tradition perceived to be eroding or under attack by the processes of modernization and secularization. Without this characteristic, a movement is not properly labeled fundamentalist. 2. Selectivity: Fundamentalism is selective. Rather than simply defending a religious tradition, it selects and reshapes aspects of the tradition, particularly aspects that clearly distinguish the fundamentalists from the mainstream (see also Antoun, 2001). What is more, such movements affirm and use some aspects of modernity, such as much of modern science and modern forms of communication and other technologies. Finally, certain consequences or processes of modernity are singled out for special attention and focused opposition (such as abortion for U.S. Christian fundamentalists). 3. Dualistic worldview: Reality is clearly divided into the good and the evil, light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness. 4. Absolutism and inerrancy: The text of the tradition (the Torah, Qur'an, or Bible, for example) "are of divine (inspired) origin and true and
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accurate in all particulars" (Almond et al., 2003, p. 96). Fundamentalist movements in religions that do not have a clear sacred text (such as Hinduism) often privilege one text (or set of texts) over others.

5. **Millennialism and messianism:** History has a miraculous and holy end. At the end of time, at the entry or return of the hoped-for one (the messiah, the hidden Imam, etc.), suffering will end, evil will be vanquished, and believers will be victorious. The Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) offer the most certain assurances; non-Abrahamic traditions, although tending to borrow from Abrahamic religion's "end times" certainty, lack such fully elaborated assurances.

Organizational

1. **Elect, chosen membership:** Those in fundamentalist movements view themselves as called, selected out, set apart for their mission to defend the religious tradition.
2. **Sharp boundaries:** People are either in the fundamentalist group or they are not. The boundaries are clearly set; there is no confusion. One is saved, righteous, a follower of Allah, a defender of the faith, or one is not.
3. **Authoritarian organization:** Fundamentalist movements are typically organized around charismatic leaders, with others the followers. The leader (or leaders) is viewed by the followers as specially chosen by their deity, someone with near supernatural qualities or special access to the deity, virtuous, a model for the followers, and one with special training and insight into the sacred texts.
4. **Behavioral requirements:** As an extension of the dualistic worldview and creating sharp boundaries, behavioral requirements are both elaborate and specific. Rules about appropriate speech, dress, sexuality, drinking, eating, family formation, children, entertainment pursuits, and other behaviors are common.

From Emerson and Hartman's (2006) summary of the categories by Almond et al. (1995, 2003).

Studies of Chinese evangelical congregations in North America confirm that these congregations carry many of the traits listed above (Chen, 2008; Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018; Yang, 1999a). Given that fundamentalism is a transcultural global phenomenon (Lawrence, 1989), global migration functions to transfer values from home countries to the new destination countries.

This was the case for many Chinese evangelicals from East Asia to the West. Tseng's (1996, 2003, 2006) research found that many religious beliefs and practices were brought over by international students from East Asia to North America throughout the 20th century. While some students became permanent residents and others returned to their home countries, many of these connections remain to this day in some form (Cao, 2013; Guest, 2002; Tam & Hasmath, 2015; Yang, 2002). Below, I show that despite the fractures within transnational Chinese evangelicalism, the nodes within CCCOWE can continue to retain all of the fundamentalist characteristics listed above.

3.3 Transnational Chinese Evangelicalism in North America

Scholars of religious transnationalism have made strong empirical cases supporting the claims that religious goods and ideas transfer globally through transnational religious networks (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011; D. Wong, 2014; D. Wong & Levitt, 2014; Wuthnow, 2009). These connections have contributed to the “religious vitality” (Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015) of immigrant diasporas in North America (S. R. Warner, 1993; S. R. Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang & Ebaugh, 2001b).

Evangelicalism, a type of Protestantism with fundamentalist roots that prioritizes proselytization (Hunt, 2011), is particularly aggressive in its efforts to expand. Most Chinese Protestants in North America are of the evangelical stripe (Park, 2009; Skirbekk et al., 2012; Tseng, 2006; Wang & Yang, 2006) because evangelical congregations in Hong Kong and Taiwan provided financial and personnel assistance in planting churches overseas (Levitt, 2007; Tseng, 2006; Wong, 2015). Thus many diaspora Chinese congregations maintain strong transnational ties (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002; Levitt, 2007; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Tam & Hasmath, 2015). These immigrant churches have been instrumental in assisting new Chinese immigrants in North America in transitioning to their new homes (Ley, 2008; S. R. Warner, 1993; Yang, 1999b; Zhou, 2009). This also explains, in part, the higher likelihood of new Chinese immigrants converting to evangelical Christianity because they become embedded in religious communities that readily provide support (Skirbekk et al., 2012; Wang & Yang, 2006).

Despite the growth of Chinese evangelicalism in North America in the past few decades, many pastors and members of the community have noted that significant numbers of English-speaking members in the next generations of immigrants are beginning to leave the ethnic church, a phenomenon coined by Helen Lee (1996) as the “Silent Exodus.” Wong’s (2015) study of next-generation CCE leaders, and Wong, myself, and our colleagues’ (2018) study of CCE lay members, found debates on faith, science, and sexuality; mentorship; leadership; sense of belonging; relationships; transition support; and the overarching Chinese culture to be salient factors impacting whether CCEs choose to leave their immigrant churches. When they do leave, they do so by secularizing, joining non-ethnic churches, or joining other Chinese or pan-Asian churches. This phenomenon of the next generation leaving the ethnic evangelical congregations because of declining identification with “Chineseness” has also been observed in Southeast Asia (Hoon, 2015; Nagata, 2005; Nyíri, 2003).

This loss of the next generation coincides with the narrative of secularization in the global West (Pew Research Center, 2015). For example, in Canada, scholars have observed a nationwide decline of “religious vitality” outside of evangelical congregations (Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015), and especially among young adults (Penner et al., 2012). However, it is important to distinguish leaving the immigrant church because of declining ethnic identification from secularization, as the two involve different sets of causal mechanisms, the former being ethnically based and the latter being faith-based. Nonetheless, Wong (2015) and Wong, myself, and our colleagues (2018) have found that the mechanisms of both declining ethnic identification and secularization occur simultaneously, and can even be mutually constitutive in influencing the decision of CCEs to leave the immigrant church.

While facing the exodus of the next generation of congregants, Chinese evangelical congregations in North America continue to maintain transnational religious connections and practices within ethnically based networks (Nyíri, 2003; Tam & Hasmath, 2015; Wilkinson,

2000). However, despite these connections, scholars of Chinese transnationalism find that the overseas Chinese are not a monolithic identity (Ang, 2001) and they exercise their own agency independently of their transnational religious commitments. In another study of CCCOWE, Nagata (2005) found that the Chinese Protestants in Canada, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore were reluctant to align with a pan-Chinese ideology given their different definitions of what being Chinese entails (also see Hoon, 2015). In a similar vein, Tse (2013) found that the theologies and practices of Chinese Protestants are grounded in their local contexts over transnational commitments. This chapter joins the growing body of literature on religious transnationalism, starting from the assumption that “migrant religions are not static, self-contained wholes that travel unchanged. Rather, in the process of moving and settlement... migrants constantly [contest] religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy” (Vásquez & Dewind, 2014, p. 258; also see Tweed, 2005).

Given that a) many of the next generation of North American Chinese evangelicals are leaving the immigrant church, and b) many North American Chinese evangelical congregations maintain practices of religious transnationalism, I return to the questions that drive this chapter: 1) Why do missions exist? And 2) Will future generations of CCEs continue with practices of religious transnationalism through their ethnic institutions to sustain missions? Other scholars of religious transnationalism have previously articulated similar questions. While Wilkinson (2000) notes that transnational networks have contributed to the growth of Asian Pentecostalism in Canada, he is unsure whether these networks will sustain its momentum into the future. Similarly, Levitt (2004) suggests that further work should be done to uncover “the extent [to which] religion will function as a catalyst for transnational practices” for the future generations of immigrants (p. 16). Certainly, the practice of short-term missions to China and Taiwan falls within the purview of these transnational practices. I address this broad theoretical question by using the case of CCCOWE and the CCE leaders of the next generation.

The fractures discussed in this paper are consistent with some of the themes in previous work on Asian American evangelicalism. For example, Yang (1998) described a “tenacious unity” of Chinese evangelical congregations despite denominational, linguistic, sociocultural, and sociopolitical diversity. Similarly, it addresses some of what Shin and Park (1988) called “schisms” in Korean American congregations. The unique contribution of this chapter is scaling the notions of “diversity” and “schisms” to the transnational level by contrasting the sacred symbols in the NTRO scenes of transnational Chinese evangelicalism and those of mainstream evangelicalism. Reviewing these two streams of discourse also explains why STMs exist.

3.4 A Short Note on Methodology

This chapter was developed spontaneously and serendipitously over a side-trip in my multi-sited ethnographic study on STMs. As such, I need to explain the slightly different methodology for this specific chapter. This chapter draws primarily on the data I collected by means of my observations and ethnographic interviewing (Heyl, 2013) with 18 English-track delegates and the key leaders of the Chinese-track delegates from Canada at the 9th CCCOWE Congress. Convenience sampling was used given that my observations depended on those who attended the congress. I grasped opportunities to gauge the delegates’ reactions to the events of the week over coffee breaks and sightseeing. Given that the congress is for religious leaders such as pastors, lay leaders, and leaders of religious non-governmental organizations (RNGOs; see Tam

& Hasmath 2015), it is a rich nexus to study transnational Chinese evangelical engagement with missions.

In this chapter, I use the term *English* in multiple ways. When I write *English-speaking*, it is used to describe a subject who uses English as their preferred language. When I use *English track*, it points to the CCCOWE congress' English-speaking track of 132 delegates, as opposed to its Chinese-speaking counterpart of 1,042 delegates. When I write *English pastor* or *English delegate*, I refer to an ethnically Chinese clergy who is in charge of an English-speaking congregation. This distinction is necessary because Chinese churches in Canada are multilingual, with Chinese (i.e. mostly Cantonese or Mandarin) and English services.

As explained above, in light of diminishing ethnic identification with the immigrant church among next generation CCE leaders (Wong, 2015) and laypeople (Wong et al., 2018), this chapter's emphasis was to observe how this mission manifests itself in NTROs. Therefore, I focused on the agents that engage NTROs. While a few of the 18 English-track delegates may not be second-generation CCEs themselves, they are the ones traversing the NTRO (i.e. CCCOWE) and engaging in its practices. Furthermore, these leaders of the next generation are most in touch with their congregational needs, a claim supported by previous congregational studies that key informants in leadership positions are accurate in representing their congregations (see Reimer & Wilkinson 2015). Concentrating on 18 English-track delegates comes with a selection bias. They were selected by CCCOWE-Canada to attend the congress, so the likelihood of them being sympathetic to the CCCOWE cause may be greater compared to CCE leaders who were not chosen. However, as we shall see below, this chapter's findings become even more fascinating considering that the 18 participants were supposed to be CCCOWE sympathizers.

This chapter synthesizes observations from both the broader STM dataset and from this specific CCCOWE trip. Depending on the reader's methodological orientation, this approach may enrich the validity or suggest a methodological flaw; I believe the former to be the case. While key CCCOWE-Canada gatekeepers gave permission to conduct fieldwork at the congress, some of the delegates were unaware I was conducting research at the time—an ethical dilemma often associated with ethnographic research (Murphy & Dingwall, 2013). For participants' protection, all names are either not provided or given as pseudonyms, since unpopular opinions may elicit negative repercussions from the CCE community.

Besides the 18 English-track CCE delegates, there were key leaders among the 40 Chinese-track CCE delegates that participated in the congress. To ensure I had a balanced perspective on both Chinese and English tracks, I had numerous conversations about the congress with Chinese-track leaders from Canada in the long 45-minute subway commutes over the several days of the congress. In addition, I crossed over to the Chinese-speaking sessions on several occasions for a more balanced observation. Coding and analysis of the data were conducted in the same manner as the rest of the thesis, discussed in the previous chapter.

Understanding questions of validity in unstructured observations, I sent several drafts of this chapter to five members of both the English and Chinese sides of the CCE delegation. Follow-up interviews were conducted with key informants half a year later to gauge their reflections on the congress. I duly implemented their feedback to ensure I accurately interpreted and represented their social reality.

3.5 Negotiated Transnational Religious Organizations Scenes: The Lausanne and the CCCOWE Evangelical Movements

In this section, I compare the Lausanne and CCCOWE evangelical movements. The Lausanne Movement is the largest transnational organization that sustains the mainstream discourse on global evangelicalism. In comparison, the CCCOWE Movement is an offshoot of the Lausanne Movement that has developed its own unique discourse on global missions based on Chinese ethnicity.

Both movements are mature arrangements of what Levitt (2004) calls “negotiated transnational religious organizations” (NTROs). She defines these as “an emerging set of cross-border organizational arrangements [that] are still being worked out” (p. 3) and states that these “emerge organically, in response to the challenges posed by a particular context” (p. 10). There is an absence of “strong federated institutional structure or rules. Instead, individuals and organizations enter into informal agreements with one another that... are more flexibly constituted” (p. 8). Levitt’s original conception of NTROs specifies that these arrangements are for “migrants,” a fitting description for CCCOWE’s aspiration to be a global platform for Chinese migrants. Conversely, Levitt’s conception of “migrants” is inapplicable in the case of the Lausanne Movement because the network is based solely on the belief in a global Christendom with little consideration for ethnicity. I call both arrangements “mature” because they are more centralized and established than what Levitt’s original conception suggests.

The Lausanne and CCCOWE evangelical movements are also what Collins (2004) calls “scenes.” They are networks with a high density of interaction and interconnection with constant IRs over time where participants continue engaging because of the central mission they share. In this chapter, I utilize both Levitt’s notion of NTRO (to emphasize its transnational and voluntary nature) and Collins’ concept of scenes (for the theoretical application of symbols and IRs). Below, I elaborate upon what is sacred for each NTRO scene.

3.5.1 The Lausanne Movement, spiritual conflict, and global missions.

The International Congress of World Evangelization called by evangelical icons Billy Graham and John Stott held in Lausanne in 1974 produced the Lausanne Covenant—the most recognized document outlining the modern evangelical agenda. This event marked the beginning of the Lausanne Movement, which shaped the evangelical movement for the next four decades (Hunt, 2011). The Lausanne Covenant has been renewed twice, with the most recent iteration being the Cape Town Commitment in 2011 (The Lausanne Movement, 2011b).

Engagement in spiritual conflict has historically been embedded in the Christian worldview. Most Christian traditions, both Protestant and Catholic, subscribe to the belief that Satan and his demons exercise dominion over the world and that the ontological world is in conflict between the forces of God and Satan. This perspective is well-documented in the New Testament, with 1 John 5:19 (NIV) stating “that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” and Jesus referring to Satan as “the prince of the world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). The engagement of Christians against the demonic realm is summarized in Ephesians 6, where Paul analogizes armor with Christian traits (e.g. the breastplate of Righteousness, the helmet of salvation). The imagery of spiritual warfare is written in greatest detail in the book of Revelations, which described Satan’s insurrection in heaven and his fall (Revelations 12:7), followed by a war between the beast (often depicted as the antichrist) leading the kings of the

earth against God's elect (Revelations 19:19), culminating in a final showdown between Satan leading the nations of the earth in an open rebellion against God's triumphant return (Revelations 20:8).

Theologically, the evangelical interpretation of the spiritual war is divided into two eras: the present age of evil and the ultimate victorious return of Christ (Arnold, 1997). This worldview of the spiritual war seeps into popular culture via its depiction in literary works such as C. S. Lewis's quite explicit *The Last Battle* from *The Chronicles of Narnia* (also see Lewis, 1942) and J. R. R. Tolkien's more subtle Catholic symbolism of *The Return of the King* from *The Lord of the Rings*. To this day, the ontological position that the earth is in a perpetual spiritual war between God and the devil until Christ's return at the end of times is largely undisputed among most Protestant denominations and the Catholic church.

The writing of the Lausanne Covenant consisted of the input of 150 nations around the world focusing on mainstream, Biblical, and primary issues, while ignoring the controversial secondary issues that often splinter churches. Written by John Stott, the covenant's 12th article clearly spells out the evangelical position on spiritual conflict:

We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the Church and frustrate its task of world evangelization. We know our need to equip ourselves with God's armor and to fight this battle with the spiritual weapons of truth and prayer... We need both watchfulness and discernment to safeguard the biblical gospel... All this is worldly. The Church must be in the world; the world must not be in the Church (Lausanne Committee For World Evangelization, 1974).

Evangelical denominations subscribe to the Lausanne Covenant's core belief that missionizing is to save human souls from eternal damnation and the clutches of the devil. In short, missions exist because they are a core doctrine of Christianity.

The Lausanne Movement continues to be active in promoting global evangelism. Its appendages are regional offices around the world that coordinate regional consultations and conferences. It employs specialists called "catalysts" who champion different initiatives for evangelism, such as research, diaspora networks, technology implementation, and healthcare. For churches and Christians who want to be involved, it is an open platform to plug into the global evangelical network.

The Lausanne Movement has been actively renewing itself over the past five years. Facing the threat of aging, it has moved away from its presidential model and incorporated a more oligarchic leadership. It has been trying to involve younger leaders by deliberately appointing catalysts in their 40s rather than relying solely on the venerable leaders from the old evangelical guard. Furthermore, there is a newfound emphasis on promoting diversity by appointing catalysts of multiple nationalities, ethnicities, and genders.

Since 1974, substantial changes have taken place in the field of global missionary outreach. For many, "Reaching the Unreached" is the motto for this era of missions (Winter & Koch, 2009). Given the restricted access of the "10/40 Window,"⁵⁴ among other countries, a shift to pragmatism has emerged. "Creative access platforms," innovative programs used to circumvent a country's means of excluding foreign religion, have become the model to enter

countries that do not issue visas for missionaries. In other words, in order to deploy missionaries to those locations, missionary agencies enlist professionals or entrepreneurs as missionaries instead of clergy (see Tam & Hasmath 2015).

The Lausanne Movement is regarded as one of the primary global networks championing mainstream evangelicalism today. Recently, it has striven to renew itself and transcend ethnicity and nationality. It facilitates the transnational transference of ideas and networks among evangelicals and like-minded Protestants. Mirroring this effort is the Chinese version—the CCCOWE Movement.

3.5.2 The CCCOWE Movement.

With some Chinese leaders also attending the 1974 Lausanne meeting, 60 Chinese religious leaders around the world from different affiliations felt the need to begin a diaspora evangelical movement to respond to the call for global evangelism by forming CCCOWE. In 1976, CCCOWE held their first international conference in Hong Kong, gathering over 1500 attendees from 27 districts around the world. The conference resulted in the CCCOWE Declaration (CCCOWE, n.d.) proclaiming the fourfold purpose of CCCOWE is to bridge the gap between 1) two generations, 2) the old and new, 3) the East and West, and 4) denominations.⁵⁵ Some know CCCOWE as the “Chinese Lausanne,” and it is currently one of the largest transnational Chinese evangelical networks working cross-denominationally among interested churches, seminaries, mission agencies, and RNGOs.

Similar to the Lausanne Movement, the CCCOWE Movement was designed to be a hub to coordinate evangelism efforts within regions with significant Chinese evangelical presence. To achieve this, CCCOWE promotes cooperation and strategies to advance global missions with the purpose of renewing Chinese churches and evangelizing to the Chinese diaspora and homeland. CCCOWE’s branches are divided into 73 district committees around the world, with a comprehensive catalogue of Chinese churches in each district. Regional and international conferences continue to this day, and its overall attendance has remained consistent. The past few global congresses have been held once every five years. One senior member of the Canadian delegation maintained that the CCCOWE Movement is the “moral authority” for Chinese evangelicalism and offers the highest level of transnational evangelical cooperation in the Chinese context.

3.5.3 The Chinese elect.

At a cursory level, CCCOWE’s mission statement and archives align with mainstream evangelicalism’s agenda of “Reaching the Unreached.” However, a more critical read reveals a core belief in what I call the “Chinese elect,” which I define as a special calling for the Chinese people to evangelize to the world.⁵⁶ This notion of the Chinese elect is grounded on several factors, such as a “pan-Chinese” diaspora, socioeconomic status, education, work ethic, and entrepreneurial spirit (see Nagata, 2005; Nyíri, 2003). CCCOWE’s former general secretary (the top CCCOWE position) Morley Lee summarizes the rationale in his paper “Chinese & World Missions,” published on CCCOWE’s English website:

Why are the Chinese the largest people group in the world?... Christians believe, “It's because God wants the many Chinese people to work for Him.” In the

eternal plan of our God, we are convinced that Chinese people are very capable candidates to carry out the Great Commission. Chinese are not only blessed with bright minds, most of us are also hard-working and quick to learn new languages. Whether for survival or a better life, Chinese people would strive to achieve the goals against all odds... Nowadays, most Chinese there are listed among professionals such as scientists, engineers, doctors, professors, computer experts as well as entrepreneurs and businessmen. Can we say this big change in Chinese' vocational paradigm happened in the past century is due to pure chance? (M. Lee & Lee, 2007)

The notion of the Chinese elect, having been actively spread by CCCOWE since its inception, circulates in other nodes of the transnational Chinese evangelical network (see Nyíri 2003) and continue as of this publication.⁵⁷ As a result, CCCOWE's global mission sets an inimitably Chinese agenda distinct from Lausanne's more inclusive approach. It carries the fundamentalist character of selectivity, with an ethnic slant—being an elected group tasked with carrying out a mission or bringing light to a dark world at the end of times.

The tension within CCCOWE to present both Chinese and English discourse on global missions can be found in its anthem. This CCCOWE anthem is sung during the opening and closing of all their assemblies in both Chinese and English at international and regional meetings.

Official CCCOWE Chinese Anthem

主愛中華，恩寵有加；地大物博，代出俊哲。
人道既窮，天道斯通；天人合一，惟信可期。
勉我教會，造就門徒；舉目望天，耕耘收成。
普世華民，作主忠僕；高舉十架，天下一家。
廣傳福音，靈命日新；佳美腳蹤，可西可東。
最後一捧，迎頭趕上；主來在望，凱歌高唱。

Official CCCOWE English Anthem

Praise God for all His wondrous blessings, to Chinese freely giv'n.
The ways of men have led astray, but through Christ God has shown the way.
O church of Christ make disciples, turn your eyes to visions above.
May we for him bold servants be, bear the cross in love and unity.
Proclaim the good news of salvation, with the minds renewed by truth.
In faith we'll run the race to win, shout the vict'ry, Hail the coming King.

My Translation of CCCOWE Chinese Anthem

God loves and blesses the Chinese abundantly;
The land is vast, bountiful, and good ministers are created every generation.

The way of man is corrupt, the way of heaven is the way;
 God and man as one, through faith can we anticipate.
 Help our church to develop disciples;
 Look at the field, plow hard for a good harvest.
 Chinese people around the world as faithful servants of God;
 Uphold the cross, the world as one family.
 Spread the gospel far and wide and renew our spiritual lives daily;
 Our beautiful feet can carry us to the East and to the West.
 May we press forward with the final baton;
 The Lord's return is imminent, let us sing the victory song.

While ideas from the Lausanne Movement regarding the impending end of times and the need to train disciples to evangelize are clearly written in both versions, there are some significant differences. My literal translation from the Chinese version above highlights how the sacred symbols embodied in declarations of being the Chinese elect, pan-Chineseness, one family, the final baton, and going East and West, are stripped from the English version. Instead, the English version mitigates the ethnic dimension of the original Chinese text and conveys the mainstream mission concepts of the Lausanne Movement. The anthem being a song meant to unite all nodes of CCCOWE conveying two different meanings is ironic to say the least.

Why would there be such a difference in the English translation? While an explanation may be that the Chinese version uses Chinese couplets that cannot be easily captured in translation, it is peculiar how only themes of ethnicity and cross-cultural missions are omitted. On this basis, I anticipated that I would find a misalignment on the global missions' agenda when I attended the global CCCOWE congress in Taipei.

3.6 The Fractures in the 9th CCCOWE Congress

The disjunction behind the Chinese and English CCCOWE anthems manifested when I attended the 9th CCCOWE congress in Taipei from August 22-26, 2016. The congress was packed with worship sessions, action research workshops, sermons, and networking opportunities that revolved around the core themes of discipleship and evangelism. The delegates were mostly clergy or leaders from parachurch organizations hailing from all around the world (see Table 2: Countries and Number of Delegates at CCCOWE's 9th Congress).⁵⁸ The congress was held in the largest megachurch venue in Taiwan, which can seat over 2500 people.

Table 2: Countries and Number of Delegates at CCCOWE's 9th Congress

Country	Chinese Track Delegates	English Track Delegates
Australia	54	4
Canada	40	18
Hong Kong	232	16
Indonesia	54	16
Italy	26	0
Malaysia	86	9

Philippines	16	10
Singapore	50	18
Spain	25	0
Taiwan	290	8
Thailand	10	9
United Kingdom	11	6
United States	72	10
Others	76	8
Total	1,042	132

Note. ‘Others’ includes Argentina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Japan, Macao, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam. These were omitted from this table given their relatively lower participation numbers.

Within CCCOWE, there were two language tracks, using Chinese (i.e. *huayu*, or Mandarin) and English respectively. The Chinese side had over 1,042 registered delegates, while the English side had 132. Once one factors in the volunteers, walk-ons, media, journalists, and other staff, the congress had around 1300 total attendees from around the world. Both tracks shared the same programs, with some keynote speakers overlapping. The Chinese and English sessions were also separated into two spaces during most of the day, reuniting only in the morning and evening sessions. The congress was mostly held in roundtables, with each table having approximately eight delegates from different countries to promote regional diversity.

As foreshadowed in my analysis of CCCOWE’s anthem, during the course of the congress, there were observable linguistic, geographic, generational, and ideological fractures that emerged between the English and Chinese tracks. These highlighted the differences in understanding the sacred symbols of what it means to be Chinese and evangelical in transnational Chinese evangelicalism. While I present these themes as discrete categories, some overlap and intersect.

3.6.1 Linguistic fractures.

Linguistic fractures are the language barriers between people within the NTRO. This separation is exemplified by the congress being divided into Chinese and English tracks. There was the obvious spatial divide; the Chinese track enjoyed the modern auditorium befitting an American megachurch, while the English track was situated in a partitioned conference room sans windows. While the joint worship sessions were contemporary in style, fully equipped with fog machines and lighting effects, they were conducted primarily in Chinese. Only occasional stanzas were sung in English throughout 20-minute sessions of singing, leaving many non-Chinese speakers idle in the audience.

The issue most English delegates took offense to during the congress was that of translation. On the second day, there was a joint session on the history of Christianity in Taiwan. Organized by CCCOWE’s Taiwanese delegates, that session was conducted solely in Mandarin and Taiwanese. Delegates from the English track, some whom were white and did not speak Chinese, became visibly upset and a number of them walked out partway through

the 90-minute assembly. Wondering where they went, I left the main hall as well and came across a handful of English-track delegates sitting around a table complaining about the lack of translation.

The translation issue strikes a nerve among English-speaking CCE delegates who have had a history of feeling like second-class members in their own church. One English-speaking reverend in his 50s who grew up in the GTA CCE community walked up to the table shaking his head: “I’m too old to take this crap anymore.” Everyone implicitly knew precisely what he meant. Being personally acquainted with this pastor from my fieldwork, I am aware of his history of feeling slighted as an English pastor in CCE churches. A CCE academic from a GTA seminary told me in confidence afterwards, “CCCOWE doesn’t do the English people right. It’s disrespectful to the white people who paid so much to fly here. And CCCOWE’s general secretary wonders why the English attendance has dropped from 250 since the last congress!”

This unequal English-Chinese dynamic among CCEs is a sensitive topic to broach. I witnessed a CCE journalist’s interview on the subway ride with a reverend named Fred (pseudonym) in his 40s from a CCE church in the GTA. Fred described the CCCOWE congress: “The songs, the subtitles, and the setup are very Chinese. For English pastors it’s pretty tough.” His friend Mack (pseudonym), also a reverend in his 40s of another CCE English congregation in the GTA, playfully hollered to Fred from across the subway car, “Be honest! You’d be fired if they published this!” While the joke was a hyperbole, it revealed the undercurrents of the unequal relationship between Chinese and English.

Hearing complaints about the lack of translation, CCCOWE’s general secretary gave a sincere apology to the English delegates the next day. He also promised that it would not happen again for the rest of the congress. Two days later, the translation was forgotten again on another joint session on the Christian reformation. A white pastor from Hong Kong told me, “if I really wanted to learn about the Reformation, I could probably just Google it rather than sitting here and listening to a language I don’t understand.” Some other English delegates already seemed too jaded to care, with most of the CCE English-track delegates opting out of the joint evening sessions to tour Taipei’s night markets instead.

What I have described is nothing new to the CCE scene. These are clergy who are familiar with feeling like second-class members in their religious communities. In CCE churches, the Chinese congregations’ needs have consistently been placed above the English’s (Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018). When CCCOWE did not accommodate the English language, it rubbed salt into old wounds. It also highlights the fact that CCE pastors of English congregations’ lack of mastery over the Chinese language is a barrier to connecting with the other Chinese evangelicals in CCCOWE. Ironically, the English track exists precisely because of CCCOWE’s intent to corral the diaspora’s English-speaking second-generation population, but it has also served to highlight the linguistic differences within the NTRO.

3.6.2 Geographical fractures.

Geographical fractures are differences between people’s place of origin that makes it difficult for NTRO members to identify with one another. To illustrate this fracture, I use the series of Action Research Model Development (ARMD) presentations that were a focal point of the congress. Discussants were assigned to present a series of action research papers. These papers were collated from submissions across CCCOWE’s global network, and each made a case for a

successful institutional model. The models presented were diverse, including community centers, simulation games, youth conferences, and RNGOs. A significant portion of the congress revolved around the ARMD presentations and delegates envisioning these models in their own context.

Many English-speaking CCE delegates stated that they were disappointed with the ARMD presentations since most reports were written from the East Asian or Southeast Asian perspective. For example, a community center model's mission in Taiwan is to help high school students stay off drugs. Once these high school students come of age, they help the community center by becoming mentors for the next wave of high school students. However, a senior English pastor from a large CCE church in an upper-middle class neighborhood in the GTA explained, "There's nothing we can learn from here. Our contexts are so different." He elaborates that one of the reasons is the "cultural factor." He perceives Taiwan to be largely "monocultural," and thus its models are inapplicable to the "multicultural" Chinese churches in Toronto. The fact that he believed Taiwan to be monocultural also reveals his unfamiliarity with Taiwan's diversity involving its indigenous population.

It is also difficult to implement new ideas once people leave the congress. Mack explains that CCCOWE is a meeting for the "golden and baked old boys" club of the Chinese evangelicals around the world. If there is no concrete plan laid for the future at these conferences, then nothing gets done... What they talk about in the conferences is rarely implemented since everyone gets caught up with their busy lifestyle upon returning home." So while learning new models can be eye-opening, implementing these experimental ideas tend to be low on the priority list once CCEs return to their busy routine in Canada.

Adam (pseudonym), a Canadian who works as a catalyst for the Lausanne Movement and has participated in CCCOWE since its inception in 1976, sums it up by stating the central barrier to maintaining unity in CCCOWE is increasing diversity among the Chinese diaspora. "It's increasingly hard to rally under a Chinese identity. It's so diverse it loses meaning." He marks the 1950s and 60s as an apex of Chinese migration, and CCCOWE rallying under a pan-Chinese banner for these first-generation emigrants made sense in the 1970s. However, he believes that with the passage of time, geographical differences between each node of the diaspora will heighten and this trend will continue.

3.6.3 Generational fractures.

Generational fractures are the structural barriers that result from the preferences of succession within NTROs. They reflect what the incumbent leaders perceive as desirable qualities in potential successors, such as educational attainment, language, age, gender, social capital, and socioeconomic status. The more desirable "capital" (Bourdieu, 1986) the individuals carry, the more likely they are to successfully climb the NTRO's social hierarchy. Conversely, failure to accrue capital may result in a lower desire to engage the NTRO.

In CCE churches, there is a high demand for senior pastors in Cantonese congregations and a shortage of candidates to fill these positions. This is partly because of stagnated growth within Cantonese congregations, since immigration from Hong Kong has slowed down considerably since 2000 (Li, 2005). English-speaking pastors are rarely sought because most cannot speak fluent Chinese or are considered too young. After all, few boardrooms would want to hire a senior pastor who is a generation younger than its incumbent board members.

On one occasion, Mack vented his frustrations that despite being in his 40s, he still feels disrespected by being called “Little Mack” at the church where he currently works because he grew up in that church.

Similar to CCE churches, CCCOWE has aged considerably since 1974. When I interviewed Roger (pseudonym), another catalyst from the Lausanne Movement, he shared with me that the Lausanne Movement regards one generation of leadership as having a 40-year window. Coincidentally, CCCOWE’s 9th congress in 2016 is its 40th anniversary. Roger shared that the Lausanne Movement has been quite successful in renewing itself, given its new CEO Michael Oh is only in his 40s. What he found most refreshing is that Oh has already announced he will be stepping down in eight years and has a clear succession plan. He maintains that CCCOWE needs to have a clear leadership transition model like its mainstream counterpart. Adam echoed similar sentiments, saying Chinese leaders between their 50s and 70s have held onto power for too long, and younger ones are just finding their footing. He maintains that CCCOWE needs to find a way to connect to the next generation, especially English speakers.

The problem of succession poses the question, who will be the next generation to lead a NTRO like CCCOWE? In Canada, English-speaking CCEs have systemic obstacles to entering CCCOWE’s key leadership positions given the demanding requirements of educational attainment, age, gender, language, social capital, and socioeconomic status. It is worthwhile to note that these qualities are unequal, and their importance is context-dependent. For example, a venerable old pastor may be ushered into senior leadership despite not holding a doctorate.

First, education is a key criterion because an individual’s educational attainment signals competence and legitimacy within the transnational Chinese evangelical milieu. A minimum requirement of a doctoral degree from a renowned evangelical university or equivalent is an unwritten requirement to enter senior leadership positions (see Tam & Hasmath 2015). To suggest the rarity of this credential among Canadian clergy, only one pastor under 50 years of age held a doctorate among the 18 English-track delegates from Canada.

Second, in line with the Confucian virtue of age veneration, older leaders are celebrated (Chen, 2006; Tam, 2016). While the congress professed the desire to include younger leaders, it seemed to struggle to act upon this goal. One senior Canadian delegate told me that the newest member voted into CCCOWE’s executive committee was in his 70s and relies on a cane for mobility. He expressed doubts about whether this individual will even be healthy enough to attend the next congress in 2021. In comparison, the English-speaking CCE delegates largely fail the age benchmark given that they mostly come from the second generation.

Third, there is a clear preference for male leaders, stemming from both a patriarchal Chinese tradition and evangelicalism (see Alumkal, 1999). In some more conservative strains of evangelicalism, women still cannot occupy senior positions of leadership.

Fourth, there are language barriers to accessing the upper echelon of CCCOWE’s global leadership team. All key CCCOWE meetings and correspondences are held in Chinese. In addition, I was surprised to discover that the CCCOWE constitution, certainly a key document, has no English versions in publication.

Fifth, possession of social capital is also important to join CCCOWE’s senior leadership. A CCCOWE board member from Hong Kong told me that one needs to have established a positive reputation and sufficient connections to even be considered for CCCOWE’s executive committee. Given how English-speaking delegates feel slighted over language issues like

translation discussed above, it is difficult for them to keep coming back to CCCOWE to accrue such social capital.

Finally, the underlying requirements of educational attainment, age, gender, language, and social capital highlight the importance of socioeconomic status. Doctoral credentials for pastors are demanding and generally take years of ministry experience,⁵⁹ the means to afford the education, the intellectual capacity, and a strong work ethic to complete the degree. Furthermore, participation in CCCOWE is often either self- or church-funded, which means the individual or his congregation needs to be able to afford the international travel. Often, “successful” pastors are those who can model ideal CCE family life as well; that is, they are married and have well-behaved children. Simply put, the bar is set high for succession requirements (i.e. socioeconomic status, gender, age, and ethnicity) and desirable individual characteristics (i.e. educational attainment, competence, work-family balance, frequent attendance to CCCOWE and networking, bilingual fluency).

3.6.4 Ideological fractures.

Ideological fractures are the ideological differences members of the NTRO have with those promoted by NTROs. In the case of CCEs in CCCOWE, mainstream and Chinese evangelicals qualify “cross-cultural” missions differently. Using Winter and Koch’s (2009) model of cross-cultural missions from the missiology literature, missions are cast beyond spatial terms: “the cultural distance Christians need to go to communicate the gospel” and “the cultural distances that potential believers need to move in order to join the nearest church” (p. 532).

A term used by both the CCCOWE and Lausanne Movement is “diaspora missions.” It refers to missionary work conducted by one ethnic group towards co-ethnics in another location, including the ethnic homeland (see Nyíri, 2003).⁶⁰ For CCCOWE, central to this ideology is the pan-Chinese identity and the belief that they are the elect race to do it. Comparatively, what I call “mainstream missions” translates to a commitment to the Lausanne Movement covering both spatial and cultural distances.

Content analysis of the CCCOWE archives and observations of its congress reveals that while it acknowledges conducting “cross-cultural missions” in spatial terms, it has little emphasis in covering cultural distance. In other words, CCCOWE’s diaspora missions are for Chinese in one country to convert co-ethnics in another part of the diaspora. This is partly due to a utilitarian view of the Chinese as uniquely leveraged to carry the “last baton” for missions. CCCOWE recognizes that the Chinese indeed have an easier time than their white counterparts using “Creative Access Platforms” to enter restricted access countries, especially China (see Tam & Hasmath 2015). The Chinese diaspora is one of the largest groups in terms of global population, so there are no shortages of Chinese communities worldwide for Chinese churches to target missionaries towards.

But how many English-speaking CCE pastors can truly identify with CCCOWE’s diaspora mission? Most CCE clergy trained in mainstream evangelical seminaries develop a worldview of mainstream missions. Furthermore, members of the English-speaking CCE congregation are leaving the church, partly because they are growing disconnected with Chinese culture (Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018). Most importantly, even if they wanted to subscribe to the diaspora mission discourse, there are significant hurdles given the linguistic, geographical, and generational fractures listed above. To use the linguistic fracture as an example, a CCE who

cannot speak Chinese faces a substantial obstacle in proselytizing to a Chinese-speaking immigrant in Panama, who would likely only speak Chinese and Spanish.

Nonetheless, members of the English track believe that for CCCOWE to truly become a global movement, the English language needs to be accommodated. Perhaps the English-track delegates feel they deserve a bigger role because they keep hearing that the English-speaking pastors are the successors of Chinese evangelicalism in North America. By the end of the congress, some English-track delegates conflated that idea with their future stakes in CCCOWE. On the last day, the closing prayer of the English track by the CCCOWE-America's regional delegate was,

Even though we're not the majority here, I believe leaders that come out of here will lead the Chinese side in the future and others. Lord God we love the Chinese. We never leave them behind. But you will use the Chinese and its diaspora so that it's not only about the Chinese. But a movement that is about global reconciliation with God. It's above race, gender, class, and regions. And that you can make something that is broken for your glory.

This prayer closed with a resounding "Amen!" from the English-track audience. This perspective from the English-track CCEs reflects a shift from CCCOWE's ethnically based membership fundamentalism to a fundamentalism based solely on religiosity.

This presumption of future leadership in CCCOWE reflects a puzzling disconnect from reality. Indeed, the English-track CCEs may be overestimating their standing within the big picture of transnational Chinese evangelicalism. When I was interviewing one of the regional leaders of CCCOWE-Canada, he explained that CCCOWE really does not need an English track. The reality is that over 1,000 delegates attended the Chinese track—all leaders of transnational Chinese evangelicalism. CCCOWE can be perfectly self-sufficient without expending extra resources to accommodate the English language. He even added that those on the English track should be grateful that it even exists given that it did not exist a few CCCOWE congresses ago.

It can be argued that any expectation of English leadership is peculiar given the global trends at hand. PEW's study of religion globally indicates that religiosity is generally declining in the global West, especially in Canada, Western Europe, and pockets of America (Pew Research Center, 2015). Meanwhile, given the rise of Christianity in China, it is foreseeable that the Mainland Chinese may be leading the transnational CCCOWE movement in the future (Yang, 2016). For example, bold claims of China deploying over 20,000 missionaries in the near future have been made at a secret Chinese evangelical conference in Seoul in 2011 (The Lausanne Movement, 2011a).

3.7 Discussion: Renegotiating Religious Transnationalism

In essence, ethnic NTRO scenes like CCCOWE depend on consensus for claims of the sacred symbols of ethnic and religious homophily. What has changed for the nodes within the organizations are the symbols to which they subscribe. While the deterritorialized religious CCCOWE upholds a set of sacred symbols based on the Chinese elect and pan-Chineseness, the next generation within the Canadian nodes are beginning to subscribe to the symbolic constellation of mainstream evangelicalism. Furthermore, there seem to be hints of the

Canadian values of multiculturalism sneaking in as well, as evidenced in the CCE distaste for Chinese exclusivity (also see Wong et al., 2018). In short, the transnational scene of CCCOWE is dynamic, and the four fractures highlight the mechanisms that can change what the variables of ethnicity and religiosity mean. In evaluating the significance of the findings, we must consider two key points.

First, the dynamic nature of the transnational scene would force upcoming generations of diaspora congregations and ethnic NTROs to undergo a process of “renegotiation.” With future CCEs experiencing linguistic, geographical, generational, and ideological fractures with NTROs like CCCOWE, the prospect of rallying behind the symbol of a pan-Chinese elect lies on tenuous grounds. In other words, the “cultural distance” (Winter & Koch 2009) between successive generations of CCEs in NTROs like CCCOWE will likely continue to increase over time, forcing them into a state of renegotiation.

I define renegotiation as a situation in which CCCOWE and its CCE member nodes have to determine whether they want to continue with the NTRO scene’s extant terms of engagement. In Canada, each successive CCE generation identifies less with its immigrant congregation (Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018), and these congregations will need to sort out their succession plans. If members of the future generations of CCEs are the successors of the immigrant congregations, then it is likely the aforementioned fractures of religious transnationalism will increase over time. If these congregations are able to sustain the status quo of first-generation leadership through a steady flow of immigration, then their involvement with ethnic NTROs can be expected to continue until the trends of immigration change—perhaps only to postpone the inevitable. Using Goffmanian dramaturgical language, failure to maintain the self-presentation demanded of individuals in situations would result in negative emotions (Goffman, 1959). From a power ritual perspective, second-generation participants in CCCOWE situations who cannot keep up with situational demands would feel disempowered and disillusioned. I surmise this model of increased cultural distance resulting in NTRO renegotiation may also apply to other nodes of the Chinese diaspora, with the usual caveats of apposite contextualization, as have been observed in Southeast Asia (Hoon 2015; Nagata 2005).

Second, the model of ethnic congregations reproducing themselves within the diaspora as ethnically exclusive will continue. This dynamic is typical of Wong and Levitt’s (2014) definition of “deterritorialized religion,” in which travel is seen as a means to convey the religion to the unreachable. This is done through both long-term and short-term missions. Through missionary work over time, more nodes emerge, with new definitions of what it means to be Chinese and evangelical. For instance, some Chinese-track CCE pastors justified the fact that diaspora missions eventually become cross-cultural missions through what I call the “progenic approach.” This approach acknowledges that even though sending missionaries to convert first generation co-ethnics in other countries does not cover cultural distance, missionary work is a long-term project and the progeny of those first-generation converts will be culturally equipped to evangelize to the host nation. Therefore, in theory, the Chinese evangelicals in the diaspora in Jamaica will convert indigenous Jamaicans to join their churches.

There are reasons to be skeptical of the progenic approach, given that most evangelical congregations in the Chinese diaspora have historically remained ethnically exclusive (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001b). In the case of Canada, a best-case scenario for a progenic approach given the country’s embrace of immigration and multiculturalism, few CCE congregations have been

successful in transitioning into a multi-ethnic or pan-Asian model (Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018). In contrast, Indonesian Chinese evangelicals are the antithesis of the progenic approach because the Chinese there have historically joined ethnic congregations to protect themselves against their hosts' persecution and to preserve their Chineseness (Hoon, 2015). In examining both extremes of host countries in the Chinese diaspora, most evangelical congregations are constricted to remain ethnically exclusive.

In short, the diaspora missions' model and progenic approach will likely reproduce ethnically exclusivist immigrant churches in the near future. Ironically, even if the progenic approach is successful, the commitment to the increased diversity within Chinese diaspora churches will further draw them away from NTRO scenes grounded on a pan-Chinese identity. For example, why would an indigenous Jamaican who attends a Chinese church in Jamaica be interested in joining a transnational Chinese evangelical movement?

Given these two points, different definitions of the sacred in this NTRO are emerging, and transnational Chinese evangelicalism will continue to splinter along the variables of ethnic and religious symbols. It is probable similar fractures will emerge in transnational Chinese evangelicalism as the cultural distance grows between individual nodes of Chinese congregations in the diaspora and ethnic NTRO scenes, setting them into a state of renegotiation.

However, despite these fractures, it is apparent that transnational Chinese evangelicalism both globally (i.e. as deterritorialized religions) and locally (e.g. in Canada) should be able to retain most of their fundamentalist roots following Almond et al.'s (2003, 1995) categorization. They continue to believe in the marginalization of faith in an age of secularization, remain highly selective in their membership, retain a dualistic worldview of good versus evil at the end of times, and subscribe to the inerrancy of the Bible. Furthermore, the boundaries for membership, the organizational structure and culture, and behavioral requirements remain.

3.8 Conclusion

To the overall thesis, this chapter serves as a macro-level backdrop to help understand the macro discourses of sacred symbols that influence CCE churches at the meso level. This chapter has outlined the reason why missions exist, the religious networks that stem from them, and the social forces that fracture these networks. It is within this global religious discourse that CCEs deploy their STMs to China.

The conditions of modernity sparked the rise of fundamentalism and then evangelicalism, with the Lausanne and CCCOWE movements being offshoots of these broader movements. The transnational discourse that CCCOWE perpetuates is far-reaching and affects CCEs all the way in Canada. Ideas such as pan-Chineseness, the last baton, fundamentalism, and creative access platforms all coalesce into driving CCEs to participate in short-term missions to China.⁶¹

The chapter joins the growing literature of religious transnationalism that find migrants adjusting their conventional faith practices to fit their new contexts (see Levitt, 2007; Tweed, 2005; Vasquez & Dewind, 2014). It adds symbolic and temporal dimensions to the theorization of ethnic NTRO scenes by elucidating the mechanisms that may fracture these transnational institutions even as they retain their fundamentalist characteristics.

In the case of the CCCOWE Movement's transnational Chinese evangelical network, it perpetuates the symbols of the Chinese elect carrying Christianity's last baton and pan-Chineseness. However, buy-in is difficult from the perspective of the leaders in the next generation of CCE congregations because of linguistic, geographical, generational, and ideological fractures. Furthermore, English-speaking CCEs are positioned at the margins of this network, disempowering their participation and resulting in an overall negative emotional experience. Events such as the Chinese-only talks I witnessed were disappointing rituals that generated negative EE. These fractures will likely widen in the foreseeable future throughout the rest of the diaspora and unravel ethnic NTROs into a state of "renegotiation." It is unclear whether disassociation with ethnic NTROs would mean the cessation of transnational ties altogether, since these ties could simply be replaced by non-ethnically based NTROs (e.g. the Lausanne Movement).

The sacred symbols that sustain the CCCOWE NTRO are unstable. This observation brings to bear two questions that echo through the rest of the thesis. First, to what extent will the official discourses of Lausanne (mainstream evangelicalism) and CCCOWE (Chinese evangelicalism) permeate to the church levels in Canada, and to the level of the individual? Second, to what extent will the four fractures of language, geography, language, and ideology apply to the STMers? These questions will be addressed in the next two empirical chapters.

Chapter 4: The Social Organization of the Chinese Canadian Evangelical Scene

4.1 Introduction

Having discussed the historical conditions that gave rise to global missions and transnational Chinese evangelicalism, we now turn our attention to Chinese Canadian evangelicals (CCEs) and examine how the transnational discourses (i.e. the sacred symbols) of “pan-Chineseness,” the “Chinese elect,” the “last baton,” and “creative access platforms” from the previous chapter are manifested at the meso-institutional level. This chapter focuses on Eastern Chinese Alliance Church (ECAC), a CCE congregation just north of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This church forms an ideal context to consider the mechanisms by which institutions regulate levels of emotional energy among their members. A key question in Durkheimian ritual theory is, if moments of collective effervescence are so satisfying, why do successful rituals settle down into a state of what Collins’ calls “emotional satiation” (2004)? Some have presented evidence that since it is impossible to maintain a permanent emotional high, social organizations operate in cycles where mundane periods eventually ramp up to moments of collective effervescence (Hausmann, 2011; Summers-Effler, 2010). Following this framework, in this chapter, I examine how CCE scenes manage the organizational focus on missions to maintain social solidarity.

This management of emotion and social dynamics takes multiple forms. I evaluate in my empirical material the various situations revolving around STMs within the scene. In this chapter, the “scene” that I refer to is the CCE churches and their many situations that foster social interaction. In my analysis, I make three theoretical observations related to previous studies examining rituals in social organizations. First, the CCE scene’s focus on STMs was indeed cyclical and effectively sustained the organization’s focus on missions. Second, given the strong organizational culture and the long periods of socialization of the adults and youth towards the mission discourse, expectations were managed through multiple levels in the organization. Furthermore, members of the congregation actively participated in maintaining the focus of the social organization. Finally, the social organization of the CCE scene placed adults into positions of power relative to the youth. I argue that because of effective management of expectations, the STMers were primed *before* they departed on their journey to experience the STM as a spiritually moving experience.

This is the first of two closely related empirical chapters that examines how the STM discourse manifests itself in the institution and individual levels. Specifically, this chapter answers the question, “At the meso level, how do churches focus the attention of CCEs for STMs?” It leans heavily upon examining and analyzing the institutional scenes in which CCE youth are embedded.

For this chapter and the next, I used individual stories in fundamentally different ways. In this chapter, my concern for individual stories was in how they were told in public. These stories framed the expectations and directed the focus of the institution towards missions. Thus the application of public stories is at the meso level. In contrast, the use of individual stories in the next chapter shifted the unit of analysis to the micro-individual level, focusing on individuals’ motivations for participating in the STM and their exercise of agency in the CCE scene.

4.2 The Chinese Canadian Evangelical Scene: The Sacred Symbols of Short-Term Missions

In this section, I describe the symbolic world in which STMers were socialized. I demonstrate how the STM was promoted as a sacred symbol and discuss its associated symbols circulating within CCE churches. A vibrant CCE congregation would fit the definition of a scene. Much of the data used to describe the CCE scene in this chapter was drawn from ethnographic observations of ECAC over the course of two years. I identified ECAC as vibrant because it was a medium-sized (i.e. between 200-400 regular attendees) and financially stable Chinese Canadian evangelical church. ECAC purchased its own building in the early 2000s. Furthermore, the lead pastor of ECAC at the time of my fieldwork was an active member of the Canadian CCCOWE committee, and Pastor Fred was one of the research participants in my fieldwork in Taiwan, establishing a clear connection between this church and the transnational CCCOWE movement discussed in the previous chapter (also see Tam, 2018). As part of the CMA, ECAC is plugged into a national and global network of churches (see Levitt, 2007; Tam, 2018), religious non-governmental organizations (RNGOs: see Tam & Hasmath, 2015), and missionaries. I explored the numerous activities within the church where the STM was promoted: for instance, through sermons, Sunday school classes and church programs, STM promotions, testimonies, team selection and interviews, and team meetings.

The case of ECAC shared many similarities with the churches of the other three STM teams I observed: they are Cantonese, Canadian, and medium- to large-sized churches within the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) denomination. Furthermore, many of the observations on church programs are more or less generalizable to other CCE congregations given their shared histories (see Tseng, 2003, 2006) and distinct discourse on “pan-Chinese missions” (Tam, 2018), and the fact they mimic each other as institutions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Tam & Hasmath, 2015). The fact that three other churches I observed in this study had many similarities with ECAC was corroborated from the interview accounts with their STMers, my visits to the other churches, and my conversations with pastors, leaders, and laypeople within the Chinese Canadian CMA network. In other words, these prominent STM symbols were circulated within this national network of CCE congregations, though the degree of emphasis would depend on local variables (e.g. denominational affiliation, leader preferences, church size, and congregational resources). Keeping true to their fundamentalist roots, the CCEs view themselves as called to engage in spiritual warfare and faithfully rely on God’s providence so they will experience God.

4.2.1 The evangelical worldview of spiritual conflict.

A brief summary of the CMA denomination is necessary to understand the worldview of the denomination. Starting out as a parachurch organization in 1887, the CMA formally amalgamated into being in 1897 and joined the “holiness movement” that emphasized the salvation of the individual that occludes their tendency to commit sins. Though the CMA did not begin as a denomination, its local branches functioned as churches until it officially became a denomination in 1965. During this time period, the CMA shifted itself away from the fundamentalist movement to take on a more evangelical orientation. With over 6 million members globally, it is one of the few denominations that herald missionary work as their core purpose and systemically dedicate a significant portion of their resources to international missionary work.

Global missions are the sacred symbol of the CMA and a central subject of its statement of faith. The mission statement on its American webpage states, “We desire to know Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King and to complete His Great Commission” (The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 2018). The “Great Commission” on the website refers to Jesus’ final commission to his disciples.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (NIV, Matthew 28: 18-20)

The CMA is an evangelical denomination that subscribes to the Lausanne Covenant (see previous chapter) that expresses the belief that missionary work is essential to saving the souls of unbelievers in spiritual conflict. This perspective was likewise found in the various publications (e.g. mission statements, websites, bulletins and newspaper) of the churches I examined. Below, I discuss the social situations in ECAC that revolved around missions.

4.2.2 Sermons on global missions: Have faith in God.

At ECAC, the message on missions was mixed, with many other sermons covering a variety of topics throughout the year. Often the church’s pastors were the main speakers, with guest speakers visiting on occasion. Sometimes the messages were about traditional Christian values. At other times, the pastor spoke about how to tithe properly. Some sermons were community-focused, and others discussed how the congregants should deal with the spiritual threats of modern society. Generally speaking, though, the case to mobilize for global missions was clear at ECAC.

In early April 2015, the visiting speaker Pastor Calvin came to ECAC to share his story on how God called him and his wife Gina to be missionaries. Calvin stated he was born and raised in Toronto “just like most of you,” as he spoke to a young audience of about 50 high school and college students, with only a handful of grey-haired adults in the English service. He told his story about reading “signposts” from God calling them to be missionaries, resulting in them uprooting their lives in Canada and moving the family with three young children to an anonymous country in the Arabian Peninsula hostile to Christianity.

The first signpost was when Calvin was invited to a STM to China by a pediatrician. It was on that STM that he felt he truly encountered God for the first time. He explained he had a vision on the STM where he was in a “Matrix-like white room.” God spoke to him: “Do you trust Me?” If so, he was to step through the door. Calvin replied, “I think I do,” and he stepped through in the vision. He explained to the audience that it was at this moment he felt “everything became light” and he was “filled with an overwhelming sense of peace.” He concluded, “If He said go, I can say yes.”

Another signpost was when Calvin and Gina were supposed to lead an STM team to the Arabian Peninsula. Weeks before departure, Gina became ill and felt acute pain in her stomach. She was diagnosed with possible ovarian cancer and they opted for surgery. However, on the day of the surgery, the doctors could not find any traces of cancer. In the end, Calvin and Gina

both went on the STM anyway and the travel was a miserable experience for Gina battling her post-op pain. It was then she prayed for healing and “felt God’s warmth.” She claimed the pain immediately subsided, never to return. It was because of these sorts of transformative experiences on the STM that Calvin and Gina confirmed their “calling” to be full-time missionaries to the Arabian Peninsula. They encouraged others to consider whether they too were called to missions.

When it came to missions, these extraordinary (and improbable) testimonies were common within the CCE community, and often heightened in their sensationalism during annual church events such as spiritual retreats or mission conferences. CMA churches are mandated by denominational bylaw to host an annual “Missions Month” dedicated to promoting missions at all levels of their programs. Different speakers shared at the church’s pulpit about the importance of global missions. They told stories similar to Calvin and Gina’s about how they “experienced God.” Brochures, newsletters, YouTube videos, and other forms of media that propagate similar values are readily available for consumption by interested CCEs (see Nyíri, 2003).

The weekly response to the messages varied as much as the speaker. Sometimes people sat at the edge of their seat anticipating the next arc of the speaker’s riveting stories. Other times, the congregation sat through the sermon like a chore, with some members nodding off. Others kept themselves busy on their smartphones. Often the emotional response to the sermons was lukewarm, as it had become a part of mundane church life. Regardless, over the years of being in a CCE congregation, especially in a CMA denomination, the beckoning to participate in global missions is clear.

4.2.3 Sunday school and other church programs: Inheriting a spiritual conflict.

Sunday school and other church programs at ECAC also promoted the STM. I attended Sunday school classes in the spring term of 2015 taught by Johnson, the intern pastor at ECAC’s English congregation. The course was open to everyone, but its students were primarily those who had decided they would join the summer STM to China (their participation was mandatory), or those who were interested in learning about STMs. Most attendees were between the ages 12 and 18, along with a handful of grey-haired adults (who were mostly the parents).

Johnson’s curriculum borrowed content from a local evangelical seminary’s undergraduate course, “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement.” In the course, he introduced global missions from the evangelical perspective (see Hunt, 2011) that emphasized the need for all Christians to fulfill the Great Commission by spreading the gospel to the rest of the world. Each week, a couple of students had to present “an unreached people group” taken from the Joshua Project website (an evangelical website that highlights the different cultures in the world that Christianity has yet to significantly convert). The class also taught the importance of cultural sensitivity by examining religious intercultural case studies.

On the first day of class, Johnson cited the renowned evangelical pastor John Piper: “Missions exist because worship does not.” He argued that the goal of God creating humans is for people to glorify Him. However, Christians need to spread Christianity to others in order for humankind to fulfill its purpose. He taught that Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and “ruler of this world” (John 12:31), and that it is the Christian responsibility to wrest souls away from the devil. He emphasized that “missions bring people into the

kingdom,” and taught the soteriological (i.e. the doctrine of salvation) perspective in Matthew 24:14 that God’s kingdom will not arrive on Earth until all have heard the gospel. Throughout the weeks I attended the class, I wrote jottings of significant one-liners that Johnson and his co-teachers used, notably “There are lives on the line,” “You may be the only Christian these people ever meet in their lives,” “God will open the door, the fear is if we will walk through that door,” and “When we send people out, we send the best. And God will continue to take care of the church that sends.” In short, mission was framed as an essential component of the spiritual conflict over unsaved souls.

However, not all Sunday schools emphasized missions, and lessons varied depending on the age of the students. Younger children learnt a variety of Bible stories and Christian songs to sing. The content gets progressively complex as the children get older and can contemplate deeper theological problems such as the meaning of life, the problem of pain, and Christian apologetics.

Like sermons, not all Sunday school classes aroused emotional intensity. From my observations, there were classes where the youths in middle school were disengaged from the Sunday school lessons. Some classes even had to implement rules for the youths to put their cell phones into a communal box before class began; obviously distraction was enough of a problem for this rule to exist. ECAC’s STM leader, William, who also served as a Sunday school teacher, admitted to me that it can be quite difficult for the children or youth to remain focused. One of his strategies was to bring snacks (e.g. chips, candy) to reward them for their attention at the end of class.

Sunday schools are only one of ECAC’s many programs. At ECAC, children learn at a young age that Jesus loves them, and the best way to show love to other children is by bringing them the gospel through programs such as Vacation Bible School or other forms of weekly children’s program outreach (Orange and Awana are popular curriculums). Once these children enter high school and university, they themselves become the volunteers in these children’s programs to teach what they learned growing up. One generation of youths after another continue this feedback loop of transmitting the congregational values within the church (see Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith & Snell, 2009). After being saturated by these lessons for years, and by this intensive STM course for three months, prospective STMers become familiar with the teachings of the church about global missions.

4.2.4 STM promotion: Responding to “the Calling.”

The above teachings from the pulpit, classroom, and other church programs are the staple means of promoting missionary work. They constitute what Durkheim calls profane time—the mundane moments of the congregation. However, prior to the STM departure, the intensity and frequency of preparing for the STM will ramp up for both the STMers and the church. Below, I discuss how this is done through the STM promotion, testimonies, team selection and interviews, and team meetings.

The formal means of STM promotion often do not extend beyond the perfunctory Sunday announcement calling for volunteers to join. When I attended Mercy Chinese Alliance Church’s (MCAC) worship in 2015, the church showed a promotional video. It was a home video showing STMers teaching and playing games with orphans in Thailand. Overdubbed were Cantonese one- to two-liners such as “I go with my family!”, “It’s the same as a vacation except

you can experience God! It's very meaningful!", "Language barriers can be overcome with body language. We even have translators!", "Spreading the gospel to kids who have never heard about Jesus. You can even talk to their parents!", "It's very simple stuff like doing actions and teaching English. Even you can do it!", "You can experience God as long as you're willing!" The video ends with a bolded question front and center, "Do you have *the calling*?"

Within the communities I observed, "the calling" to STMs refers to God's sacred mandate for an individual to be a missionary, as discussed in the Sunday school example above (also see Howell, 2009). In fact, some Christian denominations argue that all believers are called to be saints (1 Corinthians 1:2). The STM model imitates the long-term missions (LTMs) in how individuals, like Calvin and Gina above, are called to become long-term missionaries (LTMers).⁶² STMers need to have a similar sacred mandate before joining a STM. If one embarks on an STM without God's calling, one is serving in one's own interest rather than God's, and the wills of people are flawed (see Proverbs 3:5-6). Thus "the calling" is the justification for one's participation in an STM.

The calling that elevates the STMer's decision to go is sacred and unquestionable. When God beckons an individual to join the STM, the individual needs to decide whether they are willing to submit to God's will or not. This shifts the wellbeing and outcomes of the STM team upon God—if God called people to go on a spiritual expedition (i.e. STMs), He must have a plan for them (e.g. ensuring spiritual growth) and would surely protect them. Ignoring the calling is not really a choice, as the Bible depicts the alternative of not following God as some form of tribulation, famously illustrated by the story of Jonah getting swallowed by a giant fish when he refused God's command to go to Nineveh (see Jonah 1).

Therefore, because of "the calling," all four of the churches I observed did not do much in terms of formal promotion beyond announcements months before the STM asking people who have the calling to sign up. If there is a calling, then God would naturally provide volunteers. ECAC's team leader William (50+) elaborates,

Promotion-wise, it is very minimal. Because I believe it's God who moves people to go... It's my belief that if God doesn't let people go, then I won't go... So I rarely contact people to ask them to go. For the first two years maybe I did it more. But later on, my thinking was God would provide. If He thinks this ministry is worthy, He'll find people to join.

All the team leaders shared the same story as William, telling me that their formal means of promotion was a simple Sunday service announcement with the occasional video.

Despite the lack of formal promotion, the ongoing popularity of STMs in the churches persisted through public testimonies and word of mouth. From the STMers' accounts, listening to testimonies organized by the church of former STMers upon their return piqued their interest. Other times interested CCEs asked former STMers what they thought of the experience and felt encouraged to go. Some even sought further affirmation for "the calling" from religious leaders. Lucia (21) explained how she became involved in Peace Chinese Alliance Church's (PCAC) STM:

L: I was thinking about this one and I felt like God was saying you know you need to go on this one. Because when [the pastor] brought it up 6 months ago... I just heard God's voice saying that you need to go. It will stretch you physically and emotionally and have me trust in God more...

J: So you feel that there is a calling from God for you to go on this STM and see what He is going to show you?

L: There were times where I didn't know if it was God or just myself. But having people affirm that it was God, and say, "You know what, I think God is telling you to go." That really was like, okay!

J: Who was telling you this?

L: There was a lady who was here for a conference. I told her about it and she was like you know what, "I think God wants you to go." So I was like, "okay, awesome!"

J: So the speaker?

L: It was the speaker's wife.

Lucia's story of her calling shows that just her personal desire to go on an STM is insufficient. She acknowledged that she was unsure whether the calling she felt was from God or her personal desire. Therefore, she sought the affirmation of someone considered as a reputable religious leader. Having a short conversation with someone in a spiritually authoritative position (who does not know her personally) was enough to elevate her sense of calling to be divine. Growing up in PCAC, she had heard many LTM and STM testimonials and had finally felt the need to take the plunge. After going on the STM, she would continue the positive feedback cycle by giving her testimony at church. Fellow PCAC adult rookie Dorothy (40+) sums it up well when I asked what the expectations of her were upon returning from the STM: "To promote the STM through my testimony."

4.2.5 STM testimonies: Focusing the attention on missions.

The narratives of STMers were well-circulated in all the churches. Often, upon the STMers' return, some members of the team would be selected share their testimonies on the pulpit. Naturally, only STMers whose testimony would reflect positively upon the mission were solicited, and they would share to the congregation how much they had grown from the experience.

Over the Thanksgiving celebration at ECAC in 2015, Renee (16) and Lois (16) were asked to go on the pulpit to provide their testimony. I asked if I could observe their preparation process, and we met at a local Tim Hortons coffee shop. Renee and Lois planned a video a couple of minutes long showing snippets of the STM in China. During the planning, Renee shared with me that William had asked them to share deeply about their personal spiritual growth and how the team experienced God. She then expressed that she actually preferred to

present the STM using the narrative of “a journey.” However, she understood that going on the pulpit to share the STM story was really not about her.

During the preparation for the testimony, the pair gave the team leader, William, a call for clarification on some of his instructions. I chatted with him a bit as well, and he explained that he was insisting that Renee and Lois share deeply because there was a lot of political noise that year about the program. This backlash took the form of people 1) asking why the church spent so much money but only converted three Chinese campers, 2) asking why ECAC held the STM at a seminary to help local Christians when the focus should have been on converting non-Christians, 3) questioning the point of bringing youth to the STM, and 4) criticizing the STM for going for tourism purposes. Having young people on the pulpit to share how the STM helped them grow would quell many of the criticisms from certain factions. He later explained to me that these people wanted to wrest the primary STMs to China away from William and send the teams to conduct STMs with house churches in the rural parts of China (hence making the trip illegal).

Both Lois and Renee both ultimately addressed the congregation in the manner William asked them to. Below, I present Lois’ testimony, which was scripted and structured since she felt stressed by the presence of her parents and all the church aunties and uncles. Typical of a nervous teen in front of 200 people, she read it hastily (see Appendix F for the complete testimony).

I was really able to step out of my comfort zone and really challenged myself both physically, emotionally and definitely spiritually... Our trip was filled with endless up and downs... [but] I’ve learnt that God will truly provide... Three students were able to come to know Christ... Through our late-night meetings, bonding with the students, explorations in the city and cultural experiences like this, memories will certainly last a lifetime. It makes me feel so much more grateful and privileged in this wonderful country called Canada, where I can live comfortably and freely express my faith. Nonetheless, this trip has truly opened up my perspectives on how I view life and is definitely an unforgettable trip that I would really hope to join again.

Lois’ testimony fulfilled all the criteria requested by William, such as sharing her holistic individual growth and accentuating the fact that there were three converts. Given her parents and aunties and uncles who watched her grow up in church were in the audience, she played it safe and followed the script verbatim. However, among the congregation’s audience were also other youth members of the church, and her sharing set the expectations for these members for future STMs.

Other than public oral testimonies, the STM testimonies would also be published in writing. In the case of ECAC, there was the testimony wall where STMers would post a short paragraph of their growth experiences on the STM. Alternatively, STM testimonies may also be shared via publications such as the church yearbook. As expected, all the stories spoke glowingly of the STM experience or, at the very least, framed the experience as an overall positive.

Below is an excerpt from Chris' (17) testimony that was shared to the ECAC congregation after his STM to China in 2014, which I did not attend (see Appendix G for the complete testimony). He recounts a story where the team was told by local officials to stop teaching because their activity did not comply with their visa requirements. I have made minor edits to grammar for readability. My additions for supplementary details are bracketed.

My dad pulls me aside and obviously he was worried. Now you have to understand that the way we went to China was different, we came with the visas to visit family; who lived in a completely different city and if we got in trouble with the law, not only could we be in trouble, my relatives could be too. But I didn't understand this until much later... My dad says, "We should leave" and the first thing that comes to my mind was no, I didn't want to leave... Now we were in a big argument and we're all stressed out. My dad's pissed, I'm pissed and my mom's trying to calm down...

So I'm just really stressed, and I really wanted to stay but the consequences could have been devastating... I remembered very clearly; I was sitting on my bed... and I cry out in my mind at least ten times "What do you want me to do God, what do you want me to do God." And I hear a voice. "Stay, and don't be mad at your dad." Immediately, I get up with a smile and with a renewed energy that wasn't there before, and I felt a peace like no other. It was a life changing moment; from that moment on, I had made the decision to stay, and leave it up to God to control the outcome; no matter what happened, whether we went to jail or died... So, the same night, I remember somebody playing worship songs, and one of them was "Our God," which has the lyrics "And if our God is for us, then who could ever stop us, and if our God is with us, then who could stand against." And this song was really relevant at that time. Because if our God was for us, then who could stand against; whether it was the parents of the students, the police, or even the Chinese government...

During this trip, I really learned to trust God... Someone once told me that when you go on a mission trip, the one who learns the most is not the students, but the ones teaching. And it's true; that's why I encourage all of you to go. It's life-changing. Thanks.

Chris' testimony brings up many of the themes discussed above regarding responding to the calling and trusting and experiencing God. His public story emphasized the extraordinary dimensions of his experience, how God spoke to him, and how the overall STM experience changed his life.

However, in my interview with Chris, he confessed that in retrospect, he was not sure whether it was God who spoke to him.

I want to elaborate more on [my testimony]. So, the highlight of the testimony was the point where I was crying out to God. So, I felt like God did speak to me.

In that moment, I did feel a sense of peace and relief. I felt like things changed, right away. And I felt like, because I was really conflicted, and I really didn't know what to do. I was frustrated and stuff... but later, I kind of realized that, I kind of questioned it. Like did God really speak to me? I kind of had doubts, this is kind of like after I came back and stuff. After I wrote it. I think it was around the same time I was sharing [the testimony]... I didn't want people to think that God might speak to you like that [if you go on a STM]. I wanted the focus [of my testimony] to be on reading the Bible or that kind of thing so and I wasn't so sure myself. Did God really speak to me? To be honest, I'm still not sure... I don't know, what do you think?

The fact that Chris had to ask for my opinion on whether he had an extraordinary experience or not reveals how uncertain he was whether his experience was true. In the end, he published his testimony despite his doubts. Chris' testimony also reflected a management of expectations; that is, even in the case of a "failed" STM (i.e. it was cancelled), he was able to frame it in a manner that was overall positive to the mission (i.e. the STMers learning God is in control).

Examining negative cases from STMs are just as important as the positive cases in STMs. In the case of Oscar (17), unlike Renee and Lois, he did not "transform" as expected after the 2015 STM and was never asked to share his testimony on the pulpit. Furthermore, the adults in the church community, especially his parents, were noticeably disappointed. In fact, despite his stating his desire to go on the STM the following year, his parents rejected his request. Only after speaking with the team leader and much pleading with his parents was he allowed another chance to go. While Oscar presented his parent's disappointment as the main factor for him feeling judged, his experience also speaks to the overall pressure the CCE scene can exert upon its youth. He explains,

O: [My parents] did not think I got much out of [the STM] because I did not talk much about it [upon returning to Canada]. That was the single reason why they believe it was a waste of my time trying to go again this year. Also, because I forgot to write the testimony after the trip, a paragraph of what I experienced. I didn't write that, so they thought I was wasting my time and I was just going there for vacation. I felt like my efforts were in vain. It's just you try to do something, but people think you did nothing. So, you go like, (shrugs) "Okay. So not up to standard."

J: Do you feel that there is an unspoken expectation that's there?

O: I think the standard they saw was, for example, Renee and Lois last year went and they instantly got baptized. So, I think that was the idea they were getting from me going to STM but that didn't happen, so they thought otherwise. So, I feel like the unspoken rule or standard is that you get baptized after you go on an STM but I personally don't think that's true.

J: Do you feel that you have gained just as much out of it as anyone else, but you didn't talk about it, so you were misunderstood or something like that?

O: Yeah, I definitely feel that way because everyone else was a little more talkative... I personally don't like to talk about myself, so people think, if I don't say it, they don't think I did.

J: So, I want to get the facts straight. Who was it that was saying that you couldn't go again?

O: ... It's just my parents, solely my parents. The only reason that I know is that these things is because the pre-STM trips had been just vacation, so they think that I have the wrong mindset to go on an STM. Well at least my dad thinks that.

J: Right. And what do you think made them think that?

O: Because I don't talk much about STM and so if I didn't say it then they think that.

Oscar's case clearly demonstrates the possibility of disappointment from the church adults, including his parents.

While his parents did not think he changed, Oscar believed that growing up in ECAC accounts for his lack of obvious change—he had been inundated with CCE knowledge all his life. Notably, Oscar was adamant that he grew spiritually from the STM, expressing it at a personal level that cannot be observed at church. He had become more open about sharing his faith at school and learning Christian apologetics. He went on to elaborate how the adults at the church expected him to give his testimony and how he resented feeling forced to be disingenuous about it and despised those who went along with it.

If I were to go and write a [testimony] and the church was going to take that paragraph and put it on the bulletin board in our hallways for the next half a year, people would be inclined to read something Christian on that board. So, it's really hard to just write your honest opinion if you didn't learn anything. Like I didn't have any changes and just put that paragraph there for like a half a year. I didn't do it because I felt it was embarrassing to write something for people to read... So, there are current examples up there on the bulletin board and sometimes when I read those paragraphs, they seem engineered. Because they clearly do not recollect what is happening after writing that paragraph. So, I get the sense that it is a model answer... I can't say what they are writing up there is a lie, but I also can say that what is written up there is not the person they are after they have written the paragraph. It doesn't describe them.

Oscar goes on to list people who wrote glowing STM testimonies but who have since left the ECAC community. He portrays them as hypocrites who helped build up the hype surrounding STMs.

So, this person used to, let's just say dishonors his parents a lot, swears a lot, basically the polar opposite of... what my parents would tell our generation to do... There were cases of people that have written those paragraphs. They were a decent person that went to an STM and came back as a decent person, so because they are born in church, so you can't really change much more than what is already there because it's already there. You're not adding.

When I asked him if he felt pressure to give a testimony, Oscar replied,

The expectations are always going to be there, what I will try to do is if I cannot confirm or cannot find something which I would be able to confirm, then I just have to force myself to find something to confirm. So, what I am saying is if I just go there and do the teaching business as usual and I don't find something then I have to bring myself out of my comfort zone and try and talk to them, so I may potentially witness something, so that I can witness and put it down on paper.

What is the most telling is his last sentence. Given Oscar felt he disappointed his parents and the church community, and he is determined to step out of his comfort zone in the next STM so that he may potentially witness something to write in his testimony. Despite being repulsed by the church's desire for dramatic STMs outcomes among the youth, he ultimately agrees to conform to the transformation narrative. It is clear that through this experience of being censured by his parents, and to a lesser extent the church community, he has accepted the necessity to toe the party line and find an agreeable Sunday-school story of his own to tell.⁶³

The last account that is significant is from an STMer who actually left his church shortly after the STM. Three-time veteran Francis (18) reflected back on his time going on the STM and felt guilty for all the lies he told the congregation. He attributed his new perspective to growing up and maturing away from his church.

F: You're forced to say stuff, even the smallest, like even when I was here, I would say stuff like even the smallest seed, like you sow it and it's going to grow, stuff like that. And it's like, really optimistic talk, to validate ourselves. You know what I mean? It's optimism, and I'm not trying to shit talk the idea of missions, it's just... I just feel like it wasn't missions. All in all, I don't feel good about what I've been doing.

J: But you felt good at that time.

F: I definitely started questioning it by this summer when I went, was when I started to explore these ideas of whether I am actually there for something bigger. This summer I am not going. One of the reasons is because I am trying to accelerate my learning, so I am taking summer school and everything. And the other reason is because I actually don't support this anymore. I guess this is probably what you want for your study, like a guy who went for three years and now he's come to this conclusion... I don't want to seem to be a deviant, I'm just

saying what I feel like I can be completely unbiased and not sway it by anything and I'm just trying to be 100% honest with my feelings.

J: ... I think what you are trying to say is it's got a very neo-colonial perspective where you have rich successful people going to a developing country to help them out and also make themselves feel good at the same time.⁶⁴

F: Yeah, like, you know the whole story about Europe and Africa right? That's like, basically it. Neo-colonialism you know.

J: Isn't it slightly different though? I mean, you're Chinese, how can you be neo-colonial when you are Chinese doing it to your own motherland? You're not even born in Canada, you're Chinese. China Chinese, right?

F: I don't know if this will help your research in anyway, but there is a play, *Things Fall Apart* by some black African playwright... It talks about neo-colonialism. This play might explain something, I feel that way, like that son, from the African tribe, right... You are actually a dangerous tool because you are [an African] who they can look up to, but you are not... [The local Chinese] can actually look up to you and say oh you are a Chinese guy, but I have all these American traits about me and this includes me and Logan, Terrence a little less, because he is [an international student]. I think that's my answer to that... If I do go back, I'll definitely be aware of what I do because I am aware of it [now], but then you look at me who was just there last year, it's really dangerous. Because we just think we are being ourselves [but we were] really just becoming God for these kids, it's terrible.

J: But you said it's dangerous, what's so dangerous about it?

F: Well one danger of it, in terms of the Christian religion aspect is that they actually do end up worshipping you and not God. That's one danger, and the more social cultural danger, is that these kids start to worship that culture, and thinking, "Oh I'm living here. I'm living in such a shitty lifestyle, look at these guys. They want fans, they get fans. They think it's too hot, so they just go into an [air conditioned] room, right... I just think, these kids will end up hating on themselves when they are older. Right now, they may think they are funny, it may be a good time to play and stuff. But when they get older, they are hating themselves for being in this society because they can't be like us. I just see that happening.

J: So it's like you show them a little bit of the west, and they realize what kind of shit hole they live in.

F: Yeah. That's why I think mission should be done intra-country.

J: But isn't it the same thing though? If you go from Beijing, same thing, like a *Fu Er Dai* (crazy rich second-generation, 富二代), and they decided to go to Lelin?

F: That's true, but that's the danger of globalization, Beijing is globalized... It's kind of the western effect, if you are a *Fu Er Dai* in Beijing... like you at least grew up in the Chinese culture. I hope you don't start imposing Americanized culture on like we did... Like look at Terrence, he's super Americanized, even though he only lived in North America for like 2-3 years...

Throughout the interview, he felt hypercritical about the STM enterprise. In retrospect, he believes he was pressured to give the testimonies that he gave (though he did not identify where the pressure came from). He was especially critical about the neo-colonial consequences of entering China, looking *like* a Chinese, but actually not *being* Chinese inside. He cited the literary masterpiece *Things Fall Apart* to illustrate his position. He felt that STMers, in fact, through the material symbols they brought with them, turned themselves into gods to the Chinese students who perpetuate the global western hegemony. Francis's accounts would never see the light of day in the CCE scene.

STM testimonies about how powerful and transformational STM experiences abound in a church. Nonetheless, the youth's testimonies are heavily regulated by both the adults and the youth themselves. The STMers know instinctively that if they were to step upon the pulpit, the most sacred space in the church, they must cast their mission experience in a positive light. Similarly, if STM stories were to be posted on the testimony wall or printed into the church yearbook, these publications would have to resonate with the core beliefs of the institution. I will elaborate in my analysis on how these oral and testimonies reflect the "emotion work" (Hochschild, 1983) necessary to maintain the church's mission.

4.2.6 STM team selection and interview: Establishing membership legitimacy.

Church leaders encouraged people who were highly religious to go on STMs. While all members were invited, most churches screened whether their candidates were "mature Christians," often through formal interviews. The bar for maturity varied among churches. Generally speaking, a mature Christian would be a consistent member of the community who is able to effectively signal their church membership (e.g. able to speak in religious parlance, cite scripture, sing the hymns). The leaders of the church, such as the pastors, elders, deacons, parents, and youth group counselors, make this assessment. The interview grants a sense of legitimacy to new members joining the STM interactions.

However, I found that the screening processes were usually just a formality. In most cases, STM team leaders and pastors already knew whether the prospective STMer was a "mature Christian." These leaders were often the adults who watched the youth grow up in church for many years and also interacted with the parents. In cases where the church deemed an individual unfit to join the STM, the screening interview could serve as a means for rejecting undesirable candidates. This was especially important given that most churches partially fund the STMs on a limited budget and need to be thrifty in their choice of STMers. The largest budget among the churches I observed spent approximately \$20,000 Canadian dollars, a modest support to divide among a team of over 10 STMers for transnational travel and lodging.

I witnessed a handful of STM interviews at ECAC, and it was not a rigorous or meticulous process. Simply put, the interview served as the final check to ensure that the prospective STMer could properly iterate the church's position on missions. While some of the younger youths may have felt nervous since the process was under the guise of an "interview" with adults, it was pretty obvious that most, if not all, members would be approved to participate on the STM, barring the candidate saying something egregiously wrong in the interview (e.g. the candidate confesses they are on the STM for tourism). I felt that the interviewers treated the interview as a rubber-stamp procedure.

In the ECAC interviews, the mission deacon, mission elder, and the STM team leader questioned the candidates. The questions they asked included, "Why are you going?", "What are your expectations?", "Do you speak Mandarin?", "Have you evangelized before?", "Are you afraid of getting in trouble with the Chinese government?", and "Do you want to go because your parent/child/friends want to go?" In all of the cases, the candidates replied with the correct answers by regurgitating what they learned growing up. When some answers fell short, the interviewers gently corrected them on the proper response. For example, the 12-year-old Jacob was able to provide model answers to most of the interview questions asked by the ECAC's deacon until he gave an incorrect answer midway.

D: What is the most important factor to make people believe in God? Do you think it's your ability or preparation?

J: It's all part of God's plan.

D: That's really great that you think that. What do you expect from the STM?

J: Just to help out. I have no expectation.

D: What would you do if they say no?

J: I'll pray for them.

D: Excellent. You are a great boy. Very good. There were many problems last year [when the Chinese government shut down the previous STM]. Do you expect there will be problems this year?

J: I think so. But I'm not worried.

D: Is it because your mom is going with you?

J: Yes. (incorrect answer)

The deacon caught on to the incorrect answer and was quick to prompt Jacob the correct one.

D: It's an STM. It's a spiritual war. Are you worried?

J: No. God is with me.

D: Don't worry, God is with you... When you have a problem who will help you?
Uncle William will. Your mom will. Most importantly God will help you.

J: Yes, God will help me.

One of the major lessons CCE churches hopes for its youths to learn is to rely on God's providence. Given the assumptions that God is sovereign, that He "called" STMers to go on the STM, and that this God is just and good, the natural inference is that He would provide for His chosen people. The mission deacon's reminder to Jacob was a friendly reminder that he should not rely on his mother but on God, who would surely provide.

At the end of the ECAC interviews, candidates were reminded to be 'F.A.T.' – flexible, adaptable, and teachable. After the interviews, the mission deacon admitted to me that "Even though kids go without the right idea at first, I believe what they learn is incredible and is valuable." Many church leaders believed anyone can benefit from going on an STM. The bar is not set high, and a 12-year-old candidate raised in a church can breeze through the interview if they have paid a little attention over the years. Nonetheless, a formal interview granted legitimacy to the process of welcoming a peripheral church member closer to the center of the STM interactions.

4.2.7 STM team meetings: Submitting to God's will.

In the several months of team meetings prior to the STM, the reality of the team's impending departure began to settle in. Members began to familiarize themselves with one another and sorted out responsibilities. This was done in two general phases. In the first phase, usually in early spring, the team meetings were focused on foundational material such as teaching the proper attitudes of a team player, the "do's and don'ts of STMs," and laying out the logistical plan. They were usually led by the team leaders and were of limited interest because they mostly consisted of brainstorming.

For example, in ECAC's first team meeting in April 2015, three months before the August 2015 mission, the English congregation Pastor Fred delivered a short message to the team members. He cited Romans 9 and 10, and maintained that God sends people through a process called "divine election," despite God being able to do everything Himself.⁶⁵ Therefore, according to Fred, the STMers' job was to "share and be His ambassadors, salt and light."⁶⁶ He reminded everyone that the mission of the STM is to reach the target people. Fred also distinguished between "real need" (i.e. what the Bible says people need, the salvation Jesus offers) and "felt need" (i.e. what people feel they need; e.g. teaching English, humanitarian aid, medical care), maintaining that people in China really "thirst" for Jesus: "Living is tough in China; society is oppressive; something very simple like a bead will attract them to listen to what you have to say." Here Fred refers to using a bead as a prop to tell the story of Christ's crucifixion, something STMers were trained to do.⁶⁷

Fred also taught that STMers are the ones who benefit most from STMs and that it is easier to see God in situations of adversity. He stated that STMs would help one consider a life in missions and are beneficial in helping participants understand such a life. Finally, he distinguished between STMs and vacations, and told the team not to complain about the discomforts they might face.

If you think this is a vacation, you should probably not go on this trip. Perhaps you need to do a self-examination. This is not a vacation and we should not complain. Don't complain about the food. Don't complain about the living conditions... Don't disrespect their culture. We are the servants and not the ones being served. Don't be a whiny member. No complaints.

The overall message was one of submission—STMers are to conform unconditionally throughout the STM process and persevere through whatever adversities they meet abroad. Expectations of a relaxing vacation are considered an affront to the sacred STM mission of servanthood and proselytization.

After Pastor Fred finished his message, team leader William took over the meeting to go over the logistical planning. He had everyone introduce themselves to the team, ran through some “icebreakers,” and explained the tentative itinerary, the budgeting, and the distribution of responsibilities. He led most of the meeting, as it was more a matter of keeping everyone informed. Most adults were engaged and offered input, while the youth were passive listeners. Some youth did not even bother listening and fidgeted because they knew their parents would take care of everything.

In the second phase, usually in late spring, all the members began to plan in earnest what they would actually be doing. By this point, everyone’s responsibilities had already been outlined, people had become more comfortable with one another, and the youth who had been tasked with delivering the curriculum actually had to start doing the work. The meeting situations were no longer dominated by the team leaders or pastors but began to involve the unique contributions of each team member.

4.2.8 The internal structure of an STM team.

The preparation meetings were the formal situations where STM team members got acquainted with one another. While youth and adults might previously have interacted within the church, those opportunities were sparse. Therefore, the team meeting situations were also where the social hierarchy in the team was arranged. The internal structure was consistent across all four teams. Each STM team had a main leader, and most had a pastor, followed by participating adults and youth (veterans and rookies). While the participating adults and youths had the official position of teachers or helpers, the main distinction in power lay in the fact that the adults spoke Chinese, had more resources, and were accustomed to receiving deferential treatment from the youth. For example, as explained earlier, the youth who grew up in a CCE church were used to calling the adults “uncles” and “aunties,” thus highlighting an innate social hierarchy imbued in the language of Confucian-heritage cultures. For example, everyone called William “Uncle William,” including the adults when talking to the youths, thus serving to reinforce his senior status. As a result, the veteran or rookie distinction was inapplicable to the adults because they were expected to behave appropriately regardless.

The team leaders were responsible for the logistics of the STM and coordinating with the local support. Team leaders would often be supported by other adults who also taught in the STM. The adults discussed the travel itinerary, hotel logistics, passport paperwork, and coordinating with the local correspondents. They also set the goals and theme of the camp and

delegated responsibilities to the youth. Most of these STM responsibilities fell upon the adults because they were the ones paying with their credit cards and had the ability to use Chinese to set up the STM itinerary. In other words, even before the group departed, the situations that involved adults and youth placed the former in positions of power, though most of them respected the spiritual authority of the pastor.

Next in the situational hierarchy would be the youth veterans, who were assigned more responsibilities than rookies for several reasons. Most veterans who had attended previous STMs would know what was expected of them in terms of focusing on the mission. Given that all the camps were based around English instruction, veterans would typically be better prepared as teachers (i.e. more familiar with the curriculum) and have more English teaching experience. Furthermore, team leaders would have a better idea of where to place veterans given their previous work experience. Sometimes veteran youth were given other responsibilities, such as sharing their spiritual reflections during team meetings. Rookies, given their lack of experience, were often assigned less responsibilities for precisely that reason (i.e. they were less experienced and did not know what to expect).

The pastoral staff operated outside this social hierarchy. Given they are God's ordained workers, they were turned to for spiritual leadership, especially when other members faced situations that required some type of spiritual discernment (e.g. facing a spiritual conflict). However, the pastors often deferred to the team leader and other supporting adults when it came to logistical decisions. Only in PCAC was the team leader also a pastor.

To summarize, each team was led by a team leader who served as the logistical leader, and most had a pastor as the spiritual leader. While the remaining adults and youth were teachers in name, the reality was that the other adults helped navigate and provide secondary leadership to the team. The veteran youth were given many responsibilities, particularly in delivering the English curriculum, but were not really assigned many responsibilities in terms of spiritual leadership. Rookie youth were given even fewer responsibilities and were expected to be helpers.

4.3 Analysis

The observations of the role of STM in CCE churches, and ECAC in particular, provide several analytical points of discussion. First, by tracing the intensity of the sacred symbols (e.g. missions, the calling, spiritual conflict) and the secondary ritual circulation surrounding them (e.g. public testimonies, sermons, Sunday school, interviews), I found that, as social organizations, CCE churches are cyclical in their organizational entrainment upon the STM. These ritual cycles regulate conformity to group norms and encourage congregants to maintain the focus on missions. Second, the CCE scenes have a thorough multi-level system to manage the discourse that frames the expectations of their congregants. Finally, the preparation process reifies a situational stratification (i.e. a power asymmetry) between the adults and youth. These characteristics of the CCE scene frame the social situations that take place for the community's youth.

4.3.1 Conformity in CCE churches.

A central question in Durkheimian ritual theory is, if moments of collective effervescence are so incredible, why do rituals ever come to rest in what Collins (2004) calls "emotional satiation"?

Some have proposed that social organizations operate in cycles that unwind before ramping up for another intense ritual. For example, Summers-Effler's (2010) ethnography of altruistic organizations found that organizations operate in cycles where they adjust the attention and intensity of their interactions to adapt to collective successes and failures. Similarly, Hausmann's (2011) study of college religious retreats and paranormal investigators found that social organizations entrain to the temporal and spatial characteristics of their environments. What both ethnographies shared was a finding that social organizations found ways to sustain the focus upon their core mission through their interaction rituals. Similarly, members of the CCE communities readily perform "emotion work," presenting emotions they do not necessarily feel (Hochschild, 1983), or "face work" (Goffman, 1955), working together in maintaining a positive social interaction. Through these efforts they confirm their commitment to the group's sacred symbol of global missions.

The organization's cyclical characteristic helped the group manage its social interactions, and STMers knew what to say accordingly in the public eye. One cohort after another, each wave of STMers consistently affirmed the importance of the mission and how one can experience God abroad. However, upon deeper examination, I found numerous accounts of emotion and face work in which youths had to conform to their community's expectations. Lois and Renee were not able to share publicly about their preferred topics and had to instead give a public display that followed expected group norms. Chris gave a testimony about hearing God's voice, when in fact he doubts the experience himself. Oscar felt like he was being penalized because he was not able to demonstrate the growth expected of STM veterans, and hence was willing to try to give a better performance the next time. And most strikingly, Francis denounced his previous participation in STMs because he felt a righteous anger from the new sacred symbols that he had become invested in (i.e. the post-colonial perspective on STMs) after leaving his church. The commonality was that these individuals all had to conform to the expectations of their respective congregation.

4.3.2 The STM cycle in the CCE church.

Cyclical entrainment on the STM played a significant role in setting expectations within the CCE social organization. The interaction rituals that revolved around the sacred symbol of the STM included sermons, Sunday schools, testimonies, promotions, STM member vetting, team meetings, and of course the STM itself. The church's cyclical focus on the STM resulted in predictable moments of mundanity and intensification. It synchronized to the Canadian academic year since school attendance occludes the youths from leaving for any extended time other than over the summer. The typical working parents' vacation dates also revolved around their children's schedules.

The cycle operated as follows. In the fall and winter, there were the occasional rumblings regarding missions in sermons, religious retreats, fellowship, Sunday schools, and even a "Missions Month" allowing for people to ruminate on the possibility of joining the STM in the future. As winter ended, the focus on the STM ramped up as churches began promotions, preliminary meetings, and discussions among family and friends on who would be going. In spring, the official team meetings ensued, and people began planning for the mission. Other members of the churches were made aware of the mission through prayer requests for the upcoming STM during weekly worship and prayer meetings. By early summer, each church

conducted a sending ceremony in their Sunday service, where the whole congregation prayed for the STM teams before they were formally sent off to China. The prayers from the sending church continued until the mission trip was completed. The predictable cycles of ramping up and cooling down allowed members of the community to know how and when to meet social expectations.⁶⁸

By ramping up, I mean the mutual focus and the shared mood in the IRs surrounding STMs increase in intensity and frequency, until the team embarks on the journey. Those who are closer to the center of these IRs, the members of the STM team, become the center of interactions within the church and derive the most EE from the buildup in intensity and frequency of these interactions. Those on the periphery of these interactions are the other members of the CCE scene who opt not to embark but offer their prayer as well moral and monetary support. Members on the periphery can ponder whether they want to draw closer to the center of these interactions.

By cooling down, I refer to the end of the STM team's journey and the rituals after the team's return to the church. There were oral and written testimonies upon return that conducted emotion work to promote the STM as a success, and if not, to explain or justify the lack of success. Similarly, the STM promotion, interviews, and team meetings reoriented the focus of the STMers upon the core mission. As reflected in the testimonies, success may be framed as the quantifiable number of converts or the qualitative improvement of the spiritual lives of the STMers. STMers were chosen by the team leaders to share how they "experienced God" abroad, and publicly declared on the pulpit how partaking in the STM had made them draw closer to God. Like Renee, Lois, and Chris, people who were chosen to speak or write publicly understood the expectations on them to share certain aspects of the mission, while playing down other dimensions. Others, like Oscar and Francis, either were not given a platform or remained silent.

Because sustaining constant collective effervescence is impossible, the cyclical routine of STMs helps sustain a CCE scene's focus. Echoing Summers-Effler's (2010) observations of the emotion work altruistic organizations enact to maintain emotional energy, the varieties of stories presented above reflected the CCE scene's efforts in creating a shared mood and a mutual focus of attention, both essential ingredients of successful IRs. It allowed the youths to know when to perform emotion (Hochschild, 1983) and face (Goffman, 1955) work to confirm their social membership, without overwhelming them by requiring they sustain it throughout the year. As the year went on, the congregation became further entrained towards the STM team being deployed.

4.3.3 Managing expectations.

The cycle also regulated the cohorts of STMers who played critical roles in managing expectations towards IRs. As Summers-Effler (2010) argues, expectations can form a key ingredient to IRs. Hausmann (2011) added that cohorts operate as brokers of information that frame these IR expectations. In his ethnography, he describes his observed organizations as having predecessors and successors, paralleling the veterans and rookies I have described above. In his analysis, the predecessors manage the expectations of the successors when they monopolize and share their experiences of prior rituals, and can thus be held accountable if the expectations are not met.

However, Hausmann's observation of expectation management by cohorts was not the case in my study. In fact, many of the rookie STMers already knew what to expect and instead had to use strategies to manage their expectations, as we shall see in the next chapter. While Hausmann found that the predecessors monopolized the distribution of information to the successors, I found that the discourse of global missions was thoroughly ingrained in the church because of the multi-level dissemination of information over years of socialization. Multiple levels of discourse (i.e. preachers, parents, Sunday school teachers, church media, fellowship, veterans) were channeled to youth who had never participated in missions before. In other words, the predecessors could not monopolize the information because of the stable institutional culture that disseminated information at all levels of social interaction.⁶⁹

4.3.4 Intersubjectivity: The situational stratification and power asymmetry between the adults and the youth.

Besides the cyclical nature of the CCE scene's STM ritual, the empirical material also revealed situational stratification within the CCE community. In all the situations presented above, the interactions were dominated by pastors and adults, with the youth being further down the hierarchy of social interactions. As with any stable social scene, situational stratification is common, and those who dominate the social interactions derive the most EE (Collins, 2004). In the case of the CCE scene, there were many obvious avenues of discourse from the top down. Conversely, few official channels go from the bottom up. These observations were largely consistent with research on North American Asian evangelical scenes (Tam, 2018; Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018; Yang, 1999b).

The intersubjective conditions of power asymmetry between adults and youths played an important role in how the situations generated EE around the STMs. The adults who were in positions of power in Canada would continue their monopoly of EE abroad in China. Meanwhile, the youths who went were selected on the basis of being willing followers driven by their desire to experience God. In IRC theory nomenclature, the adults were the "order-givers" (in power ritual terms) at the center (in status ritual terms), while the youths were the "order-takers" on the periphery (also see Kemper, 2011).

However, the youths were not mere order-takers to be led by the order-giving adults. The filtering mechanisms of the churches (e.g. church attendance, team selection, interviews, high cost of the STM) minimized the chances of religious pariahs making it onto the trip or playing a key role in it. In short, the profiles of the youths suggested that they would gain some EE from STM IRs since they were closer to the center of the STM ritual, especially relative to the other non-going members of the church. Upon their return, they got to declare their spiritual growth through the STM and draw closer to the center of the community. Through their declaration, they reinforced the organization's sacred symbols and encouraged the next cohort of STMers to go.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter's empirical material on CCE churches, specifically ECAC, reflected how these meso-level scenes managed their sacred mission by following predictable patterns. They were cyclical and synchronized with the academic year, with moments of mundanity (e.g. Sunday service, Sunday school) that eventually ramped up (e.g. STM promotions, interviews, team

meetings) to the STM's sending ceremony, marking the team's departure. Closure was reached when the teams returned and presented their testimonies. Throughout the cycle, the CCE scene had situations embedded that facilitated individuals conducting emotion work and face work, whether it was to justify STM outcomes (e.g. testimonies) or to manage expectations (e.g. Sunday school, testimonies, team meetings, promotion). Every year, this cycle repeats, and members of the community adjust their Goffmanian "performance" accordingly.

Durkheim's analysis of the two phases of aboriginal life can provide insight into how CCE scenes maintained social solidarity towards its mission. He notes that moments of "a sort of electricity" often "stand in sharpest possible contrast" to the rituals of "low intensity" and the "monotonous, slack, and humdrum" (Durkheim, 1912, 217; also see Garfinkel, 1967). For Durkheim, differentiating mundane moments from those of collective effervescence delineated the profane from the sacred. These different levels of emotion are reached when physically co-present actors mutually adjust to one another to share a focus, and experience a moral force from the interaction itself that is grounded upon the sacred ritual symbols (Collins, 2004; Rawls, 1996). The intensity of the interaction rituals builds up and cools down over time in social organizations.⁷⁰

The management of expectations was also central to the cognitive structures of the STMers in the sequencing of events and creation of perspectives as the STM events unfolded (Cerulo, 1998, 2014a).⁷¹ The STMers were socialized to readily interpret experiences based on the beliefs and expectations taught in the CCE scene. As we shall see in Chapter 6, these beliefs were reinforced in group interaction rituals.

I want to briefly return to the first empirical chapter's discussion on the two transnational discourses of mainstream missions and the pan-Chinese elect missions. While the message was clear that all CCEs are called to engage in missions at the local level in ECAC, there was no overt promotion of STMs to China because of ethnic homophily. The delineation between discourses of Chinese and mainstream missions become lost, and what was left was a message to simply do missions. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, the decision for the church to go to China was not a coincidence.

This chapter is the first of two closely related chapters. It focused on the CCE scene's institutional characteristics by examining how it maintained social cohesion and organizational entrainment through managing expectations and facilitating cycles of interaction rituals at the institutional level (e.g. Sunday worship, Sunday school, testimony sharing, team meetings). Furthermore, it explored the intersubjective positions within the community. However, little was said about the agency of the individuals involved in the STM enterprise. At the micro individual level, what were the private motivations of the participants? That is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Entangled Chains to Experience God

5.1 Introduction

Having examined the institutional characteristics of the CCE scene in the previous chapter, in this chapter I examine the beliefs and expectations that motivated CCEs to partake in the STM. To do this, I analyzed the semi-structured interviews that I conducted with youths and their parents *before* the departure for the 2015 STMs.⁷² Unlike the previous chapter's focus on the meso organizational level, the emphasis is shifted towards the micro level of analysis—individuals. While the previous chapter also used individual interview data, the interview content was in relation to the broader CCE institutional settings. This chapter focuses on individual discourses largely independent from institutional influences.

I present my empirical material and theoretical analysis in several steps. I first present the beliefs and expectations that the parents had for their children's participation in the STM. I then examine the beliefs and expectations the youth had for themselves. For the parents, I found that STMs played an important role in child-rearing within the CCE community by providing the children with religious experiences. For the youths, the desire to "experience God" drove their interest in STMs. However, there were intragroup variations among rookies/veterans and younger youths/emerging adults in terms of what it meant to experience God.

This chapter makes two unique contributions to the sociology of emotions and the sociology of religion. First, for the sociology of emotions, the empirical material reflects a limitation in IRC theory's imagery of "chains," and I present an alternative theorization of "entangled chains." Second, for the sociology of religion, the notion of entangled chains can help explain the reconciliation between fundamentalism and modernity in contemporary observations. Specifically, research on secularism (or lack thereof) has found that people selectively integrate aspects of religiosity, and these decisions are clearly not entirely based on rational explanations (e.g. Ammerman, 2014; Smith & Snell, 2009; Thiessen, 2015). I conclude by discussing why youths who participated in short-term mission (STM) trips were ready to experience mundane aspects of daily life abroad as spiritually moving.

5.2 Parental Beliefs and Expectations for Short-Term Missions

This section primarily draws on data from the parents who went on the STMs and some of the parents of the youths within the ECAC community. The parents' perspectives on the youths partaking in STMs are important, as they influence their children at home and in church. Often these parents are the very people who manage and teach the church's children's programs, and they are embedded in a close network of like-minded peers in church fellowships and cell groups. It is important to note that members of the clergy (i.e. pastors, reverends, other official church staff) are often parents themselves. Together, they strive to do what they see as best for the next generation and become major actors in framing their children's religious experience. Many of these parents encouraged their children to partake in STMs and served the roles of team leader, participant, or chaperone on the trip.

Most parents at the churches I observed encouraged their children to go on STMs. While the parents stated in their interviews that their personal motivations for going were

aligned with the church's, their expectations for their youths' participation were more about child-rearing. There were many factors, ranging from spurring their children's spiritual growth and personal maturity, visiting the ethnic homeland, and enriching familial relationships.

These beliefs that STMs were responsible for positive child-rearing outcomes were spread widely throughout the CCE community. This motivation exists against the backdrop of a looming concern, discussed in my introduction, that the next generation of CCEs may leave the church because of secularization (Penner et al., 2012; Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015; Smith & Snell, 2009; Thiessen, 2015) and declining ethnic identification (Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018). Put differently, CCE parents believe that STMs are one of the most powerful options in the CCE parenting arsenal to increase their children's religiosity and stave off secularization. In their Christian worldview, this dichotomy carries the weight of their child's eternal salvation or damnation. In short, parental agendas align with those of their churches.

5.2.1 Spiritual growth.

The principle benefit of STMs that all parents brought up was that of spiritual growth. Parents aspired for their children to grow and become strong Christians who were grounded in their faith, and the persistent belief was that STMs can help deliver on that front. When asked why she wanted to bring her 12-year-old son on the STM, ECAC's Wanda explained that it is because she wanted him to *hoi1 hui3* (jyutping: 開竅). There is no direct translation for this Chinese term, but the characters literally mean "open" and "hole," implying an inspired breakthrough for someone stuck in a rut. In this case, she wanted him to reach the next level in his spiritual growth. In my email interview with Faith Chinese Alliance Church's (FCAC) Isabella (40+), she succinctly outlined her rationale for encouraging her daughters to partake in an STM.

J: What do you think are the most important things to achieve at this point in your life?

I: Love God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength, and encourage my children to do the same (while they're still living with us) through my life example, encouragement, teaching moments, sharing, etc.

J: How might going on STMs help you fulfill that goal? Please elaborate.

I:

- We can experience God's goodness and providence together, along with our dependence on God for things to work out and spur one another on during the STM and afterwards.
- They will (hopefully) see clearly my faith at "work," or remind me when I need to depend on God (instead of self) or to repent (i.e. if I lose patience).
- After the STM, we can remind each other how God leads and guides us especially through problems/challenges that will come.

J: What do you think is the most important thing to achieve at this point in your daughters' lives?

I:

- Discovering their identity (who they are), passions, God-given gifts, God's will for their life and career, etc.
- Build a strong foundation in God's Word and a strong relationship with Jesus Christ to help them go through life's challenges.
- Be brave and courageous, and not be scared of stepping out of her comfort zone to be used by God.

J: How might going on STMs help you fulfill that goal? Please elaborate.

I:

- Provide opportunities for them to discover, use, and develop passions, compassion, and skills.
- Help them build confidence in God's faithfulness and in God using them.

Isabella's perspective summarized what most other parents said about the spiritual benefits of having youths attend STMs. Her answer not only laid out how she hoped STMs will ground her children in their relationship with God, but also how she planned to play an active role in modeling this experience through her participation as well. According to Isabella, "build[ing] a strong foundation in God" meant having experienced God in trying times. She believed providing opportunities for her children to experience God adds to their palette of religious experiences. When the going inevitably gets rough in the future, they can recall God's providence in the past and be reassured that He is dependable.

5.2.2 Maturing through STMs.

Besides spiritual growth, parents listed other benefits of STMs that I broadly categorize as maturity factors. These maturity factors were diverse and vague, and sometimes caused the parents to pause and think before pinpointing the reason. They included broadening horizons, gaining an appreciation of Canadian life and realizing how lucky they were, and developing a love or appreciation for the ethnic homeland and/or culture.

Broadening one's horizon was a common reason. Parents were imprecise about its benefits, though they believed more opportunities to see the world foster maturity. For example, one of the main motivations for FCAC's team leader Jackson (50+) to lead STMs at his church was the desire to broaden the worldviews of youths at his church, including his own, with their parents around to guide the process. This experience was also what he had with his teenage daughters.

It's very hard to define what I want them to learn. Just being here broadens their understanding about the world, how life is, and just maturity. Like Riley being only 11 and able to speak out and work in a team [is a good learning experience]... That's why this camp is particularly set up for families. I will always set up the camp for families, so we can take the adults and the family can go together... I want a family to work together. There are a lot of benefits. It's huge.

Jackson explains that the multiple factors of working as a team and experiencing the STM as a family together benefit the youths' maturation.

Going on an STM also affords a window into socioeconomic status disparity at a global level. MCAC's Amelia (40+) cited taking her sons on their previous STM to Thailand to interact with less privileged orphans. In their STM to the orphanage, the team played with the orphans and shared the gospel. She believed that this experience helped her sons mature.

I want them to experience more. The first STM that we went to was an orphanage. My intention was to let them see the children outside, those that don't have parents, how do they live, and how an orphanage is like. Or else we wouldn't have visited one out of the blue. And we don't know of any Canadian orphanages... My children learned a lot. Because the children in the orphanage were very independent and they were really close in their relationships by looking out for one another. After the first trip, my sons had a big change. They actually started doing housework, to help the family. I think that was a big change.

Seeing the needs of the less fortunate also heightens the sense of privilege for many of the Canadian-raised CCEs (see Linhart, 2006).

I think with each of these different types of experiences, they gain a bit more world perspective on its needs and how blessed they are right now in their comfy Canadian life... For my younger daughter, she's still kind of finding herself I find. I'd like to think that it's also a stepping-stone to her blossoming one day.

Isabella hoped exposing her children to this would help them cherish the blessed lifestyle they have.

5.2.3 China, the motherland.

Lastly, the benefits of learning about Chinese culture by going specifically to China was a major factor for some parents. ECAC's Wendy (40+) explained the importance of having her daughters going not as tourists but to experience the authentic China.

I don't want them to be tourists, live in a 5-star hotel, and eat nice food. I want them to see the real China. In tourism, you only see the best parts. [On an STM], my kids can see the Chinese students studying really seriously and they cherish any opportunity [to improve]. In comparison, for students in Canada... telling

them to study is like killing them. They don't know what's the purpose of studying. My daughter shared with her classmates that her first impression was that "Chinese people are really serious."

Wendy believed that her children's experience in China also informed their Chinese identity in their daily lives in Canada. She noted that since her children's participation in prior STMs, her Cantonese children had developed an openness to learning and speaking Mandarin, effectively making them trilingual (though Cantonese and Mandarin were still inevitably the weaker languages). For a number of the families, maintaining their children's Chinese identity was a priority, and bringing them to China was a way to nurture their cultural knowledge and practise the Mandarin they learn in their weekly Saturday Chinese school. Some parents, including team leaders, desired for their youths to love being Chinese, and serving their ethnic brethren through STMs is a way to encourage this identification.

However, when I asked the team leaders whether the decision to go to China was because they felt a specific calling to save the Chinese, all of them answered that while there are emotional attachments to China as an ethnic homeland, the reasons were more pragmatic than affective. Jackson elaborates,

J: Why China and not Kenya?

Ja: It could be Kenya next year but I've got to finish this one first. You've got to be stable. China there's Chinese. I mean Kenya, it's cross-cultural, but it isn't quite the same kind of thing. Eventually I will go there. But I think through in my head why I am there that sort of thing. And how I am going to develop a long-term strategy. Because the culture is different, like here I can understand the culture better and pretty well understand what's happening in China in general – not the details... I know the culture in China, I know how the Chinese think. I don't know how Africans think. Since we started in [Lelin], it makes sense to keep the China thing going... But if you decide to try Kenya, and things don't work out, why don't I go to Spain? Next thing you know, it'll become quite inconsistent... We could go to Japan. The main focus is to maintain what we have. If something's started, then it's okay. But even then, you've got to think, "Can I cope realistically, two workable teams, one team from China one team from Japan?" Even [China alone] is hard.

J: Is it important to go to China because they are Chinese?

Ja: I don't think it's because they are Chinese so we've got to go to China. It's natural. It's a natural relation there, it makes sense. But it doesn't have to be there, it's just easier. Because you have some of the language. Like a university student, you can figure your way. But if you're in Africa, you'll be handicapped, I don't speak the language or write the language. In China you can build relationships because of the language. You can watch what they share. It's a long-time friendship. If I go to Kenya, it's different. Different strategy, different

objective. Culturally we're handicapped, language-wise we're handicapped. That's the main thing. You get natural advantage like the trains... it's so much cheaper. Another thing is Hong Kong pushing the ministry in Mainland. You just get on a train and go right into China.

All the leaders noted the convenience of their language and cultural understanding. Many of them also noted having Hong Kong as a launching pad for STMs into China. Furthermore, the convenience of being in China allowed them to fit in a family vacation to visit relatives in Hong Kong or be a tourist in the booming Chinese metropolises.

The positions of the adults resonated selectively with CCCOWE's discourse of the pan-Chinese elect. The choice of going to China as opposed to a country further in cultural distance (Winter & Koch, 2009) was justified for pragmatic reasons—the language and cultural connection make for long-lasting and effective collaborations with the locals. Furthermore, there were benefits of bringing the children there to learn more about their ethnic homeland in hopes of retaining their ethnic culture. They also used Hong Kong as an entry point given Hong Kong permanent residents could enter using their government-issued Home Return Permits.⁷³ In short, the interviews with the parents revealed ethnic homophily and pragmatism to both be factors in their choice of China.

5.2.4 Enriching familial relationships.

Families expect STMs to bond their members closer together and create common memories for the household to share. Furthermore, the experience allows the parents to see their children in a different light when they interact with others. MCAC's Michael (40+) explains how he believes bringing his wife and daughter to the STM helped bring them closer together.

The influence is positive. Because sometimes even when you live in the same household, it's difficult to see each other or work stuff out together due to our school and work schedules. But on the STM, everyone's focused on one thing and living in a new place together... It gives us opportunities to clash and work out our togetherness. I think that is a very good exercise. When you put it in perspective, despite living in the same household, my daughter has to practice sports, study, do this and that; and then we have to go to work, get off work, and serve at church. Everyone is busy with his or her agenda. So sometimes when we go to STM, it actually allows us to spend a little bit more time together and get to know each other better.

Michael elaborates that he cherishes the opportunities STMs afford him to view his daughter in a different light because of her interactions with other people.

And you can see, when your daughter is interacting with someone else and she needs to say these things, her communication is different. Like you learn something about them. I don't know if she will pick up something from us, but I can see more of how she communicates with other people, the way she says things and does things. Like you don't see that at home.

The parents recognized that despite living together in Canada, the mundane busyness of Canadian life could hinder family members from connecting with one another. By dedicating time to go on a STM, families can see each other in a new light, gain a newfound appreciation for one another, and create shared memories.

5.2.5 Proliferating the belief that youths grow on STMs.

All the churches I observed were committed to sending STM teams perennially, with China and Taiwan being popular destinations. As a result, many of the youths growing up in the church have gone to STMs at some point, with some parents even sending their children for consecutive years. This results in numerous families reaping the perceived benefits of STMs, and they continue to propagate the belief that spiritual growth, maturity, and familial bonding are common outcomes of participation. Word of how the STM benefits youths spread in the community, and as a result, other parents also look to invest in the STM experience for their children.

Some parents even claim that the benefits translate to other fields, such as an improvement in grades and behavior at home. Abigail (50+) from ECAC explained that her son Edgar (21) was previously struggling academically but his STM experience turned his grades around.

After coming back from the STM, his grades improved compared to [what he got previously]. He got on the dean's honor roll in his first term [back]. And he also told me, "Mom, every time I go take an exam, I tell myself I'm doing this for the youths in China." I can see my son had changed.

Edgar himself confirmed in his interview that the STM inspired him to study harder.

William, who has led STM teams to China from ECAC for seven consecutive years, discusses how successive years of youths going on STMs have shaped how parents view the role of STMs in child-rearing at his church.

Let me put it this way; we can't see changes from our point of view [outside the family]. But some who come back, their parents tell us they see big changes in terms of behavior and relationship with the parents. For example, some who never hug their parents started to hug them after coming back. Usually they won't talk to them, but they'll tell them so much about China. So, parents will see a change in their behavior. Some parents even go with us the next year. So basically, the youths end up taking the parents with them. The mom comes along to see what's so special. Why such a big change... Regardless, it's encouraging that the parents think it's helped and were willing to pay for themselves [to join the STM].

Whether the children actually came back to hug their parents or earn improved grades because of the STM matters not—what matters is the propagation of the belief within the community that STMs are transformative experiences for the youths.

With the belief that STMs help youths grow up spreading throughout the community, highly religious parents of young children anticipate someday sending their children on a STM. One evening in 2015, I was invited for dinner at a young family's home at ECAC during the course of my fieldwork. Over dinner, the parents expressed the desire to send their 6-year-old son on a STM in the future precisely because of the reasons listed above.

While people believe STMs help youths grow, it is unclear whether the causal relationship of this growth is 1) a result of their natural progression of simply getting older and thus more mature, or 2) because of the STM experiences in particular. FCAC's team leader Jackson acknowledged that it is difficult to measure growth, but cautions against underestimating what the youths may get out of STMs.

Ja: Parents always like to send their kids to this sort of stuff... Now don't underestimate the ministry for the 6 to 7-year-old. You don't know what they see. I remember when [my daughters] Riley and Addison were young. This experience will affect how they grow up. They will remember how we serve. In fact, children have vivid memories of what happens in the church. I don't know. I cannot pinpoint, I cannot describe, but I will not underestimate the value of a kid seeing their parents serve. So [this kid] was 6 years old and he was just sitting around with the students. He was helping when it was game time. His dad didn't want to come originally... but afterwards his dad raved about it. He said he could see how God blessed his son...

J: Does Riley remember her STM from several years ago [when she was 11]?

Ja: Oh, I'm pretty sure she does.

In other words, for some parents, it does not matter whether there is definite proof that STMs cause growth. There are enough testimonials circulating in the community that encourage that expectation. From the parents' perspective, STMs are a worthwhile investment if there is even a chance that such trips could contribute to their child's growth.

As a result of these beliefs, many parents even send their children when they themselves do not go, entrusting their kids to the care of other adults. This highlights the roles of "aunties" and "uncles" at church as important agents in the collective effort of child-rearing. For example, Abigail cited the Chinese proverb "exchange teaching our children" (*ji6 zi2 ji4 gaau3*, jyutping: 易子而教), where parents relied on other adults to reach their wayward child.

I really believe in "exchange teaching our children." William knows that Oscar (17) clashes with his dad in terms of personality. He needs a different voice that is not like his dad's blunt traditional way of teaching. William said, "Let me try to talk with Oscar." As couples, we are very close with [Oscar's parents] (they are in the same fellowship)... we talk about many things. And sometimes we take turns being the good and bad guys. Sometimes they'll ask me to praise their children or help advise them. Not all brothers and sisters are willing to do that... when another auntie or uncle says it, at least the child will not, as the Chinese

saying goes, “you criticize one thing and they retort tenfold.” Like they won’t talk back... They still have to listen to it and it’s softer... So sometimes we have to exchange our children among brothers and sisters... and we really treat the church children as our own children, as with other parents. And that’s important.

Many of the parents I observed in the CCE community embraced the mantra “it takes a village to raise a child.” STMs are one of the many ways uncles and aunties can nudge the youths in the right direction.

There is a major selection effect based on the age of the parents. All the adults who went had children who were in or past their teenage years. There are two reasons for this. First, parents who have youth-aged children faced the reality that their children were no longer satisfied with Sunday School Bible stories and demanded concrete experiences to support their faith. Second, even if the adults themselves did not have teenage children, they shared the same social networks (e.g. church fellowship, cell groups) as the parents and were willing to act as uncles and aunties to guide their friends’ youth-aged children. Young children simply have not reached the right stage developmentally, nor do their parents have the time or resources to take their family on a physically demanding trip abroad.

Despite the parents’ aspiration for their children to grow spiritual, some parents were wary of the possibility of their kids becoming too religious and ending up dedicating themselves to becoming full-time religious workers (i.e. pastors, missionaries; see Wong & Tam, 2018). After all, many of the parents carried a model-minority mentality in which ideal careers for their children were lucrative professions (Louie, 2004). For example, 27-year-old Johnson recounted how conflicted his parents were when he quit his job as an electrical engineer to become a pastor after he confirmed his calling by attending a China STM.

[They were] somewhat shocked, as any parent would be... I don’t know if they were disappointed, but definitely concerned that I was about to leave a career of engineering, a secure well-paying job to go be a missionary or pastor... I think they were upset, maybe conflicted... My mother was the one who was more concerned... she was asking me over and over again, “Are you sure?” And I was pretty convicted and certain by that point... Over time, I think she is just much more okay with it.

On one occasion, I was chatting with Lois’s mom (40+) after church at ECAC’s busy foyer after Sunday service. It took her a bit by surprise when I asked whether she would be amenable to her daughter pursuing a pastoral career as a result of the STM. She jokingly and half-sheepishly asked, “Do I have to answer?” and I reassured her of her right to decide: “It’s your choice if you want to answer.” After a short pause to think, she obliged and shared that it would be tough to support her decision, especially because she has relatives who are missionaries and she understood how difficult that career could be. However, at the end of the conversation, she reluctantly admitted that if it were indeed God’s will, she would be willing.

All of the above parental expectations indicated how the CCE community has framed the STM experience. Parents talk with one another in the churches and form expectations for the STM that are well-circulated in the community. The mission trip is promoted as a powerful

child-rearing tool—almost a remedy against creeping secularism. The perceived benefits the STM experience boasts are plentiful, and parents become willing to invest into this experience for their youths.

5.3 The Youths' Beliefs and Expectations for Short-Term Missions

This third section of the empirical findings explores the youths' beliefs about and expectations for participating in STMs. In this section, I will discuss the expectations of the youths, both rookies and veterans respectively. The religious profile of the STM youths I observed matched those of Trinitapoli and Vaisey's (2009), in that they were mostly highly religious individuals or had highly religious parents. All the STM youths regularly attend Sunday service or fellowship, and they all found the STM opportunity through their church network. In addition, they had all heard testimonies from others who have gone before and understand the responsibility to give their own written or oral testimonies upon their return. Some youths, the younger ones in particular, shared that their parents were the ones who suggested or encouraged a STM for the summer.

Given that the church community and the parents have circulated the idea of the STM for years (e.g. more than 7 years at ECAC), all of the youths held expectations for the trip. However, the youths' expectations were markedly different from those of the parents, who were hoping that their children would reap the variety of benefits from the STM listed above. In comparison, the youths were interested in affirming their faith by experiencing God and perhaps making a difference.

It is necessary to differentiate between the youths who go on STMs for the first time (whom I call the rookies) and those who have gone previously (the veterans). The rookie and veteran labels are fluid categorizations. Every STMer is unique in their church experience and their religiosity. A STM rookie can be a "mature Christian" who is familiar with the institutional language surrounding STMs and can deal with the challenges they encounter on their first mission. They may have heard so many testimonies at church that they know what to expect and what religious heuristics to draw upon to behave properly. In addition, "younger youths" may be veterans while "emerging adults" may be rookies, and their previous experiences inform their STM expectations.

There are also those who do not fit neatly into the rookie and veteran categories. For example, several families in the STMs I observed had taken their children on STMs several times, with some having their first trip as young as 7 years old. For clarity, I did not include in this study youths who were not in high school at the time of the STM. With these caveats, dividing the rookie and veteran as discrete categories is useful given that previous STM experiences clearly influenced one's expectations for the next STM.

5.3.1 The rookies.

For both rookies and veterans, the predominant expectation was the desire to "experience God." This phrase or variations of it (e.g. seeing God, see for myself what God is doing) came up in all the interviews. However, the rookies' expectations of "experiencing God" differed slightly from those of the veterans. They included affirming their faith, minimizing expectations, making a difference, and bracing themselves for the worst but praying for the best. Often, the rookies carried several or all of these expectations in varying degrees.

Renee (16) is an example of a youth who sought to affirm her faith; that is, she desired to support her “head knowledge” with religious experience. In the youths’ words, they wanted to “see for themselves” what God is doing abroad. Renee was an STM rookie and a high school sophomore in 2015. She was not raised in a church, and started attending ECAC in middle school because a friend invited her. After a few years, she had converted and was learning the ropes of how to be a Christian. She felt she had acquired a lot of head knowledge and explained to me that she hears all these incredible stories of how people experience their faith.

I see people that are really strong in their faith... Sometimes I hear all these testimonies and things but then I don’t know if I can do it or if the same thing will happen to me because even today when I was listening to [Pastor Calvin’s sermon] (see above), I feel like a lot of things sounds fictional to me... A part of the purpose of why I’m going on STM is I want to experience God out of what I know and I want to see if that will give me any answers.

The incredible tales she kept hearing at church seemed distant to her. Renee’s reason for going on an STM resonated with many other STMers. She wanted to set apart a “sacred time” dedicated to God to affirm her faith.⁷⁴ Many STM rookies shared a similar desire to affirm whether the faith tradition in which they were raised is the real deal.

While affirming her faith is important, Renee also had to be practical in how she accomplished this. Renee has a busy schedule in Canada; not only is she an International Baccalaureate student, she also participates in her school’s Distributive Education Clubs of America (a provincial-level debate club), works part-time as a lifeguard, and serves in church fellowship and worship team. These activities take up most of her time in Canada. Many of these middle-class Chinese Canadian youths come from families that tend to have high academic expectations for their children (Louie, 2004; Wong et al., 2018). From the youths’ perspective, there is no better way to experience God than a concentrated dose of religious travel for a week or two over the summer, freeing the rest of the summer for school, jobs, or other commitments.

Some rookies said they go with “no expectations,” but given the institutional and parental influences described above, that is implausible. Deconstructing “no expectations” reveals it actually meant that STMers did not want their expectations to cloud their experience of God with their flawed expectations. Trisha (20) was an STM rookie raised in MCAC and had heard numerous STM testimonies before. However, given it was her first time going, she curbed her expectations: “I don’t have many expectations... so all I have is just God showing me his work and what I can do as a person to share God’s love. That’s basically all.” Renee expressed similar sentiments.

R: I don’t want to expect anything because I feel like if I have expectations then it’ll actually hinder my experiences.

J: The higher the expectations, the greater the disappointment?

R: Yeah, it’s something I want. But I’m trying not to expect anything.

In other words, some were concerned their expectations would get in the way of experiencing God.

Other rookies were going on the STM with the ambition to make a difference. Oscar (17), a high school sophomore at ECAC, was the most zealous in stating his desire to make a difference.

I'm actually going on the STM because I want to test... or see for myself the condition that people are being subjected to... I want to see how hard it is to actually fulfill these goals that the church has in mind... If I see it's incredibly difficult, I would actually be interested in finding out why it is difficult and what caused it. I'm looking forward to how the students will react to our camp and to see how much of a difference we can make.

Many others made similar claims about "helping the kids," "teaching them English," and "sharing God with them" to varying extents. This was not surprising. After all, no one would spend the time and money to go on an STM and not expect to make a difference.

Finally, some were expecting the worst and praying for the best. Lois (16) is a high school sophomore who was raised in ECAC and widely regarded across the community as being precocious. Having heard many China STM testimonies and being well versed in the STM discourse, she came across as quite confident about what she expected physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

I'm expecting the worst... there's the physical part of it, living in a slightly, maybe not as clean environment... that's going to be a challenge. Just the water, you can't drink it out of the tap. You'll have to get bottled water... Food as well. And then there's the emotional part, which is being separated from my family for two weeks... I'm very close to my family so it's going to be really hard so I'm hopefully not going to be homesick. But I'm there with... people from church who I'm very close to so I think it should be fine. And then there is the spiritual part, which is really hoping to... try to change the kids' lives, because that's what I'm there for, and I'm really hoping that I can achieve that.

While she did not specifically say she was going to rely on God in this quote, she did state elsewhere in the interview that God is a critical part of her life and she will rely on Him through these challenges. Nonetheless, it is quite clear that she braced herself to struggle on the STM.

The rookies' expectations were quite diverse, and most carried a combination of expectations. They all expected to draw closer to God, and most hoped to affirm their faith. Others tempered their expectations so those expectations would not interfere with their ability to experience God. Still others were hoping to make their mark on the mission field and be the agent of change. Finally, some were bracing for the worst but praying for the best because they expected to suffer on STMs. These expectations all constituted experiencing God.

5.3.2 The veterans.

The veteran youths' previous experiences were the reference points that framed their STM expectations. Given they chose to go again, something from their past experience clearly compelled them to keep participating. Compared to the rookies, they were less naïve and more realistic about the fruits of their labor. Since they were more experienced, they assumed larger roles compared to rookies. Furthermore, they had developed an emotional connection with those at their target destinations from previous STMs that compelled them to go again.

Veterans were more realistic in their expectations about making a difference. For example, Francis (18) from FCAC was a graduating high school senior who had been going on STMs annually since he was a sophomore. He explained how his expectations became more realistic over time.

F: I think after three years; the expectations are pretty much the same. Like don't go in expecting too much. You don't want to think, "I'm going to convert a bunch of youths to Christianity." I don't expect anything like that. I just honestly pray that it'll go well. My expectation is that the camp runs smoothly and what we're trying to communicate with the youths and the relationships we're trying to build go through. I guess that's my expectations that my youths are open and build relationships.

J: After going several times, do you feel your expectations have been tempered over time to be like, "Yeah, let's build relationships and whatever happens, happens?"

F: Yeah, I think for sure. Obviously the first year I went I didn't know anything about STMs. I just think we're going over there to convert all these youths to Christianity. And it's pretty intense and crazy and there's so much responsibility. But then through talking to Jackson (the team leader), through the actual relationships by being there... I see a problem with trying to convert people without building relationships... Having a relationship first makes Christianity more personable and not just a blind Christianity... you're emulating a relationship because Christianity is a relationship. It's not just blindly being a Christian because you can go to heaven after you die.

Francis had come to realize that STMs were not about converting masses of people and solving Chinese poverty in two weeks. Rather, the experience was about building relationships with the local youths and emulating the relationship Christ has with his followers. The assumption was that through compassion, youths in China would see Christ through the STM members. This is the approach of being "ambassadors for Christ" according to 2 Corinthians 5:20.

Veterans also saw STMs as an opportunity to get closer to God. A corollary of drawing close to God was being empowered to step out of one's comfort zone, and was a predominant theme among emerging adults, while it was hardly mentioned for younger youths. Sabin (19) was a university freshman and had gone on several STMs to China with his family in the past. He explained that he felt God's presence more in China than in Canada. For him, experiencing

God entails undertaking religious practices (e.g. praying, devotions, singing praises) and feeling galvanized to step out of his comfort zone (e.g. leading in singing, dancing, or teaching).

I feel like God's presence is a lot stronger in China because we pray to Him, like every morning we pray... Living here, we are too comfortable, so we don't feel that need for God... but I guess going to China, anything could happen. We really need God and His presence is a lot stronger there... It feels more motivating to do stuff and it gives you strength to do things you normally won't do. For me, it was leading the singing. I would never do that here, but I was able to do it at least once there.

His pastors, peers, mother, and even I noted that he does not dance or sing at church in Canada. His typical serving capacity was occasionally helping out with the children's program and the audio mixing board for Sunday service. Given his past experience, Sabin expected to grow closer to God and step out of his comfort zone in the upcoming STM.

STM veterans also recognized the benefits of STMs helping them grow as individuals, and believed there might be opportunities to be blessed by God through their sacrifice. This too was more of a concern for emerging adults rather than younger youths, not least because they had the reality check of finding a job and integrating into adult working life. Jason (23) was a veteran who grew up attending PCAC. He recently graduated from university with a degree in engineering and had been job-searching for several months to no avail. When I spoke to him in 2015, the province of Alberta was undergoing a recession and he was growing frustrated with his job-search ordeal. He explained that past STMs had really allowed him to experience God and grow as an individual. He hoped that by drawing closer to God through the STM, he would make it possible for God to guide him in the near future, especially in terms of starting a career.

Ja: I know that through a STM you can get to know yourself a lot more too... you find different traits that you had that you didn't have before... I used to be pretty bad at public speaking, but I guess through the mission trip, I found that I could be confident in public speaking... And you know how at the very end there is an "altar call" (to formally convert people)... So, I went through teaching for the whole week, and I thought to myself, "I don't know if the youths got the message or what they would think." And so... 23 people rose their hands (to accept Christ) out of like 50 or 60? I was thinking like 5 would be really amazing already... "Wow, God can do miraculous things!" And it was supposed to be typhoon season, it was supposed to rain every day, but it didn't rain until the last day. So, to me it's like... Oh, God. He does miracles, but you never really experience it here in Canada. You're like, "Oh that just happened?" We never think of those things because of God. But through the mission trip you just focus on things that are impossible sometimes, but you'll find a way to finish it and think, "Oh, that must be because of God."

J: So, it's strengthens your faith because you see God doing things that otherwise you would not see here.

Ja: Yeah. So, finding a job is really worrisome to me. So, I guess also going to STM is, like you said, to strengthen my faith. Like here's my life and then whatever job you want me to do...

J: The way I am hearing this is before taking a step on any of these paths, you are just going to give it up to God, offer yourself, get close to God, and let Him to lead you to wherever He wants you to go.

Ja: Yeah, exactly. And hopefully I'll find some answers.

While demanding a reward for one's sacrifice can be regarded as self-seeking (Protestant theology is based on Jesus' grace and not acts as the basis for salvation), there is certainly a discourse of blessing for proper sacrifices within Christianity (e.g. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

Jason's experience resonated with that of a typical emerging adult—he finished his degree at a reputable university, but still could not find employment. When I conducted my final interview with Jason, he had been unable to find a job for a whole year and had to choose between continuing his job search or participating in another STM in the summer of 2016. He committed to the STM on the condition that he would opt out if he found employment before the STM, and even bought a non-refundable plane ticket to China. He eventually secured a job, so he did not go on the STM. He believed that securing the job was not necessarily God rewarding him, but rather, “It's more like a [process] of I'll trust in Him and He'll provide. Maybe it was a test [of faith]?”

As suggested in both Sabin and Jason's accounts, STMers felt that their mundane routine in Canada made their religious experiences at home predictable. It is difficult to experience hardship for self-improvement through God when one is so comfortable. Veterans knew this especially well because of their past STM experiences. As Jason stated above, 23 converts out of 60 children at a summer camp would definitely be material to write a testimony about. Veterans expected that freeing themselves from the routine distractions of home would allow them to better attune to God because it had worked before.

5.3.3 Choosing China.

Going to China was significant for most of the youth. The reasons included the desire to help one's country, being pragmatic, curiosity about the ethnic homeland, and the lack of choices of other STMs. For a minority of people, going to China did not matter. It is worth noting that those who could not speak Chinese fluently (Mandarin or Cantonese) downplayed the significance of going to China the most.

The most obvious pattern I found in whether a youth wanted to go to China was whether they were born or raised in China or Hong Kong. STM veteran Terrence (18), who was born in China and then moved to Canada for high school, explained that he felt an obligation to go to China for STM.

J: Why did you choose China over Mexico and Peru [for your STM].

T: Because I'm from China, I just have the connections, when I go back... I am from China, I really love my country so it's like a *baofu* (burden, 抱負). It's your

country, the people who live in there. I tried to go STM two years ago, and last year. But it didn't work out. The first year it was too late to apply; and last year, I had summer school, so I didn't go back to China; and this year I get a chance to go back so I'm going on an STM...

The sense of being Chinese and the desire to help one's country of origin motivated some to partake in the China STMs.

Pragmatic reasons also applied to the youth. It was just easier to be helpful for the youths who had some level of competency in the Chinese language, since Chinese nationals reacted differently to Chinese-looking people. For example, STM veteran Priscilla (24) was born in Hong Kong, and she had developed a dislike shared by many Hong Kongers towards the Mainland Chinese.⁷⁵ However, she changed her mind after volunteering at a missionary organization. Priscilla eventually went on an STM to China and saw firsthand the difference she could make compared to a white person.

P: On the same team there were Caucasian people and us the Chinese people, and I can speak it too. I saw how [the Chinese nationals] would treat us differently. My teaching partner, he's from Ireland. They would seem like a celebrity. (Talking to herself) "Oh awesome, you've never seen white people." But they don't really initiate conversation [with the white people]. But for me they always come to me and ask questions and want to tell me more about themselves. So we were all assigned to a class of around 20 something teachers, so my class, they were all around like 20... For a few of them, I was really close with them because we were almost the same age. After class, they would come up to me and be like, "Hey Priscilla, do you want to go out for lunch with us?" And they would bring me to where they were staying or a restaurant or even try to buy me lunch. But then with my partner, like he would have to initiate, and ask them. And then they would feel bad if they say no. They would always say yes to him but sometimes they would say no to me because they have other things to do. I feel like we connect a bit more on a personal level. They are not afraid to offend me; whereas they don't want to offend the Caucasian people. Like even during class, when they have questions about the words or something that they are ashamed of... they would be like (hand motion to beckon someone to come over), "Priscilla, Priscilla, come!" and they would ask me so quietly. Like they won't ask the other guy.

J: Why do you think that is?

P: I just think, I'm Chinese, and I speak their language. Mandarin.

J: You interacted with them in Mandarin?

P: See, the first week, I tried not to. But then by the second week, because I want to talk to them, about my faith too, so I had to start speaking Mandarin, and then they got super comfortable after that...

J: Do you think that had to do with it? Girls talk with girls, that would be easier to connect with?

P: No, the whole class, there were at least, 90% were women, just because it was an English camp, and all English teachers were women. But even the guy teachers, I see them interacting and it was the same way that the female teachers did.

The account of Priscilla applied to all of the youth who spoke Chinese. STMers who did not speak Chinese were the ones that would say there is no difference between going to China or another country.

Curiosity about China also motivated many people to go. For example, Lois was born and raised in Canada and has never gone to China.

J: One of the ideas that I am looking at is “roots-searching”; that is, getting in touch with the motherland. Do you feel that’s the case when you are talking about China?

L: Yeah, definitely. Like looking back at our heritage. China is a very traditional place compared to modern Canada. It’s just nice to go back and see how it really was there... And I have something to look for in China, I can look back at how my grandma or something lived in China.

J: So you are generally interested in China because you are Chinese.

L: Yeah. Also, because the church gave us this opportunity to China, so why not take it. There weren’t opportunities anywhere else. And China is just somewhere that I would like to go.

Having never been to China, she felt it was necessary to go learn more about her ethnic heritage (see Kibria, 2002; A. Louie, 2004).

Lois also highlighted that there were simply no other choices, or that other options were less desirable. Rookie Logan (18) chose China over Kenya because he felt he could help out more in China and he did not want to risk getting sick in Africa. Veterans Jason (23) and Florence (23) chose China over Mexico and Peru for the same reasons.

When it came down to deciding, China was just an easier choice for many CCEs because of the desire to help China, pragmatism, curiosity about one’s ethnic homeland, and the potential for personal side trips to China or Hong Kong. While not sharing the same discourse as CCCOWE’s rationale of pan-Chinese elect, these youth were going to China STMs because it just made sense for them to go and be effective while learning about their heritage. The fact that there were few other options (because the parents who care for the ethnic homeland keep organizing China trips) further shortens the list of competition.

Returning again to the discourse of the pan-Chinese elect, it is noteworthy that while the drumbeating of CCCOWE may claim a global Chinese unity, it manifested itself differently on the ground. The CCE adults and youth chose to go to China for STMs not because they felt

they were chosen by God to save the Chinese people, but because of a combination of reasons, such as the desire to help the ethnic homeland, pragmatism, the lack of choices available, and side trips to visit family in Hong Kong or China. This reality is different from what CCCOWE is telling their Chinese global network.⁷⁶

5.3.4 The youths who chose not to go.

Despite the institutional and parental emphasis to participate in STMs, there were still some youths who chose not to go on STMs. They shared similar backgrounds to those who went, and had seriously considered going. They ultimately decided not to go in 2015 for various reasons, ranging from not feeling “the calling” to financial constraints and schedule limitations.

For example, Maria (19) grew up in ECAC and believes herself to be quite religious. Even though she had been asked many times by church leaders to join STMs, she still felt the lack of calling and chose not to go. I conducted the interview with her immediately after William asked whether she was interested in 2015.

M: I just never really felt the calling for it. Like I’m not really interested in going there... It’s not like, when I think of STM, it’s like, “Oh my gosh! I really want to go. This is what I want with my life!” I’ve never had that moment where I want to go or I feel like God’s telling me to go. Like I haven’t felt that yet, so I don’t really feel the reason to sign myself up for it...

J: And so, do you think if you suddenly felt there was a calling, would you go?

M: I think I would go.

J: What would you define as a calling?

M: I don’t know. I can’t describe it, I don’t think there are words to describe the calling in anyway, it’s like, if you feel like there are just things in life that push you towards it. I’ve never felt pushed towards it. [William’s] been encouraging me to go for all these years, and I don’t really want to go. So, I’m not going to. I’m not going to be pressured to do something right... I want to go because I want something to change or I want something in my life from it and I want to do something. I’m not going to go just because.

She elaborated that part of the reason she does not go is because she felt she was not ready for it. She recognizes that it was not an adequate reason according to the church, but she maintained her decision.

M: I just don’t feel like I am ready for it sometimes. Like I wouldn’t mind if I came out with my nursing degree and I became a registered nurse. I would be more compelled to go overseas and do something about it and help people... I just really don’t feel ready, like that’s an awful excuse, you don’t just go on missions just because you feel ready. You should go just because you should go.

J: You've heard that before?

M: Yeah, like I've heard, God tells you when it's time to go. It's like, "Go! Make disciples!" ... But I just really...I don't want to. I sound like an awful person, I'm sorry.

J: Why would you call that awful?

M: Because I'm not really into missions.

J: Do you feel guilty about it?

M: I feel that. But I'm still not going to do it.

J: Right. Do you feel there is almost like a pressure here for people to do this?

M: No, I don't feel this pressure. I don't feel there is like, "You have to go to missions! Complete this thing in your life!" ... I think they highly encourage you to go, but I don't think they're like forcing you. Like, "You are not a good kid [if you don't go] or something." They definitely don't do that... It's like, "It's here for you, come. We encourage you to come." But it's not like, "We are going to sign you up."

In Maria's account, she was clear that the option to go on STMs would always be available to the youths at ECAC. They were encouraged to try the experience whenever they felt ready, and it was not forced upon them. Despite knowing this, Maria still did not feel compelled to go, and she felt somewhat guilty for it.

Financial constraints were another reason why some youths chose not to go on the STM. Chris (17) was a STM veteran from ECAC. Having gone before in the previous year and desiring to go again, he did not want to burden his family financially.

So last year my whole family went... The plane ticket to China is pretty expensive. And obviously my whole family can't go again. Because of financial reasons... I kind of want to go but... I feel like, if I asked my parents and they said yeah... I feel like it would be a burden to them... It's just mainly money. I'm not sure how much [my church] subsidizes.

The amount a church is able to subsidize depends on the budget, although most churches I observed subsidized approximately half of the STM fee. Nonetheless, STMs are still expensive; there are lodging and food costs as well as other expenses such as side trips to Hong Kong or elsewhere in China. Therefore, despite the perceived benefits of the STM, it can be cost-prohibitive for some families.

Busy schedules could also stop youths from going on an STM. Eric (17) from ECAC was a talented high school junior in the IB program. While he had been vocal about his intent to participating in an STM for several years, he still had not gone for a number of reasons.

E: So, the first issue was the scheduling issues. I have piano classes and [music] theory classes. This summer I'm pretty busy because I have a couple projects to be working on... I'll be writing my extended essay for the IB program, it's like a research paper... And my [piano] exams are in conflict with the timing. They are actually directly overlapping so I can't go because of that. And in the previous years, I think it also had to do with my music studies. I think my parents would say like, don't distract yourself; you can go next year. And also, there's this whole financial issue thing... my mom doesn't work, and my father has to work and sometimes he is doing like two jobs... I feel it's pretty selfish to just ask for this money to go to China and just come back.

J: Why is it selfish?

E: I feel it is selfish because, well, I wanted to do this STM because I wanted to help people but also because I want to go for myself. And I think going for yourself is selfish in a way.

J: What do you mean go for yourself? What is there for you to gain?

E: So that I can, maybe I will gain confidence, spiritual maturity, but then I don't think it should come at the cost of my family having to pay... Mostly it's just my schedule... Maybe next year or the year after... I'll be done high school at least... but every year I say, "next year."

As Eric and I walked out of the conference room where the interview took place, we bumped into William.

After we bid farewell to Eric, William added his two cents about Eric's case since he was aware of our interview. He explained that from his experience, people who say, "I'll go next year" never go since there will always be an excuse not to go. In fact, he elaborated that Eric had been publicly expressing his desire to go for several years already. Last year, Eric was undecided again and so his mom asked him several times to confirm. However, having not received an answer, she eventually just planned something else and his trip never materialized. William did not bother asking Eric again. He believes that for youths to go on an STM, they need to set their priorities straight and just drop everything to go.

5.4 Analysis: Entangled chains in the Chinese Canadian evangelical scene

It was previously suggested by Summers-Effler that Collins' imagery of chains may be too linear an image to reflect the role of embeddedness in interactions given the multidimensional dynamics of power relationships (Summers-Effler, 2006). She argues that "although the effects of one interaction carry over into the next interaction, we are also tied to history, anticipation, and particular contexts" (p. 153). Here, I suggest a modest modification in the form of "entangled chains," which I will elaborate upon below using my empirical material.

According to Summers-Effler and her colleagues (Summers-Effler, 2006; Summers-Effler et al., 2015), symbols activate what neuroscientist Damasio (1994) calls "somatic

markers,” the “as if” loops which allows the individual to trigger a substrate of feelings to be simulated. This hypothesis has been greatly supported since the discovery of mirror neurons (Iacoboni, 2008, 2011) which have been implicated in regulating intersubjectivity (e.g. empathy). Symbols are thus the emotional scripts that can be accessed when triggered (Abelson, 1976; Cerulo, 2014a), revealing histories of interactions that are used for the internal process of thinking (Collins, 2004; Summers-Effler, 2006, p.142).

5.4.1 The entangled chains of the parents and youth.

As discussed in the last chapter, the community members of ECAC were continuously socialized to the importance of global missions through various channels, such as Sunday service, Sunday school, and fellowship. However, the extent to which these ideas have been internalized by the church members is another matter, and the empirical material suggests that symbols can become entangled as they feed into individual motivations. The symbols could be drawn from religious symbols (e.g. the pan-Chinese elect, the last baton, experiencing God, trusting in His providence, the calling, spiritual growth), but they also become entangled with non-religious ones (e.g. helping the ethnic homeland, cultural growth, maturing, improving familial relationships). Ultimately, the decision to go on a STM to China was a combination of all these factors.

When it pertains to their children, the interviews of the parents reveal that the motivations of their children partaking in STMs have become intertwined with other concerns. Spiritual growth, general maturity, enhancing their “Chineseness,” and enriching familial relationships were perceived to be benefits of participating in STMs to China. While the parents expressed the importance of global missions for *their* personal involvement in STMs, it was surprising to find that this was rarely mentioned when discussing their children. For example, Wendy’s motivation for her children participating in STMs to China was tied to her plan for them to strengthen their ethnic identity.

Like the parents, the rookie youths’ motivation reveals an entanglement of symbols and their emotions. For example, one entanglement was between their religious conservatism and scientific empiricism. As discussed in previous chapters, conservative branches of Christianity preach an embattled state of their faith and demand a return to core religious values through a strict adherence to their interpretation of the scripture (Ammerman, 1987; M. O. Emerson & Hartman, 2006; Lawrence, 1989). If one challenges a conservative Christian on how they should test their faith, many would respond with Jesus’ words from Luke 4:12, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test” (NIV). I have heard some CCEs preach that we should have “faith like children,” referring to Luke 18:17, and believe in Jesus unconditionally. While the rookies desired to submit to God, their yearning to empirically verify their head knowledge through experiences embodied a decidedly modern spirit. There is an irony innate in the desire to empirically and authentically experience God to fill an affective void.⁷⁷

The rookie and veteran youths had other concerns when discussing their STM expectations. For rookies, they wanted to “experience God,” which meant filling their “head knowledge” with affective experience. They applied various mental tricks in hopes of enhancing the experience. For example, some rookie youths entered the STM bracing themselves for something bad to happen and expecting that God would preside over them.⁷⁸

The youths' desire to "experience God" and for the STMs to be an emotionally exhilarating change of pace from the "mundane reality" (Garfinkel, 1967) of Canada (also see Durkheim, 1912) primed them to draw upon explanations from the CCE discourse (R. Brown, 1995; Cerulo, 2014a).⁷⁹

For the veteran youth, participating in the STM again meant extending the chain of STM experiences and rekindling their passion from past STM experiences. Given that they were less naïve and more realistic, their previous experiences had already set expectations and were indeed emotionally impactful for them. Since motivation is not possible without emotion (Franks, 2006, 2014; Franks & Turner, 2013), their choice to go again meant that positive EE from previous experiences still motivated them.

Even for the veterans, the desire to partake in the STM becomes entangled with other life concerns. For example, Jason wanted to go on the STM because he hoped that the way God worked abroad would be manifested in his life at home in Canada. However, he was reluctant to admit it because he recognized that this was technically an improper motivation to go on the STM. For Sabin, the mundane predictability of Canadian life made him want to shake things up emotionally.⁸⁰

Perhaps another motivation for the veterans was that they expected to be closer to the center of interactions within the team, and thus derive more satisfaction. Compared to the rookies and non-going church members, they were further up in the power hierarchy. In the STMs I observed, the veterans had more responsibilities than rookies (who remained in the periphery and were assigned support roles). For example, while veterans were asked to lead the curriculum planning and assigned lead teaching roles, rookies were told to follow the veterans' lead. The adults and veterans often led team prayers and devotions, while the rookies did it only on occasion. In short, veterans were at the center of group interactions and derived more emotional satisfaction.

The entangled-chains imagery also applies to the highly religious youth who chose not to go. The EE calculus in IRC theory predicts that the pursuit of EE is the primary human motivation, and tends to be stratified (Collins, 2004). Based on my observations from being embedded in ECAC, subjects like Maria, Eric, and Chris were all highly religious youth who made their faith a highly prioritized facet of their lives. They were youth who were committed to going to church several times weekly, knew many parts of the Bible by heart, and participated as fellowship leaders or members of the worship team. Therefore, given EE is supposed to be stratified, these youth should go on STMs as well. However, Maria felt "bad" and like a "horrible person" for not wanting to go. The fact that she felt negative emotions for speaking poorly about partaking in the STM suggests that it does carry significant emotional weight for her. Nonetheless, she ultimately decided not to go because she would rather exercise her agency to go on her own terms when she is ready rather than being pressured into it; the choice was about being authentic to herself. In the case of Eric, despite his being highly religious and constantly serving at church, competing commitments (e.g. music lessons, summer school) compelled him to prioritize those over going on an STM. Despite wanting to go, Chris did not because of his desire to be a filial son given his family's lack of resources. Many competing emotional factors weighed into each person's choice.

5.4.2 Conceptualizing a theory of entangled chains

IRC theory argues that people make decisions because of how the “IR market” operates (Collins, 2004, pp. 141-182). An individual prefers to participate in IRs that they anticipate will generate the highest EE output. If one strictly follows this definition, STMers decide to go on the trip because they believe they can get the most EE out of it. However, I have demonstrated above that the symbols contain multiple histories of interactions that become intertwined, essentially resulting in the EE calculus being a series of entangled chains.⁸¹

By entangled chains, I suggest reconceptualizing interaction ritual chains as sequences of links, with plasticity resembling elastic bands. To illustrate, each chain link of the elastic band is a symbol that carries emotional energy for an individual. A chain of links represents a history of emotional energy. The emotional strength of the chain is measured by the strength of the individual links. These chains of individual symbolic links are intertwined and messy, as we found the reasons for participating in STMs to involve a mix of motivations.

The chains are malleable, and can be connected, stretched, bent, and twisted in a variety of ways. Like elastic bands, these links can come in a various sizes and densities. Smaller and denser bands carry more emotional energy, are more resilient, and have a stronger pull to adjacent bands. In contrast, larger and thinner bands carry less emotional energy, are less resilient, and have a weaker pull. In fact, they can even snap if tugged upon too strongly.

Formation of individual links depends on the intensity of the collective effervescence that gave rise to it.⁸² During moments of collective effervescence, the intense experience spins to materialize into a new link that latches onto the previous chain of symbols. During its creation, the spinning creates a centripetal force that tugs upon all the previous chains towards the current moment that creates the new symbol. From this pull, weaker links from the past may stretch or even snap (thus greatly weakening the significance of a chain of emotional energy for the individual). Former configurations of chains that may have been significant years ago weaken with time, though traces of them still remain (and may even be active). This process is, in essence, the rise of new symbols that continue to form the chain of emotional energy.

Chains compete against one another as motivations. The centripetal force generated by the collective effervescence propels the link forward in search of similar experiences. However, it would compete for resources (i.e. time, money, attention) with other links that may also carry residual centripetal force. For example, Eric’s desire for accomplishment in music trumped his desire to partake in STMs when deciding how to allocate his time over the summer.

My empirical material has shown that decision-making involves more than linear chains of two discrete symbols (e.g. religiosity connects to the act of STM); rather, it includes many intertwined symbols (e.g. parental desire for STM is driven by a combination of child-rearing, Chineseness, and religiosity). Through the visualization of elastic-like entangled chains, the IR market principles as originally conceptualized by Collins still apply. It provides a dynamic image explaining the rise of new symbols and the fall of previous ones. The elastic nature of entangled chains also resonates with the current findings on neuroplasticity (Draganski, Busch, Schuierer, Bogdahn, & May, 2004).

5.4.3 Entangled chains in the sociology of religion and communities.

The notion of entangled chains has implications to understanding modern faith in the sociology of religion. The STMers' desire to "experience God" to further verify their faith is experientially based, a core component of rational thought, and a tool of the enlightenment. However, the irony is that the religious fundamentalism of the STMers calls for them to submit, suspend their expectations, and let God lead the way. After all, the STMers believe they have been "called" by God (see previous chapter), so He must have a will for them. Therefore, whatever they experience on the STM must be accepted as God's will as that is the precondition for their participation.

The innate tension between empirical verification and belief imbued within each of the STMers' expectations inevitably causes tension in their faith. The observations regarding the tension between science and religion have been observed in other studies (Almond et al., 2003, 1995; Ammerman, 1987), so it is not surprising to see it come up in the STM experience. However, science in this case slips in surreptitiously, as it is the scientific method of empirical verification that is of consequence. Thus, their faith draws validity and strength from the tools of the very enemies of modernity they seek to ward off.⁸³

At an even broader level, entangled chains also help us understand social solidarity of communities. Given that modernity drives a multiplicity of cultures and values to converge, individuals have to make choices in terms of what communities and rituals they participate in. For example, fitness communities are being influenced by the vegetarian movement towards using plant-based proteins as a protest against animal-derived protein such as meat or whey.

5.5 Conclusion

The STM is sacred in CCE congregations, with its own associated symbols, some being clearly religious (e.g. experiencing God) while others are less so (e.g. child-rearing). Within the CCE scene, this symbolism stems from all the IR chains that intersect from past experiences: testimonies of former STMers (see previous chapter), parents of former STMers, and the general discourse at one's CCE church. However, other chains from daily life (e.g. school, work, extracurriculars, other past histories) inevitably tie into the ones developed in the CCE scene. As a result, at the microsociological level, the youths and adults hold disparate beliefs and expectations about their participation that are knotted into entangled chains.⁸⁴

I use "entangled chains" to modify Collins' (2004) IR market proposition of two independent symbols vying for dominance within the individual. The imagery of two symbols fighting for dominance is too inflexible to describe the contradictions in the accounts of real-world subjects, as has been suggested by Summers-Effler (2006). In the case of CCE members who are conflicted about going on an STM, it is not a clear case of fundamentalism versus secularism; rather, the conflict is fundamentalist desires becoming intertwined with the validity tools of scientific empiricism. Another example is how the motivation to partake in STMs is driven by religious concerns intertwined with many other motivations, such as personal and cultural development.

Another advantage of modifying IR chains with entangled chains is this metaphor's enhanced ability to account for individuals' choices. While Collins' IR markets imagery can predict highly religious STMers becoming more religious because of status stratification (i.e. the religious would only get more religious by engaging in STMs), it struggles to explain the fact that

some equally religious youth opted to not go on the STM. By conceptualizing entangled chains as emotional elastic bands being formed and entangled, and tugging at one another, we add a dimension of symbolic fusion resulting in the birth of new symbols through a confluence of prior emotional chains.

The imagery of entangled chains benefits current discussions in the sociology of religion. The sociology of religion has theorized about the tearing of the “sacred canopy” (Berger, 1967) and its replacement with “sacred umbrellas” (Smith, 1998), but those phenomena are mainly in the global West. Secularization theories still struggle to explain the prevalence of religion around the world (Pew Research Center, 2015) and the rise of global fundamentalism (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; Shupe, 2009). In the West, current studies in how people continue to apply religion to their daily lives have found that people selectively integrate aspects of religiosity yet reject others, and these decisions are clearly not entirely based on rational explanations (e.g. Ammerman, 2014; Smith & Snell, 2009; Thiessen, 2015). A sociological explanation using entangled chains can account for why people accept or reject certain aspects of religion. At an even broader level, entangled chains can help explain the social solidarity of communities writ large.

To conclude, despite the expectations of the STMers being entangled, they were primed to tap into the scripted discourses from their CCE worldview (Berger, 1967; Brown, 1995; Cerulo, 2014a). Expectations are an essential component of the IR ingredients for “status rituals,” and the STMers saw themselves as CCE faithful eager to participate in STM rituals. Given these conditions, even before departure, there were many signs indicating the STM journey would generate high EE and increase an STMers sense of social solidarity.

Chapter 6: Generating Social Solidarity on STMs in Putative Situations of Spiritual Conflicts

6.1 Introduction

Having discussed in depth the sacred symbols of the CCE community at the macro, meso, and micro levels in the previous chapters, this chapter focuses on the interaction rituals (IRs) that take place on short-term missions (STMs). It applies Summers-Effler's (2007) theory of vortices of social organization to the STM team and discusses how these vortices enact ritual situations that can generate collective effervescence (leading to emotional energy and social solidarity). While the previous chapters examined the CCE scene and the entangled emotions that motivate STMers to action, this chapter focuses on how the STM team used the discourse of spiritual conflict to bring about IRs that led to various outputs of collective effervescence. In other words, it focuses on the ground-zero situations that bring about social solidarity on STMs—what Goffman (1967) called “moment and their men.”

I present my empirical material in several steps. I first present how STMers enacted team meetings and prayer IRs in response to adversities. I explain how these IRs developed a shared mood and focused the attention of the participants upon the extraordinary (i.e. God). I then elucidate the spiritual, political, logistical, health, and personal adversities that STMers encountered on their travails. In each example, I illustrate how STMers would gather to discuss the situation and pray for God's divine intervention, and would claim to have experienced God regardless of the outcome of the prayer. The data are presented from the perspectives of both the adults and the youths when the adversities were mostly collective experiences—that is, the whole team felt its effects. When adversities were limited to two or only a few actors, I use only examples involving the youth, given the research's emphasis on the formative religious experiences.

I conducted my analysis in two steps. I first establish Summers-Effler's (2007) theorization of the STM social organization as a vortex. I then explain the dynamic processes that create, stabilize, and collapse the social organization of the STM team. In the second part of my analysis, I categorize the variability of collective effervescence generated from conflict experiences into four ideal types: mundane challenges, front-stage collective effervescence, private collective effervescence, and public collective effervescence. These IR outcomes are based on the variables of adversity severity, IR intensity, and number of IR participants. I conclude by discussing how the STM is reintegrated back into the home congregation in Canada.

6.2 The Interaction Ritual of Team Meetings and Group Prayer

Team meetings and prayer were important in keeping the team on the same page. The team meetings updated everyone and focused their attention on the matters at hand. If the problem was significant, group prayers conveyed the problem to God and opened people's minds to the possibility of extraordinary explanations (Collins, 2011; Durkheim, 1912; James, 1902; Joas, 2008). Given how STMs were categorized as spiritual conflict prior to the participants' departure, adversities could be readily interpreted by them as assaults from the devil: Satan does not want STMers in China because they are doing God's work (Arnold, 1997; Lewis, 1942). This discourse heightened mundane adversities into extraordinary experiences, with the STMers often claiming to have “experienced God.”

From an outsider's perspective, many of the putative spiritual adversities discussed in this chapter may seem contrived. Given the comforts of modern travel and tourism, it is difficult to claim actual adversities and suffering (relative to those experienced by missionaries from yesteryear or even contemporary missionaries). After all, the STM teams to China all stayed at the best hotels nearby (the exception being the Taiwan team, which stayed with the missionaries). An STM devoid of adversity risks delegitimizing itself—a smooth-sailing STM may suggest that its members were not proper missionaries, so the devil did not bother attacking. Conditions of anxiety and suffering amidst adversities were especially powerful, given that the alleviation of adversity amplified uplifting experiences and snapped the STMers out of Garfinkel's (1967) "mundane reality" (also see Goffman, 1967). When STMers encountered adversities outside of their control, they framed them religiously and prayed to God to take the reins. In other words, while the adversities encountered on STMs may not necessarily be religious or spiritual to an outsider, what is important is the interpretation and mutual affirmation of them as a religious experience by the STMers (Berger, 1967; Durkheim, 1912; Joas, 2008; Luckmann, 1967).

The STM team rituals of prayer were conducted in a similar fashion in all the STMs I observed. Prayers usually took place in the immediate location where the individuals were situated. In China, notable exceptions would be in public spaces where they might have gotten into trouble if they prayed aloud, but STMers felt safe to do so once they were no longer in a crowded public space (e.g. on their private bus or van, in their hotel rooms, sometimes even in restaurants). In a typical prayer posture, participants would clasp their hands, close their eyes, and dip their heads. There is utility in this, as sensory deprivation allow participants to focus on the rhythm and content of the words (see Collins, 2004; Draper, 2012). Most STMers remained stationary, though some charismatically inclined evangelical participants raised their hands and rocked their bodies to the rhythm of the prayer.

If the prayers were done in a team meeting, STMers would already be positioned in something resembling a circle, since that was how the team meetings were conducted. In most situations, the person praying aloud would lead the team from an accessible position where everyone could see them, though eyes were mostly closed. Sometimes the participants would reorient themselves for the prayer if there was a specific focus. For example, if the prayers were conducted because someone was ill, the STMers would stand in a circle around the afflicted and might even lay their hands on the individual, as if to channel the healing powers of the Holy Spirit. Those who could not fit in that circle usually sat or stood in the periphery, and some would even reach their hands forward in a similar fashion.

Prayers could be either led by an individual or performed in a group format, and senior members would often open or close the ritual. Sometimes the youth were asked to do it, and most would sheepishly agree. Others might decline until they felt "ready" for it. When an individual leads the prayer, they would speak aloud as if in conversation with God and raise the collective concerns of the group. The other participants would murmur or even shout "Amen" to articulate their agreement with the contents of the prayer. The prayer usually closed by being prefaced with something along the lines of "in Jesus Christ's name we pray," and ended with an "Amen" from all participants.

There were variations on the format of group prayers. One variation was the "popcorn prayer," where there was no designated leader and whoever felt compelled could "pop up" to

pray. The popcorn format usually continued for as long as there was a salient sense of momentum among the prayer participants. It is an unspoken rule that popcorn prayers end once a designated member (often the most senior member of the group) decides to pray.

Another variation was the “murmur prayer,” in which instead of having a leader, all the members prayed simultaneously, creating a constant hum. In this hum, it was not possible to hear what others were saying, allowing each person to focus on their own prayer while knowing others were doing the same as well. However, individuals stopped speaking once they were done with their prayer, and others too would cease praying one by one. This usually left one or two people who hurriedly finished their own prayer, being aware that the rest of the group was listening and waiting for them to finish.

Not all the prayers generated emotional intensity. Some felt perfunctory, especially in the context of routine matters such as dining and the beginning or closing of eventless team meetings. Other times, they were emotional, resulting in its participants leaving feeling empowered. This was particularly true when there was a specific problem or concern that STMers needed to bring before God. Sometimes the emotional tension would build up so that the members would take turns saying “Amen” in a rhythmic fashion, building up in intensity to emphatic declarations of “Amen” near the end.

To summarize, prayers and team meetings on the STMs served to focus the attention of the team and develop a shared mood. Praying to God was naturally a sacred moment and ensured that everyone was on the same page. These practices reinforced the group symbols and opened opportunities for rhythmic entrainment. IRs of prayer are mechanisms for members of groups to publicly align (or conform) to the group sacred symbols, thus generating the appearance of solidarity.

Having described how team meetings and prayers focused the attention and developed the mood of the STMers, I now describe the situations and specific conditions that led to team meetings and prayers. In the following sections I explore the following in turn: spiritual adversities, political adversities, logistical adversities, health adversities, and personal adversities.

6.3 Spiritual Adversities

Encounters with other religions were obvious adversities given that CCEs perceived the STM enterprise as part of the ongoing spiritual conflict over human souls between God and Satan (Arnold, 1997; Lewis, 1942). While the adult members of the STM recognized this, many of the youths, both rookies and veterans, were still developing this worldview. The most obvious example of this was ECAC’s trip to a grandiose Tibetan temple during the weekend break from the English summer camp.

For many of the youths, this was their first time visiting a Buddhist temple, and they described it as a spectacle to behold. Riding the tourist bus to the temple, we could see from afar at the top of the hill sat the main building and its gold-laden rooftops that refracted the sun’s magnificent rays. As the bus got closer, we saw numerous temple residents’ rectangular huts that cascaded down the side of the hill in neat rows. Long stone stairs were the main thoroughfares, and a slow hike led by the tour guide shepherding his flock of curious tourists from the bottom to the top would take a little over five minutes. Upon reaching the top, the STMers were rewarded with a breathtaking view of the sunlit green plains that stretched out as

far as the eye could see. As the wind gently blew the white clouds, their huge shadows cast on the plains shifted in tandem. Many rapturous STMers pulled out their smartphone cameras to capture the sight. The rhythmic creaking of the Tibetan spinning wheels and the occasional murmur from other visitors punctuated the silence.

The temple's main buildings were filled with the aroma of incense to heighten the austere aura of the towering bodhisattvas. The walls of the temple were covered with colorful illustrations of Buddhist parables. Along the platforms of the bodhisattvas were large plates (for offerings), candles, small Buddhist figurines, and cans of golden *jiaduobaos* (加多宝, a popular Chinese herbal drink). Kneeling pillows were laid out neatly on the tiled floor, and visitors clasped their hands or prostrated themselves in prayer. The STM team ambled through the tour for about two hours, taking in as much of the unfamiliar sights, sounds, and smell as possible.

Some STMers already subscribed to the STM symbol of spiritual warfare and readily interpreted the encounter as such. The veteran youth Priscilla (24), raised in a Chinese Canadian evangelical (CCE) congregation, was one such example. She had expressed to me in her pre-departure interview that she had a calling to be a long-term missionary (LTM) to China from a previous China STM. She explained that attending ECAC's STM was a way for her to revisit this calling. For her, going to the temple really allowed her to "see the enemy once again." The grandeur of the Tibetan temple to her was a sign that Satan was gaining ground in China. The visit revived her LTM calling by prompting the increased sense of urgency for the gospel to reach China.

Harold (40+) even refused to "help the enemy" by opting not to attend the temple tour with his family of five. He explained that his family had seen temples before and believed the benefits of their going would be minimal. Furthermore, paying the entrance fee amounted to adding to the enemy's coffers. Despite his personal disapproval of visiting the temple, he recognized that some other STMers may have never seen a temple, and thus understood the utility of the team leader's taking the team there.

Some youth were attuned to the fact that the temple was a spiritual stronghold of "the enemy" and felt "spiritually oppressed" and "upset." Oscar (17) described how the experience compared to his previous impressions of Tibetan Buddhism:

They've been portrayed as being peaceful and non-violent, but when I was there, all the artwork displayed there that I saw depicted the opposite of that. I used to think that people went to them because they were peaceful... well a lot of movies and stories kind of show that. But it seems that they just keep you there out of fear... there were pictures of death, just there to scare you.

Renee (16) seconded Oscar's opinion by explaining it to be unsettling, "It was super creepy. I felt uneasy, like in enemy territory. I just wanted to get out as soon as possible." Lois (16) was not sure what she was experiencing, "I felt uneasy... maybe it's the incense or the environment... Or maybe my stomach."

However, not all the youths immediately interpreted Buddhism as spiritual adversity. Some joked around by playing "air bender" on the candles (in reference to the popular cartoon *Avatar: The Last Airbender*), stepping on the temple's floor beams (a sign of disrespect), and

cracking random jokes about whatever caught their fancy (rude behavior in a quiet temple tour) to lighten the mood.

Others said they did not feel much from the experience. For example, after the tour I asked Sabin (19), an STM veteran in university, why he was joking around. He explained, "I felt nothing." I followed up by asking whether that was why he was joking around. "Yeah, maybe because I was bored." He states in another interview that because he had been on STMs to China before, he has become desensitized to temple tours since they were the "same old thing."

Regardless of how the STMers felt that afternoon, the collective interpretation of this experience was to be strongly steered by the leaders of the STM. Halfway through the tour, I asked Johnson (27, the intern pastor at ECAC who taught Sunday school to train the STMers) what he thought of the youths' (mis)behavior. He believed that it was a way for the youths to deal with the stress of spiritual adversity. Later on, the youths tuned out and became noticeably disruptive since no one had the linguistic or cultural background to keep up with the tour. At this point, Johnson chastised the youths, "Guys! This is not the way to behave here. I am serious. We need to talk about this tonight," as the youths fell into silence.

Johnson and the other adults made sure to follow through in the team meetings and group prayers when the STM team returned to the English camp. Some adults gently rebuked the youths for their apathy towards this spiritual encounter. Meanwhile, Johnson delivered an impromptu sermon in the team meeting:

I feel very uncomfortable in places like [the temple]. There were a few things that really stood out to me... The first thing that came to me was when we were in the bus... As the temple started coming to view, I looked at it and I just saw how big this building is. I saw the golden towers that stood at the top and to me the entire place just looked like a fortress. It had walls going up and looked impenetrable. I could feel my eyes welling up because this was the task at hand. There were many spiritual strongholds that Satan has. A lot of time we talk about God, angels, Holy Spirit, but we don't like to talk about the demonic. But I tell you, there are still demonic strongholds that exist in the world... How is the gospel to stand in a land like [this]?

The second thing I noticed was a lady there, a tourist, she had a friend take a picture of her. In that picture, she stood in a posture of prayer towards the temple. I thought to myself, if only you knew what you were doing and who you are praying to...

The third thing that stood out for me, and [this] was close to the breaking point for me, when we walked up to the top of the stairs and walked into the first building and saw some people walking in a circle and they were worshipping the idol in front of them. I was standing there at the door and there was a father with his daughter and she is about 7-8 years old. The father pointed to the kneeling bench at the front of the door and she fell to her knees so willingly. She didn't know any better and she only did what her father told her to do... and in this dark

place that we're in, there are so many people who don't know the name of Jesus and that's what they're looking for. They're searching for assurance and they're searching for meaning and they're doing it in this demonic fortress established by Satan and his demons.

This is why we're here and this is why it's important for us to see. I talked to some of us and some of you were uncomfortable. But that's okay. You need to be disturbed because it is very disturbing. You need to understand that this is our enemy, and this is what we're fighting against. YOU ARE A CHOSEN RACE! A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD! A PERSON OF HIS CHOOSING! ... Who cares what people say about us as Christians because we don't belong here anyway, we are sojourners and exiles here anyway, our citizenship is in heaven and not on this earth.

The STMers listened in silence, some nodding in approval as Johnson delivered his message. Shortly after, the meeting closed with a prayer for the correct interpretation of the experience and that everyone may grow spiritually from it. This was an explicit instance of overtly framing the STM experience as spiritual adversity. Johnson upheld the sacred symbol of spiritual conflict to reinforce the moral norms of the team.

Some encounters with other religions were framed as spiritual adversities upon arrival, and thus occluded alternative interpretations of any sort from arising. When MCAC's STM team arrived in the Taiwanese township, the resident Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) missionary briefed the team on how the town was "trapped by Satan." The local temple governs most of the township's affairs and, in fact, temples in rural Taiwan fund the local schools, loan money, and function as a para-governmental organization. The courtyard of the school where the STMers taught was regarded as a space of spiritual contention since it had numerous temple flags planted all over. Given that the STM provided outdoor badminton lessons, the missionary took this as an opportunity to uproot the temple flags and replace them with poles to hoist the badminton net.

Many of the STMers saw the act of replacing the temple flags with badminton poles as a minor spiritual victory. The veteran youth Barbara (15) explained,

I feel like when [the pastor] was able to make the badminton net and put it in the spot of the flags... Because the flags are from the temple and in... such a traditional place, the kids are taught these are temples and you worship them. You even have a temple study [course] in school. It's a super big thing. It's really something that God did... it's symbolic. Even though it's just a flag, and we're just putting badminton [poles] in, it's still like removing the presence, like a little bit.

Indeed, any opportunity to remove the enemy's spiritual presence is regarded as gaining a little ground for Jesus, despite badminton nets not being a Christian symbol.

Collective efforts by the team leaders and local support constantly reinforced the discourse of spiritual conflict to the STMers, with group meetings serving as the platform. In these meetings, the team constantly prayed, asking for spiritual intercession and to express

submission to God's will. Before entering the temple areas, STMers would pray for the "blood of Jesus" to cover and protect them from Satan's assaults. When ECAC forgot to pray before entering the Tibetan temple, the team conducted a "make-up" prayer. When the STMers had the wrong focus at the Tibetan temple, the team prayed to repent and asked for the "correct" perspective. When the poles for badminton nets temporarily replaced the temple flags, the STM gave thanks for gaining ground against the devil. There was a heightened sense of awareness among the STMers that they were constantly engaging in spiritual warfare and the devil might strike the unprepared at any moment through the other forms of adversity listed below.

6.4 Political Adversities

STMs to China tread a legal tightrope, as outright proselytization in China is illegal. While there are guaranteed religious rights and freedoms in China, the government itself is decidedly secular and has a history of persecuting house churches (Wielander, 2009; Yang, 2012). STMs sponsored by local TSPC churches get around the ban on proselytizing by being organized as English camps in which CCE members reach out to the camp children and build friendships. Partnerships with local government-sanctioned religious groups grant them some form of immunity, especially if the partner has good *guanxi* (loosely translated as "personal connections"; see Hsu & Hasmath, 2012) with the local government or *is* the local government. For the local partners, STMs are worth hosting since doing so will boost political capital due to their rich overseas resources and expertise (see Hsu, 2012; Vala, 2012). Conversely, if the partner has poor *guanxi*, then hosting STMs will only hurt their political stock and make them vulnerable to attacks by political rivals.

Despite the precautions CCEs take, problems sometimes occur. In fact, one of the STM teams I observed had to stop teaching the previous year (see second example below). Stories of detainments and deportations of missionaries in China circulating within the CCE community created a sense of danger and adversity among the STMers. It was thus easy for the team to frame their experiences as political adversity under the broader spiritual conflict rubric. In comparison, analysis of the data from the STM to Taiwan did not have any mention of political adversity. This was because the Taiwanese legal framework allows for proselytization and mission work. Thus the STMers did not vilify the Taiwanese government as a source of political adversity within the spiritual conflict framework.

FCAC's STM encountered political adversity in their summer camp that was being held for its second consecutive year at a local Three-Self Patriotic Church (TSPC). The deputy head of the provincial Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) notified the church that he was going to inspect the camp. Naturally, the STMers from FCAC were concerned, especially the youth who lacked understanding of the Chinese government. In a calm manner, the STM team leader Jackson (50+) went over scenarios of crackdown, arrest, deportation, and blacklisting during team briefings. He gave careful instructions to the effect that while it is acceptable to use Bible stories as source material for English lessons about Western culture, the team was to refrain from making overt conversion attempts or political comments. Furthermore, everyone was to carry his or her Canadian passport. The team prepared the best they could for all contingencies. They closed the meeting with a prayer and offered the whole situation into God's hands.

When the team finally met the RAB official, they found out he had actually brought his wife and daughter to participate in the camp—the former as a camp assistant and the latter as a student. The team suspected them to be spies since the official was not there the whole time. However, by the end of the camp, the team established relationships with the wife and daughter of the official. They felt they had made a positive impression on the family as Christians. That may have been true, as the RAB official invited FCAC to expand their English-camp program to other sites across the province.

The encounter with the government official allowed me to observe two contrasting cases of rationalizing the same experience of political adversity. Addison (17), the daughter of FCAC's team leader Jackson, explained in an interview after the STM that

I ended up getting really close to [the official's daughter] and it was just kind of like God telling me don't worry about these people and He has it under control. He has it in His plan so that the officials would be there so we could do more stuff in the future. It was all part of His bigger picture... Before, I couldn't see that. So it was really interesting to see how even the mom helped me in the class, like to translate and stuff, and the dad was really nice, and the daughter and I were like really close friends.

She was not exaggerating the relationship that developed with the official's family. In fact, the official even offered to give Jackson's family a ride to the airport for their flight back to Canada.

In a contrasting case, prior to meeting the official, Jackson briefed the team that teaching Bible stories in English on church grounds should be okay, but that if the official decided otherwise, they must comply. However, in the interviews after the STM, Jackson stated in retrospect that he was not worried all along.

I told the official that I'm not there to challenge anything, I'm just working with the local churches and I'm working with children. So really, there is nothing to hide. I'm not telling them something that I don't believe in.

While Jackson did publicly express concern in the team meetings and made sure the team was prepared, he was familiar with how the Chinese local government operated, and had some understanding that as long as the unwritten rules were observed, the STM team would be safe (Tam & Hasmath, 2015; see also Deng, 2010; Vala, 2012).

The extent to which different STMers knew about the Chinese government informed how they "experienced God." Addison, being in high school, really did not know much about China other than the stories of religious crackdown one hears through the grapevine back in Canada. For her, fear was the expectation and dominant emotion in the encounter with the government, and its alleviation justified the idea that the experience was one of God's intervention and providence. In comparison, Jackson believed that everything was in God's hands, and his prior experience of leading STMs in China allowed him to navigate what was permissible. To him, God's intervention was ancillary to the fact that everything should be okay so long as the team observes the unwritten rules. In other words, Jackson's sense of God's supernatural intervention was mitigated by his knowledge and experience.

In team meetings, my post-STM interviews, and testimonies shared back in Canada, Addison's story of divine intervention was circulated more than Jackson's rational navigation. In the team meetings, the STMers shared stories with one another about how their fear of the government was alleviated and how the encounter with government officials became an opportunity for the STM work to advance. They mutually reassured one another that this was indeed the case and prayed to give thanks. This experience reassured them of God's providence.

Even when things went wrong, STMers found ways to justify the belief that God was presiding over the situation. Another case of political adversity occurred a year before my study, in 2014 (my understanding of this story comes from interview accounts from those who participated and testimonials circulating within ECAC). ECAC's STM team was told by the government to stop teaching. The STM site was at another city in China, and the partnership with the local orphanage fell through because the organization expected substantial "donations" (i.e. bribes) from the team. The STM team declined to give a bribe, and this decision left the team marooned in China with no campsite. As a result, the STM team decided to host the camp in their hotel rooms.

Government officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of State Security cracked down on this unlawful assembly. Wendy (40+), a mother who brought her family of five on the STM, recalls that frightening experience:

So we met them on Saturday. Before meeting them, we were scared and nervous. We sent emails out [to Canada] asking for prayer. When we met them, there were seven policemen who interviewed us then the rest were from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of State Security who went upstairs to interview the students. At that time, there was an official, who had the least stars on his shoulder, and he was so mean. Maybe he had to show off in front of his superiors. He commanded those with [Hong Kong] home visiting permits to stand on one side and those with tourist visas on the other. And then he filmed the whole process with his camera... He got a stack of papers and interviewed us. He showed us the part that says if we break the law, we each are penalized 15,000 or 25,000 RMB. I was thinking at that time that we had a family of five (sheepish laugh). [The fine would amount to] 15,000 to 20,000 Canadian dollars. So the TA (teaching assistant) kept on using the local dialect to speak with the officer, as if they were arguing. And the more they argued, the more it seemed to get out of hand. And then Emma asked if she could say a few words. The room immediately became silent... She said, "We come and we even bring our kids because we want them to see our motherland. If we only bring them to do tourism, they will feel like they're tourists." At that moment, the people began to smile. The officials even stood up and shook our hands and told us to get some rest.

In another conversation with Emma (50+), she recalled that she did not plan those words beforehand and felt that God was speaking through her. She shared this "God speaking through me" perspective accordingly at her church testimonies.

As a result of this encounter with the government, the STM team stopped their activities at the hotel. They were not deported, but were told to fulfill their visas by being actual tourists. The students whom they were teaching became *de facto* tour guides, and the rest of the time was spent visiting local attractions. Some of the STMers even said that this was a better arrangement than teaching in the hotel because it actually afforded them more opportunities to build relationships and model Christlike behavior to the students during the many hours of commuting and sightseeing. This interpretation can be viewed as a type of reverse hindsight bias (Elster, 2015, p. 124), in that despite the STM being formally shut down, God's providence allowed the result to be even better than if the team had stayed in the hotel.

This frightening encounter with the Chinese government shook the community to its core. Upon returning to Canada, the STM team found out that during the precise moment they were being interrogated, the youth fellowship in Canada had been praying for them after receiving an email about the situation. For the church community, the resolution of such an intense situation and the "coincidence" in prayer timing could have no other explanation than that of divine intervention.

Most interview accounts I conducted that reflected on this experience neglected the important detail of the church receiving an email asking for prayer, and many STMers attributed the timing to supernatural coincidence. Nonetheless, the details of the story getting lost did not matter. What mattered for the ECAC community was that this experience sparked a deep sense of confirmation of faith for all members of the community. This story continued to circulate over the next year within the community's various gatherings (e.g. fellowships, Sunday worships, prayer meetings) and by word of mouth. Through the constant reiterations, even though this story of political adversity concluded with a government crackdown and its details were not entirely accurate, it led the faith community to believe that God was on their side for their STMs to China.

The circulation of this story reinforced conformity and drowned out alternative explanations. Regina (14), the STM veteran daughter of Wendy, explained,

I didn't feel the fear the other adults did. Because they had the meeting themselves and the kids didn't go in and the kids didn't know about it until on the day they showed up. And we didn't know where all the adults went. I remember that day when I woke up, me and Olivia, we walked to our normal singing gathering place... there were some kids there and we were all like, where did the adults go?... And then these men came in, they weren't dressed in uniforms, they just wore normal clothes and they came in and started interviewing everyone and he was like where are you from. And I was like, Canada, and then [the TA] was talking to one of them in Chinese... it wasn't until I flew back that I learned that it was the police who came and that my fellowship prayed for us at that moment... I felt like, sure I went through it but I didn't really go through it because I didn't have the emotions running through me. It was just a story for me, so when they asked me what I got out from it, like the testimony for STM... I thought, nothing happened, the police just let us go. And I didn't know the fellowship was praying for us and that God was working behind and everything. I said [what I was expected to] to everyone, because that's the

Sunday school answer, because I know that's probably what they want to hear when I come back. But I didn't actually feel it because I didn't go through it.

It is interesting that Regina explained she did not feel like she underwent this adversity because she did not have the "emotions running through" her. This highlights the importance of generational and language fractures, as she was not in the loop to undergo this experience. Nonetheless, Regina felt obligated to present the "Sunday-school" version of the story despite not feeling anything. She chose to conform to the collective narrative rather than facing the consequences of being a pariah.

6.5 Logistical Adversities

Logistical hiccups experienced during the STMs were also interpreted as adversities. Sometimes these were interpreted as attacks from the devil to hinder the mission. Similarly, the resolution of these problems was framed as God's providence. Below, I provide several examples of logistical adversities that the STMers, in team meetings, framed as logistical adversities and submitted their concerns in prayer in hopes that God would resolve the problem.

6.5.1 The weather.

The weather conditions the STM teams encountered were often framed as adversities. The desire for good weather was one of the most recurrent prayer items for all the STM teams because heavy rainfall was to be expected during monsoon season in East Asia. Poor weather affected everything, including transportation, camp operations, opportunities for tourism, likelihood of catching a cold, and general comfort. Furthermore, given there is limited indoor space in the STM camp facilities, all the STMs needed permissible weather to conduct activities outdoors (e.g. group games, team sports). In particular, FCAC and MCAC's mission took place during one of the summer typhoons, and the STMers were thankful for any precious windows of rain-free weather.

Upon MCAC's arrival at the missionary's home in Taiwan, they were informed that there might be a typhoon that week. The team offered their prayers collectively to God to preside over this issue. Over the course of their STM, MCAC's team felt that their prayers for good weather were constantly answered.

Jessica (26), a veteran youth and badminton instructor, expressed thankfulness in the team meeting on the second last day of the trip,

I came knowing there's no indoor gym... With the weather, God really had a hand in it. It was really hot the first day and it was really difficult to stand in the sun for so long. The kids had to take turns and wait for 10 minutes for their turn and whether they hit [the bird] or not depended on the wind. If they miss, they will have to go to the back of the line again... On the second day, it was like indoor gym conditions and it was perfect and I was ready to go for the rest of the week.

Michael (40+), a veteran parent, added his observations in his interview, ideas that he also shared in some group settings: "God really protected us... even little things like when we played badminton, and it was raining hard, and closed the sky so we could play badminton with a cloudy sky. And after we finish playing it started raining again, so God is really good."

The instances of agreeable weather were often cited in the interviews as affirming the work of the STM as being blessed by God. However, it is noteworthy that during the instances when the rain stopped, the summer camp immediately prioritized badminton-playing over other activities. In other words, it was not always that the rain stopped precisely before or during badminton time, but that the team adapted badminton time to the rainless weather. In addition, there were many instances where outdoor game activities took place indoors instead, but no one blamed God for not stopping the rain. My data for all four STMs observed suggested that STMers praised God for the instances that the rain stopped but did not attribute the moments of rain to God's lack of intervention.

6.5.2 Lodging and transportation.

Lodging and transportation in China were difficult to plan for from Canada, and the STM teams often had to rely on locals to help them sort out the details. Despite the ECAC team being in Xicheng (pseudonym) for the first time, their local contacts did not help them find a hotel because of a misunderstanding. As a result, ECAC made online reservations at a local hotel by themselves through the online Chinese travel service provider CTrip. However, upon landing in a transit city to transfer to Xicheng by bus, they found out their online hotel reservations had been unilaterally cancelled by the hotel. The team decided that they would resolve this issue once they arrived at their final destination. When the ECAC team was ready to depart via bus the next morning, the bus did not arrive at the departure time of 5 a.m. because the driver claimed he did not want to get stuck in traffic on the highway over a local festival.

Everyone began to panic about what should be done because they wanted to get to Xicheng by noon to find a hotel and prepare for the camp's opening the next day. Before long, the STM team leader William (50+) called for everyone to announce the problem and pray together with him in the hotel lobby. He submitted the hotel and transportation problems to God, finishing with the phrase, "Even though this morning is a mess, we trust it is Your will and it is for our own good." After finishing the prayer, William went to make some phone calls while the rest of the team had breakfast at the hotel. He was able to book another bus that arrived at 8:30 a.m. and the team was able to find another hotel after asking the local support team for help. Again, many STMers expressed gratitude to God both publicly and through prayer in team meetings for things being resolved despite the logistical errors.

When the ECAC youths were interviewed after the STM, two offered alternative explanations to one involving God's intervention. Renee, who grew up in China, provided an alternative explanation to the supernatural one, saying that she was not surprised at the bus cancellation because "that's how China is." She highlights the fact that logistical hurdles, like cancellations, are at the mercy of their destination's infrastructure, which is often unreliable. STMers who were unfamiliar with China would not understand this nuance, since transportation agreements are usually upheld in Canada, thus increasing their likelihood of interpreting the experience as extraordinary.

In addition, Johnson places some of the responsibility on the disorganization of the team.

Before coming, [the team] was disorganized. But... it was somewhat a tolerable disorganization... and I know this is just about how they operate... in the end they

will pull it together. And they kind of do... We've had hotels. Buses eventually came. You know, the entire camp worked out. But it's all the details that get lost, so little things.

In other words, he considers the inconveniences that ECAC faced to be self-inflicted. No one blamed God for not preventing these logistical problems, but they praised Him for resolving them.

6.5.3 A cancelled camp.

The greatest logistical hurdle observed in my fieldwork was the fact that PCAC found out upon arrival that their two-week-long English summer camp was cancelled because it conflicted with the local high schools' examination schedule. The camp was the primary reason the five STM youths went, and they had prepared a curriculum for about 60 students. For the first few days, the STMers prayed constantly for the camp to take place. However, after a week, it became apparent that the camp would not take place. Instead, they were tasked with tutoring some local high school students, with only six students in total coming to be tutored in English. The highest total for number of students on a single day was four students. Over the course of two weeks, the classes of five teachers and a few students continued, and despite trying to stay positive, the STM youths were visibly less upbeat compared to when they first arrived. Eventually, other opportunities for the STM youths came up, and they hosted health workshops at the local church (two youths graduated with degrees in occupational therapy and nutrition) and shared their testimonies with the locals.

When asked whether they were disappointed that the English camp they had spent months planning for was cancelled, the PCAC STM youths were unanimous in their response that they were not disappointed. In the focus group conversation, all five youths emphasized that any opportunity to communicate God's love and "plant seeds" (i.e. sowing the seeds of the Gospel, see Luke 8:11-15) is something to be thankful about. Veteran Lucia (21) explained, "I definitely was not disappointed; even one person counts. I think because it's an opportunity to share God's love... I definitely was not disappointed in that there were only at most 2 to 3 people." Veteran Linda (24) explains that rather than disappointment, it was the constant stress to remain flexible that was the challenge for her.

And going to a place not even knowing what you'll be doing. As you can tell, I like structure, and people being more organized, so when... you don't know what's happening, it puts me in an uncomfortable situation in a way. [However], God's there and He will take care of it.

Even though the English camp numbers were extremely low, the STMers still found ways to claim to have experienced God despite their prayers not being answered by making the best out of what they had.

STMs in a foreign land make for situations rife with logistical adversities and unpredictability. Some of these challenges may be due to the hurdles in planning from long distance, while others may be self-inflicted. The fact of being in another country magnifies mundane logistical problems that would be non-issues at home and forces the STMers to rely

on God's providence. The belief that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent renders Him immune to criticism regardless of the outcome of the logistical adversity. For example, when the weather went well, God was praised. When the weather was poor (i.e. too hot, raining), people prayed for good weather. When the weather was fixed, God received all the credit. And when the weather remained poor, the STMers chalked it up to a test of ability to undergo trials (see Romans 5:3-5, 8:17-18, and James 1:2-4, 12). God could do no wrong because the STMers were already fixated on the mindset that even if things did not go as planned, it was God's will and the team's responsibility was to make the best out of it. After all, the STMers were primed to expect that anything could happen. My focus group session with the PCAC youth during the STM became a session where the STMers continuously emphasized God's faithfulness. In effect, the team meetings and prayer IRs constantly focused the team upon God's providence and immutability and kept everyone optimistic.

Despite there being other explanations for the logical "adversities" the STMers faced, only the explanation of God's divine intervention was presented within team meetings and back at the church. Explanations such as Renee's "that's how China is" and Johnson's "poor organization" from their post-STM interviews were simply absent in the public discourse. No one blamed God for any of the problems, and only stories of God's providence were circulated. If God is sovereign and presides over the STM that was sent by His "calling," then He *must* have allowed the camp to be cancelled. If that was the case, then it *must* have been part of His plan.

6.6 Health Adversities

STMs are physically, emotionally, and mentally taxing experiences crammed into a week or two that can take a toll on anyone's health. A regular day can consist of STMers getting up at 7 a.m. to wash up, wolf down breakfast, commute to the campsite, and begin classes from as early as 8 a.m. until the late afternoon. STMers had to teach, sing, perform skits, dance, play games or team sports with the young students, clean up, and do other activities that involved exertion, shouting, and lots of laughing. Throughout the camp, STMers snuck in power naps in the rare air-conditioned rooms or made trips to the hotel to re-energize whenever possible. When the late evening came around after dinner, STMers had team meetings, group debriefings, last-minute lesson planning, and occasional chats till the wee hours of the night. As a break, tourist outings were often planned for the weekends (although these were tiring as well).

The daily grind resulted in poor health being a frequent theme over the STMs. A simple case of food poisoning could debilitate a whole team for an extended period, as members took on extra workloads for their comrades. Pre-departure STM team meetings briefed members about the necessity to visit the travel clinic, have updated immunization records, and take the popular oral vaccine Dukoral to prevent travellers' diarrhea. However, even with these precautions, the STMs encountered many challenges dealing with health and had to pray often for good health or healing.

In the cases detailed below, I differentiate between private and public health adversities. I define private health adversities as health problems that the STMers kept undisclosed to the rest of the team, and public health adversities as health problems that the rest of the team were made aware of. I argue that private health concerns were left to the interpretation of the individual about whether they experienced God. However, public health issues were elevated to the status of adversities that necessitated team prayers for healing.

6.6.1 Private health adversities: When experiencing God is a choice.

I met several individuals who had health adversities that remained private, meaning they did not announce them to the whole team. Rookie Roxanne (40+) from MCAC had a history of insomnia and fatigue when sleeping in unfamiliar environments. Before departure for the STM, Roxanne prayed that it would not be an issue. After the STM, she praised God for protecting her from that affliction. She explains,

I thank God because every time I go to a new place I couldn't sleep, but this time to Taiwan, even though I slept on the floor with a mat, I could still sleep. It's miraculous! Before, I couldn't sleep even if I went to a really nice hotel.

Roxanne attributed her being able to get sufficient rest to a blessing from God.

Another health adversity was suffered by veteran Abigail (50+) from ECAC, who takes stimulants to combat depression. On her first day of camp, she was too enthusiastic and overexerted herself in teaching elementary children and, as a result, she was burnt out the next day. Her husband said that this was likely because of the medication sending her too high. Due to the stigmatized nature of mental illness, there was no discussion at the team level of why she rested the day after. The next day, she went back to the camp rejuvenated. In the interviews with her and her husband about this incident, there was no mention of experiencing God.

The final example of individuals who experienced health problems in private was MCAC's Michael and his daughter Barbara, both of whom had eczema and struggled to adjust to the Taiwan's heat and humidity. Michael explained:

And the other low point would be we had to adjust to the high humidity and the heat. We all developed rashes and it was uncomfortable. We put some medication on but it didn't work. So it was a struggle until we went back to Canada... my knees and feet, it was particularly serious this time. Even after going to air-conditioned places after the STM, the rash didn't go away until I got back to [Canada] for a week, and then it stopped.

However, despite their discomfort, Michael and Barbara persevered through their eczema problems and dealt with the rash with baby powder until they returned to Canada. This health issue remained private and they did not attribute it to experiencing God.

All of these health cases that remained private were not brought to the team's attention as items to pray for. Only the rookie Roxanne individually attributed her health adversity to "experiencing God," while veterans Abigail, Michael, and Barbara did not treat their health adversities as such. Given the latter group could handle the problem themselves, they did not need to rely on God. Without the presence of others to elevate the adversity to a spiritual attack, the perception of the health problems was an individual choice.

6.6.2 Public health adversity: Opportunities for group rituals.

Compared to the health adversities that individuals kept private, the health adversities of individuals that became public knowledge were elevated to spiritual conflict. When the team

realized that someone was sick, they gathered together to discuss contingency plans and pray for the individual. In one case, veteran Ashley (40+) from MCAC suffered from chronic indigestion because of prior birthing complications. While in Taiwan she was careless and drank some mung bean slush that led to indigestion and a buildup of pressure in her intestines. What compounded the problem was the intense heat and dehydration. As a result, she became constipated and had to rest in bed for a day. Ashley's past history of surgical complications suggested that the threat to her health could rapidly escalate. The STM team gathered and spent a lot of time praying for her healing, with the team surrounding her and resting their hands on her in prayer on a few occasions. Ashley's health became a focal point of the STM for a day or two, and a trip to the hospital emergency room was planned if her situation persisted. She eventually recovered with ample rest and hydration, and her recovery was taken as a sign of healing and prayers answered.

Another example of an individual's health condition becoming a source of the team's concern and prayer was Lucia's food allergy. She was a university student from PCAC who carried an EpiPen with her because she is fatally allergic to nuts and shellfish. Many restaurants in China cook with peanut oil, and its kitchens are not known for their diligence in food safety. Eating at any restaurant was potentially deadly for her because a minor contamination (e.g. shellfish in the broth, peanut oil in the stir-fry) might result in a life-threatening reaction. She was in the STMers' prayers daily for no food safety mishaps. Fortunately, she encountered no problems with her health during the STMs, but the team was constantly on high alert when dining out. People gave thanks to God for Lucia's health in the team meetings and in interviews after the STM.

For the third case, I provide my own story of falling ill as an example of how the STMers reacted. The fatigue of cramming four STMs in two months took a toll on my body and I fell ill for two days on the third STM with MCAC. During that time, the team and local missionary laid their hands on me to pray for healing. Many of the STMers, especially the adults, asked how I felt, offered me the medicine they had brought with them, and provided advice on what (not) to eat according to Chinese medicinal principles. Other STMers substituted for me while I rested under a ceiling fan on the cool wooden floor. I was grateful for their concern and felt a sense of community with the STMers. When I eventually recovered, the team praised God for my healing. I personally felt it was just a case of a compromised immune system from chronic fatigue.

In the fourth case, the heat and humidity caused a leader of the PCAC STM to succumb to heatstroke due to dehydration. She fainted in the middle of taking a group photo on the church's stairs under the sun's sweltering heat. Fortunately, people on the team were able to break her fall and immediately set up an ad hoc stretcher for her to rest in the shade. There was a doctor on the team to apply first aid while the whole team prayed for her and fanned her. She recovered after two hours of rest, and the team praised God and the doctor for her healing.

When health adversities came to attention of the STM team's collective consciousness, they were elevated to experience of God's healing. This was because team-wide adjustments had to be made and the team had to pray for the welfare of an individual. This collective prayer opened the STMers up to the possibility of putative supernatural healing. In comparison, private health concerns remained private so long as the STMers could handle it. In those cases,

it depended on the individual to decide whether their health adversity was an experience of God.

6.7 Personal Adversities

Similar to health adversities, personal adversities were also separated into the private and public domains. I define personal adversities as putative adversities that challenge the individual STMer's talents and character. These too can be framed in the broader spiritual conflict discourse, as individual problems may disrupt the overall unity of the team. Therefore, as suggested by Pastor Fred previously, the subduing of individual behavior that may be detrimental to the team is also an essential part of the spiritual conflict discourse. Below, I present several examples of private adversities, some of which were elevated to the team's collective attention.

The first case of personal adversity is Logan (18), a rookie youth with FCAC, and his alleged habit of tardiness. Even before departing for the STM, he had developed a reputation for constantly being late to team meetings and church gatherings. During team meetings in China, Jackson specifically singled out Logan several times to remind him to be on time. Throughout the first few days of the STM, Logan became the team's punching bag for punctuality, with team members jokingly coughing "Logan" whenever the words "punctual" or "be on time" were mentioned. Co-teaching with Logan, I actually thought that Logan was quite reliable despite having a laid-back demeanor. In his post-STM interview, he explained that he developed a reputation for being tardy back in Canada because his parents driving him to church were the ones running late.

There was one incident where Logan took a short nap during break time and ended up being late for a group event. Jackson then confronted him to do better and cited his poor record on punctuality. At this point, Logan became fed up with being the butt of jokes and constantly being singled out by Jackson. He argued with Jackson that his being late on that specific occasion was because of lack of communication on the part of the leader. He and Jackson ended up having to resolve the issue behind closed doors.

In the post-STM interviews with Jackson and Logan, they expressed a newfound respect for each other in their reconciliation. Jackson explained that he may have indeed been at fault for singling Logan out and being a poor communicator; Logan was still young and had a lot to learn. Logan too expressed that he got to know Jackson better from the experience and admitted that he too has room to grow. Logan and Jackson both attended the STM the following year, and Jackson had since taken to mentoring Logan more.

Logan's reputation of being tardy was an issue that the team was aware of. While the team did not frame Logan's "tardiness" as the direct work of the devil, they did note that it could have a deleterious effect on the mission. Nonetheless, it was only a subplot to the overall mission, and there were never any team meetings or group prayers that came out of it. Instead, the IR that took place was between Logan and Jackson. After sorting through the issues through candid communication, they grew closer and bonded further on the STM the following year.

Lucia's example is the second case of personal adversity. Studying to be a music teacher and knowing how to play the bass guitar, she was assigned to be in charge of the choral music presentation the STM team was to do for their host church. However, in the first couple of music practices, Lucia was clearly uncomfortable with this leadership role. She struggled to

organize people and conduct the music, and was visibly frustrated with the whole process. Linda, the team's pianist, was clearly more experienced in music and gave advice to Lucia in front of the rest of the team cautiously (to avoid overstepping her responsibilities).

In a team meeting after these choir practices, Lucia publicly announced that she wanted to step down from that role, noting that Linda was a more suitable candidate. PCAC's team leader refused her resignation and emphatically stated, "You were chosen for this role and you can do it." Everyone else on the team echoed their support for Lucia. She ended up staying on the task, and the team performed their choir presentation.

I asked Lucia and Linda in their post-STM interviews how they resolved this personal challenge, noting specifically that it might have been awkward that everyone on the team saw that Linda was more suited for the task. Lucia explained that since she shared a room with Linda, they had a deep conversation during the night. Despite her vehemently wanting to pass the responsibility to Linda, Linda urged her to stay on as leader and take it as a growth opportunity. Both expressed that they grew closer to one another after these conversations took place.

Lucia's musical leadership was also a footnote to the team's overall mission. At the team level, they expressed solidarity by collectively echoing their support for Lucia. However, it was apparent that the real growth in a relationship was between Lucia and Linda.

A third case of personal adversity involved veteran Florence (23) and her discovery of her language gifts with PCAC. She had just completed an undergraduate degree in nutrition. When PCAC's summer camp was cancelled, the English teachers had little to do. Nonetheless, the hosting church found opportunities for the team to give health workshops, theology lessons, and personal religious testimonies. However, one of the main hurdles with so many presentations is that while many of the members of the PCAC team spoke either Cantonese or English, few had conversational Mandarin. This provided an opportunity for Florence to take on a personal challenge.

While not fluent like a native speaker, Florence spoke passable Cantonese and Mandarin in addition to fluent English. Despite her trilingualism, she had no prior live translation experience. Given that many of the STM teammates who were to give presentations needed to do so in their native tongue (i.e. English or Cantonese), many turned to Florence to be their translator. At first, she lacked confidence and visibly struggled, mostly due to limited vocabulary. However, with the help of the team and the audience, most of the messages were effectively translated. By the end of the week, Florence was completing her tasks in stride. In countless team meetings, grateful fellow STMers affirmed Florence's gift, and prayers of thanks were offered for her services.

In the post-STM interviews with members of PCAC, many STMers shared that Florence inspired them. For example, Brittany, a retired nurse and STM veteran, stated that she felt that God was working to help Florence grow through the difficult job of live translation. Florence herself expressed a newfound appreciation for her trilingualism, and has since dedicated more time and attention to improving her Chinese. For the team, Florence's work as a translator became a feel-good story of the youths' growth on the STMs. Florence's experience became a common fond memory that brought the team closer together when they saw "God working" to change a young person's life. The constant retelling of this story back at church further reinforced the narrative that STMs are transformative.

6.8 Analysis

Given the myriad of encounters the STM faced in China, it is possible to conceptualize the overall experience as what Summers-Effler (2007) calls a vortex of social organization. She argues that social life coalesces as a turbulent flow of “social entities,” which are anything (e.g. people, discourses) that can exert force or act as an obstacle to shape the flow of experience in a field. They are the eddies in the stream of social interaction, and exhibit what Abbott (2001, p. 277) calls “causal authority.” She conceptualizes social organizations as vortices in a turbulent river that go through the three phases of creation, stabilization, and collapse, as follows:

Patterns emerge in action that feels free-flowing, even though selection pressures are still in effect. This loose pattern action only begins an aggressive trajectory toward organizing when the action encounters obstacles, which would be a pocket of organization. The action then gains the potential to act as an obstacle to other flows of action. The social entity becomes increasingly brittle as it encounters new obstacles, ultimately increasing its vulnerability to collapse. (Summers-Effler, 2007, p. 446)

According to her theorization, the creation of social organization arises freely and naturally, as though social entities that are part of the social organization are attracted to the center of vortex. Upon establishing a discernible form, the vortex adapts itself when encountering social entities that affect its shape. The stabilizing force at the center strengthens the barriers of the social organization to resist outside pressures. Over a period of time, the barriers become rigid and brittle, and challenges from new social entities may lead to the social organization’s collapse.

Therefore, stability is an illusion existing only from a distance. In fact, upon closer examination, perceptions of stable organizations are created when actors consistently and rhythmically put in effort to ensure that the organization stays afloat (Summers-Effler, 2007, p. 436; also see Goffman, 1967). Conceptualizing the STM as a vortex that forms, stabilizes, brushes against social entities, and adapts until it finally collapses is a dynamic way to understand group experience.⁸⁵

The previous two chapters mostly described the CCE church scene’s inner functions and how they rhythmically attend to maintaining a stable pursuit of missions. As evidenced throughout the dissertation so far, there are many social forces at work affecting a CCE congregations’ actions, such as the discourses on pan-Chineseness (Tam, 2018; Tam & Hasmath, 2015), the fears of the secularization of the next generation (Wong et al., 2018), the desires of the youth and parents, the cyclical annual programs that regulate the pulse of missions, and the competition of prioritizing various commitments in mundane Canadian life. All of these can be understood as the social entities that exert force upon the CCE scene. In other words, CCE scenes can be understood as vortices of social organization in the turbulent river of Canadian social life.

The STM team becomes an extension of the sending church’s scene, itself becoming a mini-vortex that spins off of its main “host” vortex in Canada. When the STM team leaves Canada, it is temporarily supplanted into the turbulent social rapids of China for a week or two. In this foreign environment, encountering the unfamiliar social entities of China stimulates the

team members to doubling down on their efforts to stabilize, which require them to tighten their core IRs that promote solidarity. Given that the STM is in China for only a short time, there is a built-in mechanism for its conclusion so long as there is no social force strong enough to prematurely quash the mission.

6.8.1 Barriers of the STM vortex.

The vortex of the STM team entering into China intensifies the barriers to outside forces that preserve its internal integrity. I identify three interrelated forms of barriers: symbolic, physical, and social. The first, symbolic barrier is self-evident in Collins' (2004) definition of sacred symbols as delineating the memberships of the group; the STMers were highly religious individuals who chose to go because of their religious conviction (also see Durkheim, 1912). The second barrier, the physical barrier, is also obvious: Because STMers were travelling to a foreign country in East Asia they experienced isolation, which was in fact what they desired in order to be away from distractions. Both of these forms of barriers were explained in previous chapters.

In terms of the social barriers, the STMers were aware that they would be consigned to primarily mingling with each other. The youth were instructed to avoid giving out information that might jeopardize the mission and to keep their interactions to within the group or with their students, though this was not the case for the Taiwan mission. Even without this directive, social interactions with Chinese locals such as local clergy, missionaries, and teachers were limited because many of the youths did not speak fluent Mandarin and the locals did not speak much English.

China's "Great Firewall" also blocked internet connections to Western social media (i.e. Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter) and online gaming. This ban had a concrete effect in focusing the youths' interactions. For instance, I noted in my fieldnotes that the Taiwan STMers were able to get data plans for their smartphones for social media and online gaming during their brief moments of rest. In comparison, the STMers to China had to focus more on each other and their surroundings because the Great Firewall blocked off other options.

Overall, the STMs' symbolic, physical, and social barriers intensified the *social density* (i.e. how bounded people, are resulting in more frequent ritual interactions) and minimized the *social diversity* (i.e. the absence of non-CCEs) of its participants. It forced the focus of attention of team members onto one another. It increased the frequency of STM-related IRs. During people's rest time away from the STM, the environment occluded any potential distractions that would have been present in Canada. As noted in IRC theory (Collins, 2004), barriers (i.e. resulting in group assembly and bodily co-presence) and focus of attention are key ingredients to successful IRs, and the conditions in China enhanced these parameters. These two ingredients are also critical in promoting the other two ingredients, mutual focus and shared mood.

6.8.2 The intersubjectivity of the stabilizing vortex.

The intersubjective dynamics framed the situations that stabilized the STM vortex. The team leaders and adults are positioned at the center of the social organization, with veterans closer to the center and the rookie youth at the periphery (see previous chapters). In all the cases above, if the adversity involved the majority of the team, the team leaders or pastors would be

the ones to gather people to prayer and team meetings. Some adversities only involved adults or those closer to the center of the team.

Those at the center of the situations directed the focus and led the shared mood of the team, giving them the ability to shape the stabilizing IRs. As explained in the previous chapter, the adults have a vested interest in having the youths “experience God.” In team meetings, those at the center disseminated information about adversities and framed them in a manner conducive to their interests. Furthermore, because of their being in China, those at the periphery of the team relied on the interpretations of team leaders and adults because of linguistic or cultural barriers.⁸⁶ Praying is the act of opening one’s heart to the possibility of supernatural intervention (Collins, 2011; Durkheim, 1912; James, 1902; Joas, 2000), and those who were willing to pray became more easily influenced by those leading the prayers and team meetings. For example, Johnson gave an impromptu speech in the team meeting lecturing the youth on the theology of spiritual conflict, and William prayed for a bus to take the group to their destination as though the situation was a crisis situation despite it simply being a matter of making another booking. In both cases, prayer framed the situation according to the central team members’ priorities.

Given these conditions, all the central ingredients of IRC theory were present, and the aforementioned adversities *should* have pushed the STMers closer together to the stabilizing center of the vortex. With each adversity, the STMers focused on their mission, conducted earnest prayers, and held group meetings to circulate the importance of God’s providence, all actions that *should* increase the likelihood of achieving collective effervescence. However, as I explain below, there is variability in the output of collective effervescence.

6.9 The Types of Collective Effervescence in Adversity Situations

This section analyzes how various collective effervescence outcomes occur in the STMs’ adversity situations. Qualitatively, I relied on observing what Summers-Effler, Van Ness, and Hausmann (2015) called extra-deliberative processes—“emotional and perceptual dynamics.”⁸⁷ They argue that emotions can best be observed when the ethnographer is embedded in the interactional situation, and can rely on mirror neurons to feel and capture the emotional intensity of the moment. Iacoboni explains the neuroscience: “Without resorting to any magic trick, our brains are capable of accessing other minds using neural mechanisms of mirroring and simulation” (Iacoboni, 2008, p. 264). In each of the adversities above, I tried to understand the mood of the situation, often through my own involvement in the ethnography.

Based on my observations, I theorize that there are four ideal types of collective effervescence outcomes. Moments of collective effervescence depend on the intensity of the IRs, which is controlled by two key variables: the severity of the adversity and the number of IR participants involved. The nature of the adversity influences the severity of adversity and the amount of IR participants; however, the severity of adversity and the amount of IR participants also mutually affected one another. These factors operate together to determine the intensity of IR, which in turn results in various types of collective effervescences. In the following section, after discussing these variables, I present four ideal types of collective effervescence outcomes in the STM cases.

6.9.1 The severity of adversity variable.

Whether an adversity was perceived to be severe depended on the extent to which it threatened the mission and its members. The severity of adversity is a variable that can be affected by the nature of adversity and the number of IR participants. First, the more severe the adversity, the more intense the IRs the STMers responded with in their team meetings and group prayers. Second, the higher the number of IR participants, the more likely they could collectively ramp up the intensity of the IR.

Among the adversity cases examined, all spiritual and political adversities were severe. In comparison, only some logistical and health adversities were serious, while personal adversities were negligible. However, this is not to say that there could not be minor spiritual and political adversities or major logistical, health, and personal adversities. The bottom-line criterion for severity was the extent to which these adversities directly threatened the mission and its members.

Spiritual adversity served as the foundational worldview for all the other adversities. From the STMers' perspective, they were trying to bring the gospel into the devil's territory and were concerned about spiritual retaliation. In other words, while political, logistical, and health adversities were more tangible in their effects and presented actual obstacles to the mission, they were nonetheless framed as spiritual attacks. Severe adversities were more likely to bring about powerful IRs in intense team meetings, prayer sessions, and private conversations.

Comparatively, minor health adversities and personal adversities were not as likely to be brought to the team's collective attention. One reason was that they were almost expected. A person suffering from short bouts of diarrhea in China and rains during the monsoon season are expected parts of foreign travel. In addition, adversities that could bring shame upon the individual, such as Abigail's depression, Logan's tardiness, and Lucia's lack of confidence, were not elevated to the collective attention. Adversities that were perceived as less severe would bring about weaker IRs (i.e. less intense team meetings and prayers). Adversities that involved a lot of people might also be less severe (e.g. rainy weather).

6.9.2 The "number of interaction participants" variable.

The number of IR participants is a dependent variable also affected by the nature of the adversity and the severity of adversity. First, the nature of the adversity can affect the number of people immediately aware of the trouble. Second, the severity of adversity can also determine the number of people notified of the problem.

When the bus did not arrive for ECAC, all the team members were affected, and thus everyone prayed. In the case of Abigail's depression, the youth really did not need to know the details of her mental health, and her problem was mostly kept confidential among pertinent adults. In Lucia's case of low confidence and deferral to Linda, the two sorted it out in private discussions and prayer. Logan's tardiness resulted in him and Jackson having a private conversation and reconciliation. In short, the nature and severity of the adversity affected the number of people involved (e.g. team meetings vs. private conversations, group prayers vs. private prayers).

Fewer participants also meant there were fewer people to ramp up the emotional intensity of the interaction. Tavory and Eliasoph (2013) argue that group interactions in ambiguous situations create a coordinated orientation towards the future. Participants rely on

one another to generate consensus, relying on their mirror neurons to develop rhythmic entrainment (Collins, 2004; Iacoboni, 2011). In short, having fewer people meant having fewer participants to generate emotional momentum together.

6.9.3 The “intensity of the interaction ritual” outcome.

The combination of the variables of severity of adversity and number of IR participants resulted in various intensities of IR. If the adversities were severe, intense and emotionally charged IRs from team meetings and prayers would ensue out of desperation from the perceived threat. For example, when the government official came to observe FCAC’s English camp, Jackson immediately called a meeting to give out careful instructions and sort out the logistics of the camp. The mood of the room was austere and the prayers to God were sincere. Everyone was so focused on the goal of praying for God’s intercession that even the younger and soft-spoken members of the team gave a public prayer. Similarly, for Ashley’s constipation and my illness, the MCAC team and the local missionary surrounded and laid on their hands.

If the adversity’s severity was minimal, it would command less intensity in the team meetings and prayers. Weak adversities were mundane problems which the STMers could handle themselves. Sometimes they did not need to pray for God’s intervention, thus shutting the door to “experiencing God.” In other times, they gave perfunctory prayers with little emotional intensity. For example, an STM member did not have to notify others to resolve a simple diarrhea problem that could be resolved in the usual private manner.

6.9.4 The four ideal types of collective effervescence on STMs.

The two variables of severity of adversity and the number of IR participants lead us into the four ideal types of collective effervescence from STM IRs (see Figure 2). Low-severity adversities with few participants result in *minimal collective effervescence*; low-severity adversities with many participants are *front-stage collective effervescence*; high-severity adversities with few participants are *private collective effervescence*; and high-severity adversities with many participants are *public collective effervescence*. Each have their unique characteristics described below.

Figure 2: The Four Ideal Types of Collective Effervescence on STMs

Severity of Adversity	High	High intensity IR leading to Private Collective Effervescence	High intensity IR leading to Public Collective Effervescence
	Low	Low intensity IR leading to Minimal Collective Effervescence	Low intensity IR leading to Front-stage Collective Effervescence
		Fewer	More
		Number of IR participants	

Minimal collective effervescences are caused by minor adversities that do not require much IR intensity and involve few participants. They were mundane because they were not too different from the usual hurdles STMers faced in Canada. There was little need to pray and ask for God's intervention because the STMers could deal with the problems themselves. Examples of mundane challenges were the numerous bouts of diarrhea STMers had, Abigail's depression, and Michael and Barbara's eczema. These resulted in the low output or even absence of collective effervescence.

Front-stage collective effervescences were caused by minor adversities that did not require much IR intensity but involved many participants. I invoke the Goffmanian dramaturgical "front-stage" wording because the STMers maintained the façade of collective effervescence. These were instances where the adversity affected the whole team, but people knew it really was not a big deal. However, given that each incident was technically framed as an adversity from the CCE worldview (i.e. a challenge from the devil), STMers engaged in the rituals of public prayer. Because they know the problem was not severe, the intensity of the IR would be low or even perfunctory. Examples of these were praying for good weather, dealing with the camp cancellation, and the bus and hotel cancellations.

In what Collins (2004) calls "power rituals," the leaders of the team often initiate these rituals while the others follow. STMers reify the sacred symbols because failure to do so could result in one being exposed as an apostate. This results in the illusion of mass conformity and situations of pluralistic ignorance (see Coser, 1990; Rydgren, 2009). Forced rituals, despite involving many individuals, result in low output of collective effervescence. Predictably,

adversities from the minimal and front-stage collective effervescent ideal types rarely came up in follow-up interviews.

Private collective effervescences were caused by severe adversities that encouraged intense IRs but involved fewer participants. The adversity forced the STMers to turn to God. The key mechanism in this process was the group prayer, which, à propos of James' (1902) definition, was the act of submitting to the will of God. Similarly, Joas (2008) argues that to have self-transcendent experiences, one has to believe, and prayer is "the opening-up of oneself toward something higher—the experience of self-transcendence—into an activity" (p. 13).

However, certain characteristics of adversities limited the number of participants. For example, Logan's tardiness and Lucia's deferral to Linda involved elements of shame that prevented the involvement of others. As a result, fewer participants were involved in the private intense IRs. The result of this category is a high output of collective effervescence and social solidarity with fewer individuals.

Finally, *public collective effervescences* were caused by severe adversities that encouraged intense IRs and involved many participants. More people participating helped build the rhythmic entrainment to ramp up the emotional intensity. As a result, these types of IR were likely to result in an even higher output of emotional satisfaction than their private counterparts. Examples of this ideal type include ECAC's government crackdown and FCAC's government official visits—both notably involving political adversities. These events involved the embodied interaction of the STMers with a tangible threat from another person. Collins (2008, 2019) notes that IRs interacting with those outside of the group ramp up the intensity of conflict situations and trigger biological reactions (i.e. increased heart rate and skin conductance, dilated eyes, dizziness). Comparatively, visits to the temples would mostly involve imagined enemies stimulated by the environment's space (Brenneman & Miller, 2016) and smell (Cerulo, 2018). Public collective effervescence resulted in the highest output of collective effervescence for many individuals. Accounts of these events were also the most likely to be circulated and shared at church once the STMers returned to Canada.

These four categories function as a spectrum of ideal types for the collective effervescence outcomes of the adversity-based IRs on STMs. However, each person varies in the amount of emotional satisfaction they gain from these events. Collins' (2004) "power rituals" and "status rituals" ideal types explain this. When power rituals occur alone, those in power monopolize the interaction, and the followers derive minimal or even negative satisfaction from those interactions. Only when power rituals and status rituals overlap can participants gain a positive emotional experience. Since all STMers claim membership status given their high religiosity, they have the desire for collective effervescence, but they need the right situational conditions to achieve it. Therefore, where each STMer falls in the four categories in every interaction depends on a number of factors, such as one's distance from the adversity, the individual's previous chains of experiences, and their sense of power and membership.

Successful rituals generate collective effervescence, while failed ones create negative experiences, and these in turn affect the sense of social solidarity (Collins, 2004; Durkheim, 1912; Goffman, 1967, 1971). Given the conditions established above, while the outcome of each interaction may vary, the chances for negative outcomes (i.e. pessimism, depression) are

minimal. Indeed, in all the cases of STMers I observed, no one declared that they felt less religious or disappointed in God immediately after the STM.

6.10 Conclusion: The STM vortex, collective effervescence, and social solidarity

The conception of STMs as a vortex of social organization (Summers-Effler, 2007) is a dynamic theoretical framework that can help explain how a team fosters social solidarity when external social entities in unfamiliar social context exert pressure on the team. The STM teams interpreted their encounters in China as adversities because of the discourse of spiritual conflict (see Arnold, 1997; Smith, 1998). Given the priorities the adult leaders had for the youth (see previous chapter), they conducted team meetings and collective prayer to encourage moments of collective effervescence. Because the youth were highly religious individuals to begin with, they readily went along with these IRs.

For the team, these IRs provided a stabilizing force by directing their attention and developing a shared mood (i.e. of desperation, relief, gratitude), both essential ingredients of successful IRs (Collins, 2004). The isolation of the team in China increased the social density and decreased social diversity of the team, which prevented external distractions and focused the attention of the STMers toward one another and increased the likelihood of rhythmic entrainment (Collins, 2004; Draper, 2014; Durkheim, 1912; Hausmann, 2011; Summers-Effler, 2010). The team vortex reflexively expanded and contracted (e.g. how many people were involved), adapting its own rhythm (e.g. how frequently they met) and intensity (e.g. how intensely they prayed) based on the pressure external social entities impressed upon the group.⁸⁸

However, not all stabilizing IRs resulted equally in collective effervescence. Depending on the severity of the adversity and the number of IR participants involved, the STMers would vary in how they respond in IR intensity. Successful IRs that met the expectations of the STMers left a positive affective impression on the participants. Forced or failed IRs were of minimal consequence, as members would go to great lengths to ensure a successful interaction (Collins, 2004; Goffman, 1959, 1971).⁸⁹ In cases where equally valid but mundane explanations could explain certain adverse outcomes (e.g. the rainy weather, poor health), the STMers selectively elevated extraordinary explanations over mundane ones. Even if the STMers did not enjoy participating in the IRs or necessarily believe the extraordinary explanations, they only needed to put up with it for a week or two and would opt to do so instead of risking unconformity (Asch, 1956; Rydgren, 2009a).

The anticipated collapse of the STM vortex is also essential to the continued STM enterprise among CCEs. The creation and collapse of vortices are two sides of the same coin, as organizing processes can arrange elements of one into a different form (Summers-Effler, 2007, p. 438). Once the STM vortex dissolves at the end of the mission, it re-integrates itself back into the “home vortex,” bringing whatever rhythm and momentum (e.g. the adversity stories) it accumulated abroad back to its home congregation. Individual STMers then circulate extraordinary stories (as described in previous chapters) that energize the home CCE vortex to prepare for another STM the next year. This ongoing process continues to sustain the STM as a means of collective effervescence for social solidarity.

Chapter 7: Concluding Remarks

7.1 Summary of findings

This thesis aimed to contribute to both the sociology of emotions and the sociology of religion by studying the short-term mission enterprise among Chinese Canadian evangelicals. It also contributes to our understanding of communities by examining both mundane and powerful experiences. I drew theoretical insights from the Durkheimian lineage of interaction ritual chains (IRC) theory (Collins, 2004; Durkheim, 1912; Goffman, 1967) to explore the intersections of ethnicity, religion, and emotions.

My first empirical chapter answered the question “Why do missions exist?” and provided a bird’s-eye view of the transnational discourses motivating CCEs to collective missionary action. I found there were two discourses, with one revolving around mainstream evangelicalism and the other based on the pan-Chinese elect. However, the latter discourse is unstable, and this unity grounded on a religious pan-Chinese ethnicity is challenged by linguistic, geographic, generational, and ideological fractures with CCEs.

In my second empirical chapter, I examined how local CCE churches managed their congregation’s emotional focus on STMs. I found that the religious socialization of the youth began at a young age and that there were many avenues of influence through the official church programs. To sustainably manage the STM goals, churches operated cyclically in a predictable pattern, and the church members ensured they conformed to the church’s STM discourse. The narratives circulated in CCE churches framed the expectations of those who eventually went on the STMs.

My third empirical chapter investigated the motivations that drove CCE short-term missionaries to engage in STM action. I found that while the call to missions was officially framed in the spiritual conflict discourse, the STMers wanted to go for their own reasons. The parents also encouraged them to go for a variety of reasons not necessarily related to evangelism. I suggested “entangled chains” as a revision to Collins’ (2004) original conception. Given the emergence of recent findings in the cognitive sciences, I argued that the nature of the chains in IRC should be modified as entangled rather than discrete individual strands of emotional experiences. I argued that acknowledging emotional entanglement should drive the analytical discussion in our understanding of the ever-increasing complexity of the self in modernity.

My final empirical chapter examined how putative situations of spiritual adversity generated social solidarity on the STM. When the STM team vortex (Summers-Effler, 2007) enters China, it churns against the social forces of China. These frictions are framed as adversities by the team, triggering the stabilization and solidifying mechanisms of team meetings in tandem with group prayer. These conditions become what Collins (2004) calls the ingredients of interaction rituals, and the conflict situations enhance the potency of these ingredients in generating collective effervescence (Collins, 2004; Coser, 1956). I explained the differences in collective effervescence outcomes by using the variables of the severity of adversity and number of IR participants leading to varying outcomes of intensity of IR and four ideal types of collective effervescence.

The overall significance of the STM to the CCE organization is that the collective effervescence in the face of uncertainty in the STM snaps people out of their mundane lives and

inserts them into a special connection with time. According to Goffman (1967), situations of risk and uncertainty arouse actors to become acutely aware of the moment.

[The subject] must expose himself to time, to seconds and minutes ticking off outside his control; he must give himself up to the certain rapid resolution of an uncertain outcome. And he must give himself up to fate in this way when he could avoid it at reasonable cost. He must have “gamble” (p. 261).

In short, thrusting oneself into “where the action is” puts timelessness aside the Durkheimian collective effervescence that links into the STMers’ chain of experiences.⁹⁰

Following my elaboration of entangled chains, the adversities the STMers encountered in China are not only religious in nature, but also pertain to the myriad other emotions they felt. These include their understanding of China (e.g. unreliable transportation infrastructure, the feelings of awe and unease at the temple, the broader culture) and interactions with members of the team (e.g. successful or failed interactions) and the locals (e.g. students, hosts). These events entangle to form emotional impressions in the memories of people.⁹¹ All memories of the STM lose their clarity with the passage of time, and what remain are the overall emotional residues of the STM that are embedded into the brain’s long-term emotional faculties, crystallizing into emotional energy in the entangled chains of experiences (Collins, 2004; Summers-Effler, 2006).

7.2 Contributions to the sociology of emotion and sociology of religion

This study offers new contributions to the sociology of emotion and the sociology of religion. While there have been numerous studies of Asian congregations in America (e.g. Abel, 2008; Chen, 2008; Chen & Jeung, 2012; Jeung, 2005; Yang, 1999b) and Canada (e.g. Tse, 2013; Wong, 2015; Wong et al., 2018), this study is the only long-term qualitative and ethnographic study to focus on the transnational STM phenomena for the Chinese ethnic group. Similarly, while IRC theory has been widely applied in examining religion, such as various dimensions of worship (Draper, 2014; Heider & Warner, 2010; Inbody, 2015; Robbins, 2009; Wellman et al., 2014), non-governmental organizations (Summers-Effler, 2010), campus fellowships (Hausmann, 2011), friendship networks (Cheadle & Schwadel, 2012), strictness (Baker, 2010), conversion (Abel, 2006b, 2008), and building space and structure (Brenneman & Miller, 2016), this is the only long-term ethnographic study using IRC theory to study the missionary work of churches. This aspect of church activity is an important dimension of the institutions’ work given their emphasis in global evangelism (Howell, 2012; Priest, 2008; Priest et al., 2006; Priest & Howell, 2013). Furthermore, to my knowledge, this is the only ethnographic study to have applied IRC theory to the Chinese in a global and transnational frame (see Robbins, 2009).

By approaching the sociology of religion using a sociology of emotions framework, my findings can contribute to incumbent conversations in the sociology of religion. In recent years, the sociology of religion has been dominated by two paradigms: 1) secularization theory (e.g. Berger, 1967) and 2) rational choice theory (e.g. Finke & Stark, 2003). As explained previously, both fail to fully explain the current trends of religiosity; risking oversimplification, the former struggles to explain the resilience of religion (Berger, 2008) and the latter finds that people are just not that rational (Tversky & Kahneman, 1982).

Overwhelming evidence in the sociology of emotion has found that what motivates humans to action is emotional (Collins, 2004, p. 181-182; Franks, 2006, 2014; Turner, 2014) rather than rational calculations (see Iannaccone, 1990; Stark, 1996; Stark & Finke, 2000). Given the importance of emotions, it is imperative to examine the emotional products of religious institutions in an open religious market (Warner, 1993). As Summers-Effler (2006) argues, “rational choice theory is useful for understanding behavior as long as we understand both that EE is the common denominator that determines value and that maximizes patterns on the network level” (p. 142; also see Collins 2004). Motivation to partake in organized religion is no exception.

Therefore, I would argue that a key explanation for the resilience of religion in modernity is the carefully managed emotional product of organized religion. As I have demonstrated in this thesis, intense STM experience abroad is possibly the most accessible and powerful religious experience a layperson can have (Howell, 2012; Priest, 2008; Priest et al., 2006; Priest & Howell, 2013). The pacing of the STM enterprise at church, the framing of the STM as adversities, along with the social conditions which create these adverse experiences, coincide to consistently generate high levels of emotional intensity (i.e. collective effervescence). This in turn solidifies into social solidarity among the ritual participants (Collins, 2004; Durkheim, 1912; Goffman, 1967). These powerful emotional experiences on the STMs then generate narratives of “experiencing God.”

Sociologists of religion have recently emphasized the importance of how narratives create meaning and shape the identities for those who subscribe to a faith tradition (Ammerman, 1997, 2014; Collins, 2004). Christian narratives develop from stories of religious experiences, such as conversion (Manglos, 2010), healing (Singleton, 2001), testimonies (Nelson, 2005), and STMs (Howell, 2012). These narratives frame the expectations of ritual participation, becoming the center around which vortexes of social organization (Summers-Effler, 2007), or what Ammerman (2014) calls “spiritual tribes,” revolve. It is no surprise, then, that in recent years some sociologists have noted that organized religious institutions remain the best locations for the creation and maintenance of sacred consciousness (Ammerman, 2014; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). According to Collins (2004), this secondary circulation of narratives reifies group identity.⁹²

This thesis also provides a deeper understanding of IRC theory in communities. These communities do not necessarily have to be religious (e.g. vegans, neo-Nazis, fitness groups), as they have 1) their own constellation of sacred symbols that are intertwined with their mission (e.g. refraining from animal products, white supremacy, being healthy), 2) rituals that socialize their members, and 3) processes of negotiating membership identity. Studying the CCE’s STM enterprise contribute to our understanding of how other communities maintain their group solidarity through group rituals, especially when they are executing their mission.

As I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, the process by which people create narratives is complex. For members of immigrant congregations in particular, I join other scholars in arguing that our understanding of local religious communities must account for their transnational roots (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Levitt, 2007; Tseng, 2006; Wuthnow & Offutt, 2008) and recognize that “in the process of moving and settlement... migrants constantly [contest] religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy” (Vásquez & Dewind, 2014, p. 258; also see Hoon, 2015; Nagata, 2005; Tse, 2013; Tweed, 2005). Throughout the research, in connecting the

transnational religious movements (e.g. CCCOWE, Lausanne) to congregational and STM team structures, I found that the micro-level interpretation of these narratives can fracture and entangle, creating new meanings of emotional significance.

7.3 Recommendations for further study

There is much work left to be done towards developing a deeper understanding of the role of emotions in the social solidarity of communities in modernity, religious or otherwise. IRC theory has shown promise (Bellah, 2003, 2006; Weininger et al., 2019), but more empirical cases are needed (Bericat, 2015; Collins, 2004). Below, I discuss areas for further study.⁹³

One area for further study is the seemingly endless range of variables that keep emerging in a rapidly globalizing world. Altering the variables of those being researched, such as the type of community, ethnicity, countries involved, socioeconomic status, generational status (e.g. first-, second-, third-generation immigrant), and gender may yield different results that test and extend IRC theory. For example, much of the research applying IRC theory in the sociology of religion has examined the Christian tradition. How do Buddhist temples manage the emotional resources of their adherents? How would a pilgrimage to Mecca be different from a Christian STM? Would the experience of a first-generation immigrant be different from that of a third-generation immigrant? Would the mechanisms of social solidarity in IRC theory be different in a non-religious community (e.g. vegan, neo-Nazi, fitness communities)?

Another frontier of study is continuing to take a more organic view using a cross-cultural and global framework (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Jenkins, 2012; Levitt, 2007; Wuthnow, 2009). Charting out how IRC theory can be applied in a transnational frame would refine it as a tool for understanding social behavior at the global level. This is especially important as the lack of macrosociological cases has been identified as a weakness in IRC theory (Bericat, 2015). Transnational discourses become symbols from which people draw cultural scripts, and while some are seemingly innocuous (e.g. the pan-Chinese elect), others can be destabilizing (e.g. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL). For religious communities, how do different faith traditions manage the emotions of their believers? What are the characteristics of the transnational networks that sustain the global discourses driving these believers to action? For non-religious communities, how do people maintain their transnational communities?

Lastly, when viewing the world through a transnational frame, researchers can focus on the role of the modern Internet in managing emotions. The potential of the Internet should not be underestimated, as the transnational mobilizations described above already rely on it to coordinate and sustain themselves. I find persuasive the argument made by Collins (2019) that successful developments on the Internet will mimic the micro-interactions of individuals.

This power of the Internet will only continue to grow with new technology that changes how we experience reality, such as advances in virtual reality and augmented reality. For religious communities, online options already exist for religious gatherings (see Campbell & Delashmutt, 2014; Hutchings, 2017), and numerous questions can be asked about the nature of these organizations. To what extent could they generate collective effervescence? What would the religious socialization of online “church”-goers be like? For non-religious communities, how can online communities (e.g. vegans, white supremacists, fitness groups) leverage the Internet (e.g. social media, forums) to sustain their solidarity? Work in this area is just beginning, and

sociologists have already been applying IRC theory to studying online communities (DiMaggio, Bernier, Heckscher, & Mimno, 2018; Maloney, 2013; Seraj, 2012).

To conclude, I invoke Summers-Effler's (2006) imagery of interaction ritual chains as a time-lapsed photo:

We can imagine [interaction ritual chains] as though they are time-lapsed photographs that capture the patterns of light made by automobiles at night. From the perspective of a single street, we would see a single stream of light made from cars on this particular street, but from above, we would see a grid of light that would reflect the paths available for cars rather than any particular route. From an [interaction ritual chain] perspective, it is intuitive to focus on the larger pattern of interactions over an individual path. An individual at any given time appears as a crystallization of the larger pattern. (p. 146)

Durkheim's concern about diminishing social solidarity in modernity remains relevant. Pockets of conservative religious groups still exist, and they offer a competitive emotional product that allows their religious network to intermittently shine brilliantly. Nonetheless, constant illumination is unsustainable, and these congregations must routinely manage their limited emotional resources to ramp up for another moment of collective effervescence. Yet as the diversity of people increases under the conditions of modernity, so too do the possible symbolic pathways that individuals can traverse. New roads may intersect with the members of these congregations, and some may lead these members away from church. People's emotional investments become more complex as chains fracture and become further entangled. They may, on occasion, reminisce on the time their emotions shone brilliantly on a mission trip. Nonetheless, that will become the past, and people are left to decide for themselves where to go next based on their emotional chains.

Endnotes

¹ This definition of Christianity is inclusive of all types that practice STMs, such as Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.

² The big four of International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe, World Vision International, and Caritas International had a combined annual income of approximately \$2.5 billion in 2000.

³ No equivalent data exists for Canada.

⁴ Missiology is an eclectic subfield of practical theology that includes sociologists, anthropologists, religious practitioners, and other social scientists that studies the methods and purposes of Christian missions.

⁵ Similar findings have also been made in studying Chinese Canadian Christian youth by Wong, myself, and our colleagues (2018).

⁶ With some notable exceptions, e.g. Greeley, 1972; Martin, 1978.

⁷ Some have posited that secularization, in various forms, definitely occurred in Western Europe (Bruce, 1995, 1997; Lechner, 1991, 1996). However, others have debated that claim (Gorski, 2003; Kaufmann, Goujon, & Skirbekk, 2012; Stark, 1999).

⁸ The NSYR deploys a longitudinal nationally representative survey in four waves that is supplemented with in-depth interviews between 2002 to 2012. In the books published using NSYR's data, Smith delineates between youths (between 13 to 17 years old in Wave 1 and 16 to 20 in Wave 2) and emerging adults (between 18 to 23 in Wave 3 and 23 to 28 in Wave 4). He defines emerging adults as legal adults who for various reasons have still not attained the traditional markers of adulthood (e.g. getting married and having children, living separately from parents and owning property, finishing school and having a steady job/income) and this stage can technically continue up to one's mid-thirties. The emerging adult definition is discrete from young adults, which are legal adults who are young.

⁹ Other sociologists of religion have found similar trends of shrinking religious identification primarily with Catholic and Mainline Protestant within Canada, though there are ongoing debates about the degree of liberalization and secularization (Bibby, 1987, 1993; Brenner, 2016; Bruce, 2011; Eagle, 2011; Reimer, 2017; Wilkins-Laflamme, 2016) and whether there is a religious resurgence (Bibby, 2002, 2008, 2012; Thiessen, 2011, 2015; Thiessen & Dawson, 2008) or polarization (see Bibby, 2011; Reimer, 2017).

¹⁰ There are some minor differences, especially in terms of Québec and Catholics (see Eagle, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2013)

¹¹ In sociological parlance, 'ideal types' are constructions of abstract and hypothetical concepts which are designed to be tested empirically.

¹² Greeley noted that Warner's predication "has been spectacularly fulfilled" (Greeley, 1997, p. 451).

¹³ Notable works in America include Chen, 2008; Chen & Jeung, 2012; Chong, 1998; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Hirschman, 2004; Hurh & Kim, 1990; Jeung, 2005; R. Y. Kim, 2004; Min & Kim, 2005, 2000; J. Z. Park & Ecklund, 2007; Yang, 1998a; Yang & Ebaugh, 2001a, 2001b; Yang & Tamney, 2006; Zhou, 2009.

¹⁴ While most Asian immigrants arrived in America after 1965, a notable exception would be the Japanese Americans, whose presence in America may be up to their fourth or fifth generation.

¹⁵ The national discourse on ethnicity inevitably affects one's sense of identity. In Wong and my (2018) study of Chinese Canadians evangelicals found that the Canadian discourse of multiculturalism affected the sense of belongingness of the Chinese Canadian evangelical youth. For example, a number of youths cited a reason they grew disillusioned with Chinese Canadian churches was because they viewed the churches to being "un-Canadian" in its indifference or intolerance towards non-Chinese individual. Numerous studies have also highlighted the importance of the national discourse on ethnicity and its effect on religion (Chen, 2008; Chen & Jeung, 2012; Jeung, 2005; Yang, 1999).

¹⁶ Immigrant churches serve to preserve and reinforce the ethnic culture of immigrants. Within Canada, being an immigrant is highly correlated to increased religiosity (Clark, 2003; Clark & Schellenberg, 2006; Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015; Wilkins-Laflamme, 2016). Immigrant church services and other community functions are held in the native language. Yang and Ebaugh (2001a) argue that Chinese immigrant churches, since they are now living in a majority Christian country, would choose to foreground their ethnicity and a Chinese immigrant becoming a

Christian becomes an uniquely American experience (Wang & Yang, 2006; Yang, 1999). This creates an environment which they call “the Sinicization of Christianity” (Yang, 2000), in which Chinese immigrant churches would emphasize both ethnicity and religion as opposed to exclusively religion. The transnational origins of North American Chinese churches contribute to their distinctively Sinicized Christian theology (Hoon, 2015; Levitt, 2007; Nagata, 2005; Nyiri, 2003; Tam, 2018; Tseng, 1996, 2003, 2006; Yang, 2002). As a result, Chinese churches become an attractive social option for first-generation new immigrants and is especially the case for Chinese evangelical congregations, which prioritize proselytization to co-ethnics. Yang found Chinese churches would use their religious identity to serve as the symbolic filter to understanding and retaining their Chinese, American/Canadian, and Christian identities (Yang, 1998a, 1999, 2000).

¹⁷ Some sociologists of religion have noted the ethnocultural characteristic of Confucianism patriarchy can intertwine with the Christian theology. This is not surprising given both Christianity, especially American fundamentalism (Ammerman, 1987; M. O. Emerson & Hartman, 2006; Shupe, 2009), and Confucianism reinforces these traditional gender norms. This is especially evident in the Korean cases (Chong, 1998; A. R. Kim, 1996; J. H. Kim, 1996; R. Y. Kim, 2004; Pak, Lee, Kim, & Cho, 2005), though similar observations had been made for Chinese congregations (Yang, 2004). More recently, a dynamic view had been adopted where Asian American Christian women take on positions of authority as teachers to teach the traditional values that reproduce their gender subordination (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 1999). Similarly, Kim has found that Korean American Christians are aware of their subordination but their personal theology counters the patriarchal discourse (J. H. Kim, 1996). Chen also found Taiwanese immigrant women were able to use Buddhist and Christian teachings to spiritualize gendered status or provide a theological defense for their independence (Chen, 2008). The discourse on gender is a critical way for the second generation to distinguish themselves from the first generation. Yang (2004) observed that while the second generation Chinese reaffirms the gender roles of the previous generation, they justify it using white evangelical theology rather than their predecessor’s Confucian patriarchal norms. This was found in Alumkal’s (1999) study of Korean American churches. Soyoung Park (2001) also found her cases of second-generation Korean American Christians to use their religious identities to separate themselves from secular Korean women. However, while they have the means to achieve greater equality than their parents’ generation, their religious identity constrains them from siding with secular feminist movements which are deemed as un-Christian. All these Asian American cases demonstrate the interconnected nature of Christianity, ethnicity, and gender.

¹⁸ Asian American Christianity is deeply intertwined with social class. This is not surprising, given that most of the current congregations are immigrants or descendants of immigrants since the 1960s. The immigration filter inevitably selects those who are of middle or upper class to enter stable and affluent destination countries like Canada and America (Reitz, 2012). For example, many ethnic Chinese immigrants since 1967 entered Canada came via highly skilled (i.e. highly educated) or investment (i.e. wealthy) migration programs (Li, 1998, 2005). In addition, their settlement patterns in Canada is based on neighborhoods with co-ethnic immigrants (Fong, 1997), similar socioeconomic status (Fong & Shibuya, 2000), and those that share the same faith (Fong & Chan, 2011). Given churches are neighborhood-based in the people it services, the discourse of theology and socioeconomic status would naturally be intertwined. For example, Wong and Tam’s (2018) study of Chinese Canadian evangelicals found that the experience of youth and young adults in the upper-middle class Chinese “ethnoburb” to be markedly different from those in working class neighborhoods. The salience of socioeconomic status’ intersection with Christianity becomes apparent in studies of pan-ethnic and multi-racial Asian churches in America. In Jeung’s (2002) study of 50 pan-ethnic Asian American churches in the Bay Area, he found that these churches defined “Asian American” differently based on orientations towards class and status. Second-generation Asian American evangelicals are oriented towards middle- and upper- class values and the critical mass allowing the formation of pan-Asian churches helps them maintain their class lifestyle. On the other hand, Mainline Asian American pan-ethnic Protestants identify with working and lower classes and vulnerable social groups with their social justice orientation towards histories of oppression (Jeung, 2003, 2005).

¹⁹ For example, Louie’s (2004) ethnography of Chinese youth found there to be complex processes of identity negotiation upon one’s return to conduct “roots-searching” in their ethnic homeland. Her study’s youth expressed instances of realization about both their lack of “American-ness” and lack of “Chineseness” (also see Kibria, 2000, 2002; Levitt & Waters, 2002).

²⁰ This study is an entirely separate project from this thesis. It was conducted in 2013 at the University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of Emily Hannum.

²¹ Yoon Jung Lee (2011) has also studied Korean STMs, though from the perspective of sociology of tourism.

²² Abel (2006a, 2008) was the first to study Chinese conversions using IRC theory.

²³ Robbins (2009) applied IRC theory to explain the globalized growth of Pentecostal Christianity using ethnographic data from his book *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society* (2004).

²⁴ I could not find any research on vegan infants, but there were articles on vegan diet for infants (Mangels, 2001), children (Messina, 2001; Sanders & Manning, 1992), and mention of vegan families (Cherry, 2015; Larsson et al., 2003).

²⁵ Collins built on Goffman and Durkheim's definition of rituals/rites. Goffman defined rituals as the "activity, however informal and secular, represents a way in which the individual must guard and design the symbolic implications of his acts while in the immediate presence of an object that has special value for him" (Goffman, 1956, p. 57). Similarly, Durkheim argues "[R]ites are the rules of conduct which prescribe how a man should comport himself in the presence of these sacred objects." (Durkheim, 1912, p. 56). Both Durkheim and Goffman's assumption that sacred objects exist means that rituals to charge them emotionally have been practiced previously – they are links preceded by an antecedent 'chain' of rituals.

²⁶ This ingredient has been contested by Heider and Warner (2010) arguing that given ritual solidarity does not require unanimity of individual feelings, Collins should return to Durkheim's (1912) original "collective consciousness."

²⁷ Others have made observations of these intensive emotions. For example, Joas (2008) has called 'self-transcendence experiences' as "being pulled beyond the boundaries of one's self, being captivated by something outside of myself, a relaxation of or liberation from one's fixation on oneself" (p. 7). Maslow (1998) has called these 'peak experiences', where "moments were of pure, positive happiness when all doubts, all fears, all inhibitions, all tensions, all weaknesses, were left behind. Now self consciousness was lost. All separateness and distance from the world disappeared as they felt *one* with the world, fused with it, really belonging in it and to it, instead of being outside looking in" (p. 9) Both of them noted the transient nature of the high and the long-lasting after-effects.

²⁸ While Collins was advancing the importance of rhythmic entrainment to achieving collective effervescence, other fields were making progress in understanding how these high emotional states are achieved as well. Neurobiologist Freeman (2001, p. 422) explains,

I conclude that music and dance originated through biological evolution of brain chemistry, which interacted with the cultural evolution of behavior. This led to the development of chemical and behavioral technology for inducing altered states of consciousness. The role of trance states was particularly important for breaking down preexisting habits and beliefs. That meltdown appears to be necessary for personality changes leading to the formation of social groups by cooperative action leading to trust. Bonding is not simply a release of a neurochemical in an altered state. It is the social action of dancing and singing together that induces new forms of behavior, owing to the malleability that can come through the altered state. It is reasonable to suppose that musical skills played a major role early in the evolution of human intellect, because they made possible formation of human societies as a prerequisite for the transmission of acquired knowledge across generations.

In other words, the ability to attain collective effervescence to enter trancelike altered states of consciousness was an important step in the neurological development of human evolution.

For example, using Radcliffe-Brown's (1922) classic example of Andaman Islanders, if the dominant emotion in dance ritual was exuberance, it operates as a contagion via the mechanisms of the mirror neurons in the brain (Iacoboni, 2011), which I will elaborate upon further below. In a successful dance ritual, the excitement would spread, synchronize, and intensify for all its participants as a form of collective effervescence, and that EE

would resonate into the near future (e.g. the next few days). The experience of a previous dance (i.e. the previous link in the IR chain) would inform the expectations for future dances. An individual who has never been in a dance before would not recognize its symbols, resulting in a 'symbol mismatch.' Therefore, norms of behaviours and practices can be acquired through shared symbolic experiences.

²⁹ Order-givers can also be conceptualized as what Kruglanski (1989) calls "epistemic authorities" that occupy the centerstage of rituals. These epistemic authorities become especially powerful in enforcing conformity when encountering black-box situations (Boudon, 1989); that is, uncertain situations where their standard cognitive strategies cannot handle.

³⁰ Summers-Effler (2004), a student of Collins', expanded on the theory that those who are trapped in weaker positions take measures to minimize EE loss instead of maximizing EE gain by using the example of women caught in abusive relationships. Ironically, in her example, the success of minimizing EE loss reinforces the women to repeating that practice rather than getting out of the toxic relationship.

³¹ A similar principle is reflected in Lave & Wenger's (1991) idea of 'communities of practice'.

³² This theory of EE stratification is clearly an ideal type, as evidenced by cases throughout history where stratification cycles have broken down and energizing situations have become fragmented (e.g. revolutions). In other words, the mechanisms that generate EE are volatile, and the conflict that social solidarity generates may lead to their fragmentation (Collins, 1974).

³³ This is the same mechanism for people expressing moral outrage and resort to shaming or even violence when social or moral norms are violated (Elster, 2009b).

³⁴ For example, in the months after the events of 9/11, American social solidarity was initially charged in the emblems of American flags, New York City emblems, and firefighters. Afterwards, these symbols were repeatedly circulated in large-scale gatherings (e.g. concerts, sporting events) that charge them with emotion, motivating further gatherings. What resulted was an echo chamber of emotionally charged symbols that continue to reverberate until the rituals were no longer practiced. Finally, whether individuals continued to maintain the symbol at an individual level (e.g. via meditating, reading, practicing, thinking) is up to them. At the third individual level, symbols take the form of nouns as "moving blocks" to organize thoughts (Collins, 2004, 197).

³⁵ One of the main criticisms of IRC theory is that it is overly deterministic, leaving no room for individual agency to exercise itself. However, this is a misreading of the theory. Individuals with their agency can choose a variety of actions which can be accounted for in the IRC theory if we consider status and power rituals as parameters on an x-y grid (Kemper, 2011; Kemper & Collins, 1990).

If status rituals act as a parameter on the X axis and is measured in terms of social popularity, where an individual is placed on this axis depends on four variables. First, how central are they to the rituals? Second, how intense are the rituals? Third, what is the *social density* of the rituals (i.e. how bounded are the rituals). Fourth, at the meso-level, how often does the individual repeat their participation in the chain of activities (i.e. IR repetitiveness). If an individual is high on this axis, they are in the modal personality of high Durkheimian mechanical solidarity; with the characteristics of being "conforming, traditionalistic,... gossipy and localistic, warm towards familiar persons, suspicious of outsiders, [and] vengeful toward violators" (Collins, 2004, p. 348). On the other end of the continuum is low mechanical solidarity; and the modal characteristics are "unconforming, relativistic, thinks and talks in abstractions, is cool in social commitments, tolerant of differences, [and] lax on violators" (Collins, 2004, p. 348).

Power rituals are situated on the Y axis and is measured in terms of order-givers and order-takers. Order-givers take on front-stage personalities and enforce the group norms and symbols. On the opposite pole of this continuum are order-takers who take on back-stage personalities by identifying against the frontstage show that controls them but have no choice other than to conform or defer to the order-givers. In between the poles are egalitarian situations (i.e. those who do not give or take orders) and first-line supervisors (i.e. those who are in the chain of command who take orders from above and give them below).

When conceptualizing status and power rituals in this manner, given that these are measured on a continuum, it is entirely possible to further cutting the X and Y axes into as fine of detail as necessary. Furthermore, given that status and power rituals are determined by a number of variables (e.g. ritual location, ritual intensity, social density, ritual repetitiveness, power, individual idiosyncrasies), there can be further

subdimensions added into the measurement. Thus, theoretically speaking, IRC theory can account for each individual human being as a distinct individual. In concluding this point on the self, Collins echoes Goffman (Goffman, 1959, 1967) that in the situational front of presentation, “individuality does not controvert a deeply penetrating, omni-explaining sociological theory; on the contrary, it follows from it” (2004, p. 351).

Collins did not place as much emphasis upon the self as his student Summers-Effler, who borrows from symbolic interactionism. She argues that the verification of the self is critical in the arousal of positive or negative EE (Summers-Effler, 2004, 2010). People are more likely to commit to group symbols when the self is affirmed. When the self is not easily affirmed, it is difficult to accrue positive EE and may result in negative EE.

³⁶ Hochschild (1983, pp. 118-119) calls this process the “transmutation” of an emotional system.

³⁷ Some have supported Collins’ grand claim of ritual’s central position in everyday interaction. Most notably, Bellah drew from an impressive array of scholars across disciplines who came to the same conclusion that rituals are “humanity’s basic social act” (Bellah, 2003, p. 44). Sociologist Turner (2000, 2014) maintains that natural selection pressures forced hominids to rewire the brain to become socially organized through emotions. Similarly, biological anthropologist and neuroscientist Terrence Deacon came to the conclusion that the ability to enact rituals that gave rise to complete social systems is what separated the first hominids from their fellow primates (Deacon, 1997). However, these first rituals may not have been what we recognize as speech today (Nichols, 1998). Ethnomusicologists have argued that the human brain’s evolution developed in tandem with music, resulting in what Brown (2001) calls “musilanguage,” a form of embodied communication that was both proto-language and proto-music, as the central building blocks of social solidarity (Dissanayake, 2001; Freeman, 2001; Nettl, 2001).

Essential to this physical embodiment of ritual solidarity are various rhythmically-based behaviors (Richman, 2001) such as dancing (Durkheim, 1912; Mauss, 1973; McNeill, 1995), marching (McNeill, 1995), and singing or chanting (Anderson, 1991; Heider & Warner, 2010; McNeill, 1995; S. R. Warner, 2008). According to anthropologist Roy Rappaport (1999), the ability to respond to the embodied rituals is essential, and the convention of ritual evolved as a commitment to “the social contract and the morality that inhere in it” (p. 107) that bear moral consequences (Asad, 1993). These moral consequences can be found in our everyday interactions such as gesturing (Goffman, 1967) and eating (Visser, 1992). Therefore, there is a large and growing body of evidence that support rituals are “central for the understanding not only of religion but of society” (Bellah, 2006, 150, also see Goffman, 1967; Kertzer, 1988; Mellor & Shilling, 1997; Rappaport, 1999; Rawls, 1996; Shilling, 2006)

³⁸ Innovative applications in the last few decades of the ever-improving instruments available to scientists (e.g. fMRI [functional magnetic resonance imaging]) allow for better active monitoring of brain activity. A main finding in recent years has been that in all normal situations, emotions are “inseparably intertwined with cognition” (Franks, 2006, p. 39) given unconscious emotional processes underlie the brain’s cognitive faculties (Carter & Smith Pasqualini, 2004; Damasio, 1994). Two reasons undergird this. First, the neuronal networks in the older and emotional regulating centers of the brain are much denser and exhibit more control over the cognitive centers (Franks, 2014). As a result of this disproportion, self-conscious regulation of emotions is mostly unsuccessful. Second, our brains exhibit emotional preferences to things to which it is familiar with rather than things it has no emotional experience over (LeDoux, 1996). Therefore, emotions are what compels people to action and LeDoux (2000, p. 225) summarizes its evolutionary function: “Emotional arousal has powerful influences over cognitive processing. Attention, perception, memory, decision-making and the conscious concomitants of each are all swayed in emotional states. The reason for this is simple: emotional arousal organizes and coordinates brain activity.”

Hopper (2018) outlines the mechanism of how emotions affect memory in its *encoding*, *storage* and *retrieval* processes. During the encoding stage (N. Cohen et al., 2015), the brain focuses on what is emotionally significant and encodes the central details (Levine & Edelstein, 2009). Emotionally insignificant events and its peripheral details are often poorly encoded or remain unencoded.

The brain then processes memories to be *stored*, with the central details being better stored than the peripheral, which would mostly fade if not accessed shortly within a day (Antony, Ferreira, Norman, & Wimber, 2017). Memories are organized and sorted in sleep (Payne & Kensinger, 2018) with the priorities placed upon central details (Bennion, Steinmetz, Kensinger, & Payne, 2015), which is why they are often fragmented and

incomplete. The emotional content also matters, with evolution selecting negative emotional experiences being better stored to support survival (Kensinger, 2009). The strength of our memories also indicate their emotional significance, as arousing experiences creating lasting memories (McGaugh, 2015), with stressful experiences increasing the brain's capacity to store central details (Clewett, Huang, Velasco, Lee, & Mather, 2018).

Memories that are stored can then be *retrieved*. Previously detailed memories become increasingly abstract over time (Robin & Moscovitch, 2017). Peripheral and weaker central details of emotional experiences can also fade, but the central details, the gist of it, largely remain (Van Damme & Smets, 2014). In other words, the encoding, storage, and retrieval of our memories are inextricably intertwined with emotion.

Unconscious emotions and cognition also operate independently (Franks, 2006, 2014; Franks & Turner, 2013; Jacoby, Yonelinas, & Jennings, 1997; Öhman, 1999). Some estimate unconscious processes occupy up to 95 percent of our brain's activity (Gazzaniga, 1998; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Given the majority of our emotional processes are unconscious, sociological study strictly on "lived experiences" becomes questionable (Franks, 2006) since emotion are not mere words (Jack Katz, 1999). Further research on unconscious processes is necessary, and Summers-Effler and her colleagues (2015) make recommendations on how to tap into these 'extradeliberative processes' through mirror neurons.

³⁹ The visual and auditory perceptions activated during interaction rituals or individual experiences trigger somatosensations (i.e. a complex network of sensory neurons and pathways in the sensory system that responds to changes inside the body or on its surface) that allow the mirror neurons to "simulate" what is going on; it then copies the emotion into the motor cortex (Keysers, Kaas, & Gazzola, 2010).

⁴⁰ These experiences also include previously heard narratives, and those narratives become the shared discourses that shapes the habitus of a social scene (Bourdieu, 1977). However, given these narratives are not from direct embodied experiences, these are stored in the cognitive centers in the neocortex and not as loaded with emotion (Kahneman, 2011).

⁴¹ Akin to the cultural turn many disciplines underwent in the 1970s.

⁴² This priming forms the preconceptions and expectations of the mission field (Abelson, 1976; R. Brown, 1995).

⁴³ Following the "resonance" logic, they also recommend writing ethnography with an emphasis on introspective emotion, using evocative stories to trigger the reader's mirror neurons. The resonance approach also fosters Lofland (1995, p. 30) and Vaughn's (2009) vision of the analytic ethnography approach towards a "general theory."

⁴⁴ The category of emerging adults came about given the demands of modernity preventing emerging adults from quickly entering the 'adult' phase after finishing their secondary or higher education. Instead, emerging adults spend a significant portion of their 20s working through issues such as dating and marriage (e.g. starting a family), finding a vocation (e.g. attending graduate or trade school), saving up money (e.g. staying with one's parents or other arrangements), and soul-searching (e.g. global tourism).

⁴⁵ The interviews were not guided by IRC theory in its design because IRC theory became part of the study during the analysis.

⁴⁶ Small (2009) acknowledges that this approach has many similarities to Glaser and Strauss' (1967) definition of 'theoretical sampling' (p. 59) and Jack Katz's (2001) 'analytic induction'.

⁴⁷ As explained previously, these three rules were observed by gathering data via subjective self-reporting and objective observations.

⁴⁸ This network of symbols becomes a resilient system that constitutes a "central belief" system (Rokeach, 1973).

⁴⁹ A version of this paper has been published in at 2018 issue of *Global Networks* under the title *Renegotiating religious transnationalism: Fractures in transnational Chinese evangelicalism*. It has been revised to fit this thesis.

⁵⁰ Some notable exceptions that focus on Chinese Christian transnationalism include Chan, 2008; Guest, 2002; Tam & Hasmath, 2015; Nagata, 2005; Nyíri, 2003; Tse, 2013; Tseng, 2003, 2006; Yang, 2002; Yang & Ebaugh, 2001.

⁵¹ Most of the literature on the sociology of religion from America is generally applicable to Canada (Reimer, 2003).

⁵² A reason for my interest on this topic is my personal experience growing up as a CCE. Being completely fluent in both Chinese and English and understanding both perspectives, I'm curious how English-speaking CCEs will view this NTRO arrangement.

⁵³ Some disagree with this position of 'church strictness' (see Marwell, 1996).

⁵⁴ Countries located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator, also known as the ‘resistance belt.’ It is a prime target for evangelism with nearly five billion people living in this window.

⁵⁵ The term denomination is used to separate different types of Protestants. For example, the Baptist and Anglican are both Christian, but their denomination prioritizes different aspects of the faith.

⁵⁶ The “elect” means the chosen people of God and is a common idea in the Bible (see Deuteronomy and Isaiah 40-66).

⁵⁷ Some may recognize this to share similarities with the ‘Back to Jerusalem’ movement popular in China in the early 20th century. Further empirical evidence is necessary to confirm an intellectual genealogy. CCCOWE’s Chinese elect position also resonates with a growing body of literature on ‘Chinese exceptionalism’ in the social sciences, though that is a discussion for another time.

⁵⁸ It is worthwhile to note that there were likely participants from Mainland China who were at CCCOWE but the congress did not publicize this data for their protection.

⁵⁹ In Canada, one needs to have completed a Master of Divinity to begin a Doctor of Ministry degree in addition to three years of experience at a church, a parachurch organization, or in the mission field.

⁶⁰ Also see ‘indigenization’ in Wuthnow (2009: 52-53).

⁶¹ In Bourdieusian terms, these transnational evangelical scenes frame the *doxa* “by which the natural and social world are self-evident” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164) in the *habitus* of Chinese-Canadian evangelicals.

⁶² There have been some serious criticisms towards what Adeney (1996) calls the “McMissions”; that is, the amateurization of missions by sending inexperienced STMers with no expertise (also see Plake, 2013; Priest, 2008).

⁶³ There was nothing in his interviews to suggest that he questions whether STMs are transformational or there is anything wrong with genuine testimonies; his main problem was with hypocrites. This perspective of valuing being authentic to one’s faith has been found in Wong et al.’s (2018) research.

⁶⁴ While this may appear to be a leading question, we actually had these types of conversations during our time on the STM when we discussed the International Baccalaureate education from a neo-colonial perspective.

⁶⁵ The aforementioned ‘Chinese elect’ is an ethnically-based spinoff of ‘divine election’.

⁶⁶ Salt and light refer to Matthew 5:13-16, “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

⁶⁷ The youth were trained to tell the story of Christ through by threading several colored beads. The first bead is black, representing being lost in sin (Romans 3:23). The second bead is red, symbolizing Jesus’ paying the price of sin through death (Romans 5:8). The third bead is blue which represents baptism and repentance (Romans 6:42). The fourth bead is white, representing the Christian rebirth in Jesus (Psalms 51:7). The green bead is fifth, which symbolizes growth by reading the Bible and striving to be like Jesus (2 Peter 3:18). The last bead is yellow, which represents one will remain faithful until meeting God in heaven and receiving the Crown of Life (Revelations 2:10).

⁶⁸ This is what Goffman (1967) calls a “line,” which are the performative strategies in “face work” that are essential to successful interactions.

⁶⁹ Sociologists of religion have found narratives to be an essential part of maintaining the sacred consciousness in congregations (Ammerman, 1997, 2014). Christian narratives develop from stories of religious experiences, such as conversion (Manglos, 2010), healing (Singleton, 2001), testimonies (Nelson, 2005), and as we see here, STMs (Howell, 2012). These narratives crystallize into symbols of the community (Collins, 2004). As we shall see in the later chapters, these narratives become the expectations of the youth, thus ‘priming’ them (Abelson, 1976; R. Brown, 1995) towards certain cultural scripts in what Howell (2009) calls a “missionary gaze” (a variation to Urry’s (1992) “tourist gaze”) which serves to “homogenize locality” (p. 206).

⁷⁰ In addition to Durkheim’s work, Mary Douglas’ research on the maintenance of purity demonstrates how groups actively manage their sacred symbols through the framing of experience. She argues,

For us, individually, everyday symbolic enactment does several things. It provides a focusing mechanism, a method of mnemonics and a control for experience. To deal with focusing first,

a ritual provides a frame. The marked off time or place alerts a special kind of expectancy, just as the oft-repeated “Once upon a time” creates a mood receptive to fantastic tales. We can reflect upon this framing function in small personal instances, for the least action is capable of carrying significance. Framing and boxing limit experience, shut in desired themes or shut out intruding ones. (Douglas, 1966, pp. 62-63)

The framing of experiences primes individuals to trigger associative pathways in the brain that activates familiar cultural scripts (Abelson, 1976; R. Brown, 1995; Cerulo & Ruane, 2014). It is what Bourdieu treats as part of the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984; Ignatow, 2009). Indeed, the maintenance of an organization’s social and moral order depends on the everyday management of the sacred symbols.

⁷¹ Expectations situated actors at an entry point of the sequence of STM activities in what phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1962) called the “point-horizon structure,” where all following sequences of the story are grasped from that perspective, and the expectations become the belief system for embodied action (Ignatow, 2007, 2009; Strand & Lizardo, 2015).

⁷² The reasons that interviewees gave for participating were more *metaconscious* than *conscious*; but they were not *unconscious* given these actors could easily justify their beliefs (Boudon, 2012, p. 13), revealing how they had been socialized.

⁷³ Hong Kong’s legislature is considering changing the law so that those deemed to have broken Chinese law that are in Hong Kong can be extradited to China. This will be a major deterrent on future STM participation. As of this thesis’ writing, Hong Kong’s extradition laws have not changed.

⁷⁴ The application of the term ‘sacred time’ is especially befitting considering it can mean many things. Most obviously, it echoes what Durkheim’s (1912) critical distinction between profane time and sacred time, the latter which is reserved for rituals of collective effervescence. Furthermore, Durkheim defines religions as created by rituals: “A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them” (1912, p. 46). ‘Sacred time’ also resonates with Howell’s (2012) use of Turner and Turner’s (1973) ‘liminality.’ Howell describes STMs as a period of ambiguity and disorientation where one’s values are in flux and are left to settle wherever they may. In his 2000 Association for the Sociology of Religion presidential address, Casanova (2001) also explained what ‘sacred time’ could mean from the perspective of Christian believers, “... only the Father knows the hour and the day and despite all numerology, it may be futile to try to curtail God’s freedom by tying the divine eschatological plans to our own secular calendars and human deadlines. Sacred time and secular time are related, for sacred time can only happen within worldly time. But the relationship is not objective or automatic, and therefore believers are compelled to search for God’s signs in worldly events, with or without the help of prophetic revelations” (p. 415-6).

⁷⁵ Since the 1997 handover, the reintegration of Hong Kong into China has had many ups and downs. Hong Kong people constantly complain over social media about how the Mainland Chinese disrupted their lives. For example, in the 2008 Chinese milk scandal where there was a major food safety concern for powdered milk, many Mainland Chinese went to Hong Kong to buy the foreign brands that Hong Kong locals rely on. As a result, the prices inflated to ridiculous prices and some locals even struggled to procure milk for their children. In addition, stories of public defecation by Mainland tourists in Hong Kong constantly make the rounds on social media. Most recently, the Umbrella Movement in 2014 could be argued as a protest against Mainland encroachment upon Hong Kong’s rights.

⁷⁶ To be clear, this is sampling on the dependent variable since only China STMs were studied; though the lack of other STM destinations is also telling. I fully acknowledge that interviewing CCEs who went to another STM destination would shed further insights.

⁷⁷ As many scholars of the relationship of fundamentalism and science point out, most members of conservative faiths are selective in what they choose from science to match with their faith (Almond et al., 2003, 1995; Ammerman, 1987).

⁷⁸ This resonates with what Goffman (1967) said about eventful experiences: that uncertain and risky situations binds the actor into a special relationship with that period of time making it eventful.

⁷⁹ These findings for youths corroborate previous sociological studies that STMers tend to be highly religious individuals to begin with (see Trinitapoli & Vaisey, 2009).

⁸⁰ The expectations for rookie and veterans resonated with Hausmann's (2011) research on extraordinary experiences in a college religious retreat and paranormal investigators. Specifically, his version of rookies and veterans demonstrated similar proclivities in terms of managing their expectations. Furthermore, the annual cycles of looking for new paranormal sites to investigate (cf. looking for new China STM sites to visit) and recruiting more members (cf. recruiting new STM members) resulting in the necessity for increased social organization and a deeper sense of organization history.

⁸¹ The entangled chains imagery resonates with contemporary neuroscientific research. LeDoux warned that while terms like emotion, cognition, perception, and memory are necessary for analytical purposes, they do not have clear boundaries nor dedicated regions in the brain. "The various classes of emotions are mediated by separate neural systems that have evolved for different reasons. There is no such thing as the emotional faculty and there is no single brain system dedicated to this phantom function" (LeDoux 1996, p. 16). For example, fMRI scans have revealed that when sensory input is received, the amygdala is tasked with instinctual overriding of information while the neighboring thalamus gives the quickest and most direct input to emotional reactions before the information is sent to the neocortex regions to be processed logically and then sent back for reconsideration, resulting in a feedback loop (LeDoux, 2000). In other words, the neural networks are intricate and multiple regions become active when facing decisions. This also explains why the classification of emotions is so difficult, resulting in untenable categories like mixed emotions (e.g. being simultaneously happy and envious of a friend's success) or secondary emotions (e.g. variations of primary emotions such as fear) (Franks, 2014; Thamm, 2006). The plasticity of the brain that allows different parts to evolve to execute different functions also make it difficult to separate emotion from cognition (Franks, 2014). In short, multiple parts of the brain that store emotional memories are involved with decision-making.

Some scholars in cultural sociology, capitalizing upon the advancements in neuroscience, have made similar observations in applying neuroscientific findings to their social science. Ignatow (2007) outlined how modern neuroscience has made untenable the amodal approach (i.e. knowledge and sensations function independently) and proposed using Bourdieu's *habitus* concept as embodied cognitive structures linking individuals to primary-group discourses (also see Lizardo, 2007). Strand and Lizardo (2015) take it further by advancing the argument that belief is an embodied action; that is, the body and emotions that guide beliefs are inextricably linked. In fact, they argue that Bourdieu in the later stages in life distanced himself from his earlier works by replacing his concept of *habitus* with belief as embodied action (Bourdieu, 2000; also see Lizardo, 2004). They state,

In his last statement on the notion of habitus, far removed from the influence of the postwar Parisian intellectual field, Bourdieu (2000, 210) pares it down almost entirely to refer to "that presence of the past in the present which makes possible the presence in the present of the forthcoming." In certain essential respects, belief (in its nearly analogous effect on action) replaces the role of habitus in Bourdieu's later work. (Strand & Lizardo, 2015, p. 67)

From this perspective, Bourdieu's application of habitus becomes the chains of entangled cognition and emotions that are carried from one experience to the next.

⁸² This follows Collins and Durkheim's original conceptualization of collective effervescence.

⁸³ Berger's (1967) application of the term *nomos* highlighted the tension between science and religion. Meaning meaningfulness, *nomos* contrasts with Durkheim's (1897) *anomie*, which is meaninglessness. Berger argues the *nomos* of religion performs a world-building function that offers a particular script for actors to adopt. He argues, "viewed historically, most of man's worlds have been sacred worlds... it can thus be said that religion has played a strategic part in the human enterprise of world-building" (p. 27). This central function of religion makes it sacred, as to denounce it is to relegate one's world into the state of *anomie*. Berger adds, "Whenever the socially established *nomos* attains the quality of being taken for granted, there occurs a merging of its meanings with what are considered to be the fundamental meanings inherent in the universe" (p. 24-25). In contemporary societies, he

argues that modern science fulfills the function of providing *nomos*. The STMers, socialized in the *nomos* of evangelicalism and modernity, are forced to grapple with these entangled meanings.

⁸⁴ For example, some people distinguish between emotional decisions and rational decisions. However, recent brain research has shown that it does not distinguish between the strictly emotional from the rational (Franks & Turner, 2013; LeDoux, 1996; Stets & Turner, 2006, 2014). In fact, the emotional faculties get triggered first before going to the logical centers to be processed (Kahneman, 2011). As a result, all “rational” thought would inevitably first be affected by emotions.

⁸⁵ Previous theorizations of the pilgrimage-like experiences did not offer dynamic explanations that accounted for external influences upon the pilgrims. For example, Turner and Turner (1978) argued that pilgrimages allowed everyday structures to break down so that the pilgrims can experience *anti-structure* and *communitas*. Another interpretation by Eade and Sallow (1991) argue that the destination acts as a “religious void, a ritual space capable of accommodating diverse meanings and practices” (p. 15).

⁸⁶ In other words, the team leaders enhanced their position as epistemic authorities (Kruglanski, 1989; Raviv, Bartal, & Albin, 1993, p. 132) in the black-box situations of China (Brown, 1995).

⁸⁷ Quantifying collective effervescence in IRs is difficult, though recent attempts have been made by observing the forum chat threads online (P. DiMaggio et al., 2018).

⁸⁸ This observation of social organization matches previous that of Hausmann (2011) and Summers-Effler (2010) in how social groups entrain to the rhythm and space of their environment.

⁸⁹ In fact, conversational analysts have found that ensuring a successful interaction can become an end in itself (Schegloff, 1992; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977).

⁹⁰ Physiologically, moments of risk create lasting emotional memories (Clewett et al., 2018; Kensinger, 2009; McGaugh, 2015) because of higher states of arousal (Van Damme & Smets, 2014).

⁹¹ They become what Damasio (1994; also see TenHouten, 2013) calls the somatic markers.

⁹² Peterson (1999) argues that narratives form the “maps of meaning” for how people have navigated the human experience since recorded history. Similarly, Bourdieu (1977) has argued that these implicit meaning-structures form the “habitus” of our social world (see Berger, 1967; Geertz, 1973; Wuthnow, 1987).

⁹³ Most of these would require new instruments and methodological developments to tackle. In pursuing these developments, I echo what other sociologists have called for in paying closer attention to advances in neuroscience and evolutionary biology to ground our theoretical framing (Cerulo, 2010, 2014b; P. DiMaggio, 1997; Lizardo, 2014; Massey, 2002).

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Appendix

Appendix A – Profile of the STM Churches and the STM Participants

Peace Chinese Alliance Church, Central Canada

Destination: Duhua, China

Date: June 2015

Researcher Observation Role: Complete observer

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Experience	STM Role	Occupation
Brittany	60+	F	Veteran	Teach Health	Nurse
Mark	40+	M	Rookie	Teach Theology	Seminarian

Dorothy	40+	F	Rookie	Assistant	Researcher
Linda	24	F	Veteran	Teach English	Graduate School
Jason	23	M	Veteran	Teach English	Unemployed
Florence	23	F	Veteran	Teach English	Unemployed
Lucia	21	F	Veteran	Teach English	University
Connor	20	M	Rookie	Teach English	University

N=8

Mercy Chinese Alliance Church, Central Canada

Destination: Taiwan

Date: July 2015

Researcher Observation Role: Observer-as-participant

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Experience	STM Role	Occupation
Ethan	60+	M	Veteran	Team Leader	Retired
Madison	50+	F	Veteran	Team Leader	Information Technology
Chloe	60+	F	Veteran	Assistant	Retired
Jacob	50+	M	Rookie	Teacher	Engineer
Noah	60+	M	Veteran	Teacher	Designer
Zoe	50+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Accountant
Amelia	40+	F	Veteran	Assistant	Homemaker
Roxanne	40+	F	Rookie	Assistant	Homemaker
Ashley	40+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Education
Michael	40+	M	Veteran	Teacher	Aviation
Jessica	26	F	Veteran	Teacher	University
Trisha	18	F	Rookie	Assistant	University
Joel	16	M	Veteran	Assistant	High School
Barbara	15	F	Veteran	Assistant	High School

N=14

Faith Chinese Alliance Church, Greater Vancouver Area, Canada

Destination: Lelin, China

Date: July 2015

Researcher Observation Role: Participant-as-observer

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Experience	STM Role	Occupation
Jackson	50+	M	Veteran	Team Leader	Business
Isabella	40+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Business
Ryan	30+	M	Rookie	Pastor	Clergy
Miles	60+	M	Veteran	Teacher	Retired
Kaitlyn	60+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Retired

Kyle	30+	M	Veteran	Teacher	Non-Profit
Francis	18	M	Veteran	Teacher	University
Terrence	18	M	Rookie	Assistant	High School
Logan	18	M	Veteran	Teacher	University
Addison	17	F	Veteran	Teacher	High School
Riley	14	F	Veteran	Assistant	High School

N=11

Eastern Chinese Alliance Church, Greater Toronto Area, Canada

Destination: Xicheng, China

Date: August 2015

Researcher Observation Role: Complete participant

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Experience	STM Role	Occupation
William	50+	M	Veteran	Team Leader	Government
Abigail	50+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Finance
Sophia	40+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Secretary
Emma	50+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Finance
Harold	40+	M	Veteran	Teacher	Energy
Wendy	40+	F	Veteran	Teacher	Homemaker
Sabin	19	M	Veteran	Teacher	University
Johnson	27	M	Veteran	Intern Pastor	Seminarian
Priscilla	24	F	Veteran	Teacher	Design
Regina	14	F	Veteran	Assistant	High School
Oscar	17	M	Rookie	Assistant	High School
Lois	16	F	Rookie	Assistant	High School
Renee	16	F	Rookie	Assistant	High School
Frank	15	M	Veteran	Assistant	High School
Olivia	13	F	Veteran	Assistant	High School

N=15

Appendix B – Recruitment Form

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION FORM

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am currently conducting a study investigating how Chinese Canadian young adults make meaning of their ethnic, national, and religious identities in their short-term missions (STM). I am looking to interview people who are participating or have participated in this either directly or indirectly. The purpose of the study is to answer the broad question asking what are the identities and motivations of individuals driving transnational ethnic Chinese evangelical NGOs' engagement? Currently, there is very little research studying the Chinese Canadian STMs and your unique perspective and experiences will be

valuable to better understand the Christianity and its relationship with identities.

Interview participants who agree to the study will partake in two or more one-hour audio-recorded interviews and a focus group. The first interview will be conducted before the STM and involve questions spanning topics concerning your opinions on what it means to participate in the STM. The second interview will ask questions reflecting upon your experience during the STM. There will also be a focus group where all STM members participating in the study discuss their experiences. If appropriate, a third interview will be 6 months later to follow-up.

Your privacy is a top priority and all information will be confidential. In any reports that use information provided by you, your identity will be confidential and represented by a pseudonym and no identifiable information will be linked to you. The transcript(s) of our interview(s) will be available upon request.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at anytime. If you decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study it will have no consequences whatsoever. You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

If you are willing to participate, let me know when would be a convenient time and location to begin. Online or phone interviews are also a possibility as well.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please contact me using the information below. If there are any issues with this research, feel free to contact my supervisors about my work. We will do our best to answer your query. The researcher Jonathan Tam should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how we intend to deal with it. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford (Chair, Social Sciences & Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee; Email: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk; Address: Hayes House, 75 George Street, Oxford, OX1 2BQ, UK). The chair will seek to resolve the matter in a reasonably expeditious manner.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jonathan Tam
Doctoral Student at the University of Oxford, Department of Sociology
Email: jonathan.tam@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Mobile: +44 (0) 7463 108811
Website: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jontam>

Supervisors
Rachel Murphy, University Lecturer in the Sociology of China
Email: rachel.murphy@sant.ox.ac.uk

Heather Hamill, University Lecturer in Sociology
Email: heather.hamill@sociology.ox.ac.uk

Appendix C – Consent Form

Chinese Canadian Evangelicals: Meaning Making in Short Term Missions Consent Form

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to answer the broad question how Chinese Canadian young adults make meaning of their participation in transnational short-term missions (STMs)?

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If you decide to participate in this research, you will partake in two or more audio-recorded interviews and a focus group. Interviews will be approximately one-hour long while also depending on your availability. They may be conducted either in person at a location of your choosing or online.

The first interview will take place before the departing for the STM and involve questions spanning topics concerning your opinions on what it means to participate in the STM. You will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire asking some background information about you. The second interview will ask questions reflecting upon your experience during the STM. There will also be a focus group where all STM members participating in the study discuss their experiences. If appropriate, a third interview will be 6 months later to follow-up. The interviews will be transcribed.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

I will ask you to share your story, opinions, and experiences; this may include discussing personal challenges and positive moments pertaining to your experiences in Canada or over the STM. While no study is without risk, the risks in participating in this study are minimal given your confidentiality will be maintained.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?

The benefits to participating include the opportunity to build on existing knowledge on STMs, Christian evangelical networks, and development studies. While there is no monetary compensation, it is very much appreciated that you help advance the knowledge of these fields. An indirect benefit would be that knowledge generated from this research may inform future decisions of the church regarding STMs.

HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?

All interviews will be conducted in a private setting of your choosing and will be audio recorded digitally. All data collected will be kept confidential and be heavily encrypted, accessible only by the primary investigator using a complex password. Your identity will only be indicated by a pseudonym with the codes for the pseudonyms also heavily encrypted and protected with a complex password. Your pseudonym will be used for any publication and no information that will make you identifiable will be disclosed. Transcripts of our interviews will be available upon

request. If the audio files are to be used for presentation purposes, your voice may be distorted through pitch and formant altering software so that you cannot be identified.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research after you leave today you should contact the primary investigator:

Jonathan Tam
University of Oxford, Department of Sociology
Email: jonathan.tam@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Mobile: +44 (0)7463 108811

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

The University of Oxford is committed to the dissemination of its research for the benefit of society and the economy and, in support of this commitment, has established an online archive of research materials. This archive includes digital copies of student theses successfully submitted as part of a University of Oxford postgraduate degree programme. Holding the archive online gives easy access for researchers to the full text of freely available theses, thereby increasing the likely impact and use of that research.

If you agree to participate in this project, the research will be written up as a thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will be published with closed access.

I have read the information and consent forms and understand how the information will be used. I also understand that I may withdraw my participation at anytime without any prejudice and without providing a reason. I am also aware of how to raise a concern and make a complaint if necessary. I agree to my participation in this study.

Print name

Signature

Date

Appendix D – Questionnaire

Personal Information

Name

Age

Marital Status

Number of children and ages of children (if any)

Nationality (list from oldest to newest)

Ethnicity (e.g. Shanghainese, Cantonese, Hakka, Toishan)

Current Occupation

Description of Highest Education Level Obtained

What do you perceive your socioeconomic status to be (e.g. working, middle, upper-middle, upper, etc.), why?:

Annual Net Income Range (please circle)

0-\$20,000

\$20,000-
\$40,000

\$40,000-
\$70,000

\$70,000-
\$100,000

Above
\$100,000

Religious Information

Church Name

Religious Denomination

Years Christian and Years Baptized

How many times have you gone on short-term mission trips?

How many times have you gone on mid- to long-term mission trips?

To where have you gone for STM(s)?

With what organization(s) did you go with on the STM(s)?

Appendix E – Interview Schedule for Short-term Mission Participants

The questions here served as a guide for the in-depth semi-structured interviews and changed depending on the interviewee. They were pre-written for me to have a comprehensive coverage of themes and concepts in the case they do not organically surface in the interview. Following the principles of sequential interviewing (Small, 2009), these questions changed over the course of the fieldwork as other concepts or theoretical concerns emerged (Charmaz, 2000).

Guiding research questions:

- How do young Chinese adults in Chinese evangelical churches in Canada give meaning to their participation in short-term mission trips?
- How does participating STM change the observable behavior of its participants?

Interview Schedule for STM Participants Before Departure

Version November 25, 2014

Background

1. What is your ethnic and national background?
 - a. What generation Chinese are you?
 - b. Do you see yourself as a Canadian or Chinese? Why?
 - c. What citizenships do you have?
 - d. How long have you attended this church?

Ethnicity and Nationality

2. Tell me about your experience growing up as an ethnic Chinese in Canada?
 - a. Were there any experiences that made you feel you're not Canadian?
 - b. Were there any experiences that made you feel you're not Chinese?
3. Does "getting in touch with your roots," mean anything to you?
 - a. How are you going to achieve that?
4. (Using the example of the recent Umbrella Revolution) How concerned are you with what's going on politically in Hong Kong or China? Why do you feel that way? (be careful to not focus too much on Chinese politics – the focus is on identification through current events)
 - a. "Transnational" is a term used to define people who have memberships across different nation-states. Would you consider yourself as a transnational Chinese? Why or why not?

Language

1. What languages do you speak?
2. How is your Chinese (or ethnic) language?
 - a. Why do you think your Chinese is the way it is? What contributed to its current state?
 - b. Growing up in the Canada, were you integrated in a Chinese community?

Education/Occupation

3. What is your educational background?
4. What is your current occupation? OR What occupation do you want to work in after graduating?
5. What do your parents expect of you in terms of your education/career?
 - a. I've heard of cases where a person quits their prestigious job to become a missionary. What do you think of those people?
 - b. What would you do if you feel God called you in the same way?
6. Do you see a conflict between pursuing a secular career with God's plan in your life?

Ability

7. What are some skills or talents that you are proud of?
 - a. Where have you used these skills or talents?
8. How will these skills or talents play a role in your contribution to the STM?

Socioeconomic Status

9. STMs are generally costly both in money, energy, and time. How are you coping with funding the project?
10. Have you served poor people locally in Toronto?
 - a. Why are you going on an STM to a distant place to help poor people?
 - b. What do you expect from helping people who are less privileged than you?

Age

11. What do you think is the most important thing to achieve at this point in your life?
 - a. How does going on an STM help you fulfill that goal?
 - b. Is it important for a young adult to go on an STM? Why or why not?
 - c. How has your past built towards you going on the upcoming STM?

Gender

12. Are you responsible for any ministries at this church? (potentially probe for parental involvement in church leadership)
 - c. Has your parents' leadership role affected your participation in this church?
13. Tell me about what your dad and mom did in Hong Kong (or other homeland)? Has this changed since coming to Canada?
 - d. Probe for whether parental change post-immigration affected attitudes towards gender.
14. Respond to these Chinese sayings, "men take care of the outside, women take care of the inside" or "a girl with no talent is virtuous."
15. What do you expect to see in terms of gender roles during the STM? (this highly depends on the context of the destination)
 - a. Women in ... less freedom than women in Canada. What do you expect to learn from interacting with women in ...

Religiosity

16. Can you describe your religious background?
 - a. How often did you go to church?
 - b. Did you always go to a Chinese church growing up?
 - c. Did you grow up with Chinese peers?
 - d. How close are you to your friends at church?
 - e. How important has the Chinese church been in your upbringing? (probe for intersections of religiosity with ethnicity and nationality)
 - f. What ministries do you participate in your church? How might you use your aforementioned gifts in them?
17. How important is God in your life?
 - a. How is your relationship with God?
 - b. What's the purpose of life?
18. How does your church promote STMs?
 - a. How did you hear of this STM?
 - b. Does your church help with funding your STM? If so, how much?

STMs

19. Previous STM experience - Have you ever gone on an STM?
 - a. How many times have you gone?
 - b. Why do you go?
 - c. Where did you go? (look out for voluntourism, roots touching, family STM, transformation, and other possible themes)
 - d. Did you gain anything from that experience?
 - e. Did you feel yourself changed because of the STM? (probe transformation) How so?
 - f. Have those changes sustained themselves since your last STM?
 - g. What were some of the major lessons you learnt from the STM?
 - h. Did God speak to you over the STM? What did He say? How did you respond?
 - i. How has going on your previous STM(s) affected your relationship with God?
 - j. Which STM was the most fun for you? (probe voluntourism)
 - k. Did your STM team do any tourism stuff afterwards?
 - l. How do you feel about that? Mixing tourism and STM?
 - m. Were you able to communicate effectively with people in the STMs?
 - i. How did it make you feel? (probe language and ethnicity)
20. Upcoming STM - What do you expect from going to an STM?
 - a. Since you've gone before, why are you going on another STM?
 - b. What are you most looking forward to in this upcoming STM? Why?
 - c. Why did you pick this STM over others?
 - d. How are you paying for this STM?
 - e. What's your role in this upcoming STM?
 - f. Outside of your role, how else do you plan to contribute?
 - g. What gifts or talents do you have that you think can contribute?
 - h. Given your educational/occupational background, how do you see yourself contributing to this upcoming STM?

Other

21. Do you have any additional things you would like me to know?
22. Is there anything you would like to add or remove from this interview?

Interview Schedule for STM Participants After Return

Version November 25, 2014

Given that each of the participants will have different backstories from their interview before going on the STM, the interview schedule after returning will focus on the themes relevant from their first interview and the other data gathered from the STM. An emphasis will be placed on asking for the participant to recall particular events while on the STM (Riessman, 2006).

1. Can you think of an event or incident on the STM where you felt particularly happy?
2. Can you think of an event or incident on the STM where you felt particularly sad?
3. Can you think of an event or incident since your return home when you felt particularly happy?
4. Can you tell me about an event or incident since your return home when you felt particularly sad?

Interview Schedule for STM Participants 8 Months After Return

Version March 15, 2016

Each STMer had unique experiences leading up to the STM and in the STM itself. Interview questions have been tailored to the individual based on the researcher's observations and their previous interviews. Below is the general guideline of the questions I asked 8 months after the 2015 summer STMs.

1. You said _____ about the STM 8 months ago. Have you been able to keep _____ up? What do you think about _____ now?
2. You were going through _____ 8 months ago. How has that been resolved? Did the STM have anything to do with it?
3. How have your relationship with God been since the STM? Why?
4. You said God taught you _____ over the STM 8 months ago. Have you acted upon it and what are your thoughts on it now?
5. How have your relationship been with fellow STM members since the STM?
6. Are you planning to go on the STM this summer? Why or why not?

Appendix F – Lois’ Testimony at ECAC

Going on this trip was an experience of a lifetime. I’ve been able to meet some really amazing friends in China and really get to know our own team more. Through this experience I was really able to step out of my comfort zone and really challenged myself both physically, emotionally and definitely spiritually.

So, I’ve been asked “why would you even want to go on this trip”? I could have done so many other things like hanging out with my friends, going to camps, vacation or just something within my comfort. To begin, I think I’ve been living in an environment where I’m too comfortable to be in. Last week, I remember how Johnson talked about being unwilling to change, because of the problems and suffering it comes with. I wanted to take this opportunity to open my eyes to another part of the world, where people may not know of our God. I’ve been helping out in my own fellowships and children ministry for many years, but I really felt a calling for this trip especially for my spiritual gift of teaching.

We live in a place where freedom of opinion and expression in religion is allowed and legal. Going to China brought along many anxieties and fear, but God has really told me to be still and know that He is there and that He is for us. At first, I began to worry about many things like being homesick for one, and how to take up so much responsibility for myself. And trust me, for a 16-year-old girl who’s halfway across the world from her home, for 2 weeks in a place where she cannot even speak the language, is terrifying. Fortunately, we have a team of wonderful aunties and uncles, as well as good friends to be there. I’m actually so thankful for Renee here, who has constantly been by my side because she really understands the culture and is able to guide, watch over, and translate everything for me!

My sharing is definitely not just about the trip, but moreover about the journey throughout this trip. Our first official meeting was in April and at that time, I can say that this trip sounded nerve-racking and like a lot of work. However, I felt especially prepared with our daily mission sharing and encouragement from Uncle William and mostly our missions Sunday school [classes]. If you didn’t know, we had Sunday school class on missions and I can say that through learning about the history and the purpose of missions, I was able to understand the overall picture of missions. For our final project Renee and I decided to do a presentation about the Rao (pseudonym) people, which was the native cultural group in Xicheng. Through this assignment, I was able to learn more about their culture before I went, and it was really neat to see something I learned being applied in my life. I’ve had a chance to talk to some students in my class that were of Rao [pseudonym] ethnicity, and I was intrigued to hear about their culture and lifestyle. Overall, I felt that this mission’s class was very helpful in preparation for this trip.

Our trip was filled with endless up and downs, from our issues regarding the communication between our team and the church, the little number of students that were going to be attending the camp or the dilemmas about our transportation and accommodations, I’ve learnt that God will truly provide, in the times where we may even doubt or question His actions. I really learned to hold tight and cast all of our worries on to Him, as he put these many trials in my way to test my faith in Him. Matthew 6:31-32 says “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.” Like this passage, God was in control of everything that happened and all I could do was to ask Him to guide my way.

One of my goals during this trip was to overcome new challenges and try new experiences over this trip. During this journey I was 'voluntold' to teach line dance, with no experience in this kind of dance. I was actually hesitant of doing this because I kept thinking I wasn't good or knowledgeable enough. Through God's grace, I had Auntie Emma and my mom to sample some dances for me and through quite a bit of preparation and practice, I had the confidence to lead it, while having a blast teaching the students as well. I've also had the chance to try many new foods like a dragon fly, street BBQ, and Yak meat and I thought it was a VERY interesting experience.

The students we've met were more like friends who were so willing to learn and hangout with us. I loved playing UNO with students and they've even taken us around the city and a friend of ours even invited the entire team to her house. It was through bonding outside of the camp like karaoke, was when we were able to build stronger relationships with the students. I've taught some of the sweetest students during the trip and even met a few that have such a big heart for God.

One of the most intriguing thing I've realized is God's ability to work in the hearts of His people. I can really see the passion our team has for teaching the students, the love for God we all have, working all towards one purpose. It's truly amazing to see the power of God's love working in each one of us and the students. Three students were able to come to know Christ through His unconditional love shown throughout the camp.

I loved seeing how our team was able to grow spiritually, through daily devotions, which shows how God has been working in us during the trip. Through our late-night meetings, bonding with the students, explorations in the city and cultural experiences like this, memories will certainly last a lifetime. It makes me feel so much more grateful and privileged in this wonderful country called Canada, where I can live comfortably and freely express my faith. Nonetheless, this trip has truly opened up my perspectives on how I view life and is definitely an unforgettable trip that I would really hope to join again.

Appendix G – Chris’ Testimony at ECAC

First of all, I'd like to start with thanking Uncle William for organizing the trip, which must have been hard. I'd also like to thank all the team members that I was able to work with. I'd like to thank my parents and brother for being there too. And I want to thank the students and the teaching assistants (TAs) from whom I learned so much. But most of all I'd like to thank God for even giving me this opportunity.

So, when I first heard that I might be going on the China short term mission trip, I didn't know what to expect. Was I excited? Maybe. Was I reluctant? Just as possible. Honestly, it's not something you can really learn from reading a textbook, it's something you learn from experience. Not knowing what to expect, I went to the meetings.

At one of the meetings, Pastor Fred asked us why we wanted to go on the trip. Obviously, part of it was because my parents were going but going more in-depth than that, I'm pretty sure I said something along the lines of, "I wanted to experience God and also to understand what life was like for the children in China."

When I actually got to China, I was nervous, but when we met the kids, their English level was actually pretty high. When I got my class, we found as a team that the students were very willing to learn and enjoyed it as well. But the thing is, for the next four days, the students would come to class, we taught them English, they left for lunch, they would come back, we would teach some more English or do some crafts and they would go home. We didn't really interact with them after they left.

On the Friday when we heard the news (that we were to stop teaching), I remember hearing rumours about it already, but I remember clearly that Zeng comes into the room where the youth and the TAs usually met, and we asked what had happened. And she says, "We aren't allowed to teach English anymore." And my head was just trying to understand, why? Why would this happen. What were we supposed to do for the rest of the camp; which was seven days.

What happened next was what really changed me. You know I was "this" close to leaving Bacheng. A little bit of background; I didn't have a good idea of what happened when the police came Saturday morning because I was with some of the students. Honestly, I even thought it was kind of cool haha. But I remember several hours later, my dad pulls me aside and obviously he was worried. Now you have to understand that the way we went to China was different, we came with the visas to visit family; who, lived in a completely different city and if we got in trouble with the law, not only could we be in trouble, my relatives could be too. But I didn't understand this until much later. At that time, I was caught up in the moment. My dad says, "We should leave" and the first thing that comes to my mind was no, I didn't want to leave. I was really enjoying it there and I had built some really nice relationships with the team and some of the students and the TAs. Now we were in a big argument and we're all stressed out. My dad's pissed, I'm pissed and my mom's trying to calm down. So, my dad leaves to go to his room. So

I'm just really stressed, and I really really wanted to stay but the consequences could have been devastating so I was really debating on whether I should stay or not. I remembered very clearly; I was sitting on my bed and my dad had left early to go out for dinner and my mom was lying in the bed next to me. So, I lay down on my bed and I cry out in my mind at least ten times "What do you want me to do God, what do you want me to do God." And I hear a voice.

"Stay, and don't be mad at your dad." Immediately, I get up with a smile and with a renewed energy that wasn't there before, and I felt a peace like no other. It was a life changing moment, from that moment on, I had made the decision to stay; and leave it up to God to control the outcome; no matter what happened, whether we went to jail or died, I would trust God. So, with a smile on my face, I tell my mom to get up but she was tired, so I leave with everyone else to go to dinner. So, the same night, I remember somebody playing worship songs, and one of them was "Our God" which has the lyrics "And if our God is for us, then who could ever stop us, and if our God is with us, then who could stand against." And this song was really relevant at that time. Because if our God was for us, then who could stand against; whether it was the parents of the students, the police, or even the Chinese government. They could never stand up against God, the same God that was with us. The same God that gave us hope that we would get through it.

So, the next week, even though we couldn't teach English anymore, was just as awesome. The students were no longer our students, they were more than that, they were our friends. I ended up doing things I probably would've never done had the week gone as planned, or if I had left. We met up in small groups and just spent time together. We played basketball together, we went to karaoke together, and we even ate together. Honestly, I got closer to the students and the TAs, at least a couple of them; in a way that I couldn't have if I had simply been teaching English. I now have ways to contact them (online) through QQ and WeChat and I've become pretty good friends with a few of them. This way I am able to build them up in their relationship with God and see the flower bloom from the seed that was planted. Going on the mission trip to meet them was only half the journey, the other half is done here by continuing to build a relationship with them; and I would argue that that is the more important half.

During this trip, I really learned to trust God. I even had a peanut encounter, I have a peanut allergy if you didn't know, or at least I think it was. I learned to trust God; when we think we're fine but we're actually blind, when the risks were high, and we could've died, but with the hope in mind that that we might be able to see them again, we said goodbye.

Someone once told me that when you go on a mission trip, the one who learns the most is not the students, but the ones teaching. And it's true, that's why I encourage all of you to go. It's life-changing. Thanks.