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David Aikman. *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power.* Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003. Pp. 344. \$27.95.

[1] Christianity began its mission in China in the seventh century, but the Western missionaries had limited success before the mid-nineteenth. Western missionaries in China were relatively successful in the second half of the nineteenth century through the era of the Republic. The situation of Chinese Christians is not clear to Western societies. What has happened after the Chinese communist government expelled Western missionaries in 1950? How has the Chinese government treated Christians? What role will Chinese Christians play in China's modernization and democratization? David Aikman seeks to answer these questions in an introduction and fifteen chapters.

[2] The first two chapters cover the Western missionary movement in China from the Nestorians through the Jesuits, Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci, to Anglo-Saxon Protestant missionary movement. Aikman presents lively accounts of Chinese Christians, including peasants, workers, soldiers, artists, writers, political dissidents, and church leaders. In Chapter 3 he presents stories of prominent house Church leaders, Wang Mingdao, Allen Yan, Samuel Lamb, Moses Xie, and Li Tianen. Chapter 4 focuses on common Chinese Christians and Christian leaders in villages and urban areas. Chapter 6 is the story of professional Chinese Christian leaders in seminaries. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss Chinese state church from its early years to the period after the Cultural Revolution. Chapters 9 and 10 analyze the center of Chinese Christianity in Beijing, China's "Jerusalem." Chapter 11 covers Chinese Catholics under communism. Chapter 12 reveals the records of the communist government in persecuting Chinese Christians. Chapter 13 presents the story of Christian artists, writers, and academics. Chapter 14 examines foreign Christian activities in communist China. Finally, Chapter 15 predicts the role and future of China's Christians.

[3] Through captivating stories, readers can see that Jesus is not only in Beijing, but practically everywhere in China, including the most prosperous urban areas, such as Beijing and Shanghai, and in the poor areas and villages, such as those in Henan province. The Chinese Christian movement is vigorously developing. Aikman does especially well in

describing the officially recognized, government sponsored, “Three-Self Church” and the illegal “house church.” The Three-Self Church, which is sponsored by the government and affiliated with the China Christian Council (hereinafter: CCC), is “a sort of organizational umbrella for China’s officially approved Protestant churches” (7) and “the organizational twin of the Three Self Patriotic Movement, authorized by the government to operate Protestant church services across the country” (136). The leader of the CCC and the Three-Self Movement are appointed by the Chinese government. K. H. Ting was the chairman of the CCC and secretary general of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement for more than forty years, but many Chinese Christians have suspected that Ting “may never have been a real Christian believer but rather a secret member of China’s Communist Party” (145). Aikman sees the benefit of the Three-Self Church to be that in it the Chinese people “can attend, without fear of the consequences, any officially approved Protestant or Catholic church” (13-14).

[4] The house church is still illegal in China and members of the house church are arrested from time to time. Seminary professors are allowed to preach neither at the underground seminary nor in the churches. Professor Ji Tai, a Swiss-trained Christian intellectual and associate dean at the Nanjing Theological Seminary, “was expelled from the seminary for ‘illegal religious activities’” (132). However, some Chinese ministers, such as Samuel Lamb, do not fear the persecution and continue preaching at unregistered house churches. Aikman shows the readers “the blood anti-Christian persecutions, the revival of an underground Christian movement led by brave men and women risking death, and the flowering of Christianity today” (from the back cover).

[5] To this reviewer Aikman seems excessively optimistic about the development of the Chinese Christian movement, though he realizes that “China still lags miles behind in terms of freedom of religion and freedom of expression” (227). According to Aikman, about “7 to 8 percent of the country’s 1.2 billion populations” are Christian (8). Some Chinese officials (which include high-ranking army officers and deputy provincial governors) and also judges and lawyers have become Christians. Chinese intellectuals have begun to get involved in the Christian movement. In the 1990s “a new kind of Chinese had come into existence at Chinese universities and research institutions: “cultural Christians” or “Chinese scholars interested in Christianity” (17). Aikman predicts “Christians will constitute 20 to 30 percent of China’s population within three decades” (p. 285), which translates to about 45 million Christians. This would give China the largest Christian population in the world in 30 years.

[6] Aikman downplays the negative impact of the communist party on Chinese Christians. The party requires its 70 million party members to uphold Marxist atheism and does not allow Christians to hold political office. Since the former president Jiang Zemin retired two years ago, the new leader of the CPC, Hu Jintao, continues to reject political reform and to restrict religious freedom. Under these circumstances, it is hard to believe that governors, judges, and lawyers are willing to become Christians openly, particularly if persecution becomes more rigorous. Under the party control system, Chinese academics involved in research are not allowed to speak out or publish, so the influence of Chinese scholars upon the Christian community is quite limited. At present, the number of Chinese Christians is much less than 7 to 8 percent. According to a 2002 Government White Paper, only about 1.5 percent of China’s population is Christian. According to the International Religious

Freedom Report 2004, released by the U.S. Department of State, about 4 percent of China's population is Christian, including the members of the registered and unregistered churches. It is not realistic to predict that the Chinese Christian population will reach one-third of the total of China's population.

[7] My greatest concern is with Aikman's declaration that China's democratization relies on China's Christianization. Aikman asks, "How will China get from the one-party political dictatorship of today to the desirable multi-party democracy of tomorrow (289)? He responds to his own question that China's moment of its greatest achievement will occur only "when the Chinese dragon is tamed by the power of the Christian Lamb" (292). He seems not to entertain the possibility that Christianization can also be dangerous to democracy.

[8] Certain other arguments Aikman makes are questionable. For example, why has the West been so powerful? According to Aikman, religion makes the West powerful, because religion is the driving force of the world (291) and the heart of Western culture. Aikman misrepresents the historical situation of the "Eight-Powers" (the U.S., Britain, Russia, Japan, Italy, Austria, France, and Germany) invasion of China in 1900. Aikman sees it "the troops from eight foreign powers rescued China's capital from the Boxers" (42). But Aikman does not discuss the evidence that the Eight-Powers plundered national treasures, demanded the death penalty for twelve Chinese officials, enforced the Chinese government to pay a penal compensation of 40 million pounds, and established a permanent occupation force of foreign troops in China (Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 400-401). Not only is Aikman's statement an affront to the sensibilities of the Chinese people, it is often based on rather thin evidence. He reports that at a private dinner in early 2002, the former President Jiang Zemin once said "I would make Christianity the official religion of China" (17). Aikman's only support for the statement is in a footnote that reads: "I cannot reveal the person who provided this anecdote, but I have met him, and he told the same story to two foreigners independently of each other" (310). Jiang Zemin's record over the last ten years suggests he is firmly opposed to religion.

[9] In sum, Aikman presents many true and moving personal narratives. As a professional journalist with extensive experience in China, he has a keen intuitive political sense and he has touched an important issue of the relationship between Christian movement and China democratization. This book is worth reading. However, from a scholarly perspective, it is necessary to alert the reader to be cautious with some of Aikman's most strident argumentation.

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