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Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities

Fenggang Yang

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Christianity has become the most practiced religion among the Chinese in America, but very little solid research exists on Chinese Christians and their churches. This book is the first to explore the subject from the inside, revealing how Chinese Christians construct and reconstruct their identity—as Christians, Americans, and Chinese—in local congregations amid the radical pluralism of the late twentieth century.

Today there are more than one thousand Chinese churches in the United States, most of them Protestant evangelical congregations, bringing together diasporic Chinese from diverse origins—Taiwan, Hong Kong, mainland China, and Southeast Asian countries. Fenggang Yang finds that despite the many tensions and conflicts that exist within these congregations, most individuals find ways to creatively integrate their evangelical Christian beliefs with traditional Chinese (most Confucian) values. The church becomes a place where they can selectively assimilate into American society while simultaneously preserving Chinese values and culture.

Yang brings to this study unique experience as both participant and observer. Born in mainland China, he is a sociologist who converted to Christianity after coming to the United States. The heart of this book is an ethnographic study of a representative Chinese church, located in Washington, D. C., where he became a member. Throughout the book, Yang draws upon interviews with members of this congregation while making comparisons with other churches throughout the United States. *Chinese Christians in America* is an important addition to the literature on the experience of "new" immigrant communities.

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