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The Sacredness of Being There:  
Race, Religion, and Place-Making at San Francisco's Presbyterian Church in Chinatown

by

Christopher Viboon Chua

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

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Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Elaine H. Kim, Chair

Professor Catherine C. Choy

Professor David K. Yoo

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## Abstract

The Sacredness of Being There:  
Race, Religion, and Place-Making at San Francisco's Presbyterian Church in Chinatown

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Ethnic Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Elaine H. Kim, Chair

Established in 1853, the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown (PCC) in San Francisco, CA is the oldest Asian church of any Christian denomination in North America and the first Chinese Protestant church outside China. Its history in the United States reaches back to the earliest days of Chinese migration to this country, giving the church a rootedness in Asian America that few other institutions can match. This dissertation examines how the contemporary community at PCC negotiates its institutional memory in creating a sense of place and a sense of collective self that is simultaneously both Protestant Christian and distinctively Chinese American.

Employing the use of archival materials and oral histories conducted specifically for this project, the study explores how the three language ministries which currently comprise the church—English, Mandarin, and Cantonese—navigate historical resources and contemporary memories in different ways to support varying ideological positions in the present. The project focuses specifically on place-making and the process of investing the physical space of the church and its location in a historically evolving Chinatown with meanings that distinguish the community from the white American Protestant establishment on the one hand and from non-Christian Chinese society on the other.

This process of place-making is mapped over three defining moments in the life of PCC: the church's founding, its institutionalization, and its struggle to redefine itself in the wake of trauma from clergy sexual abuse. The study argues that these three chapters, reaching from 1853 to the recent past, are especially formative for PCC's identity, because they span the period of white missionary leadership at the church from beginning to end and, as a result, become the terrain over which the racial/ethnic meanings of being Chinese American Christian are negotiated, contested, and defined. In its founding moment, the intersection of racialized thought and theological justification for the establishment of a physical home for anticipated Chinese Christians resulted in the first enduring expression of religion that was conceptually Asian American, rather than simply Asian religion transplanted to the United States or Western religion imposed upon Asian immigrants. The institutionalization of the church was the enfleshment of this concept

with Chinese believers, whose practices of place subverted missionary understandings of Christianity and church by reinterpreting the Gospel message within the social, economic, and political contexts of being a racial/ethnic minority in the oftentimes hostile environment of the United States. Even as this hostility eventually seemed to give way before new visions of plurality in the 1960s, it lingered at PCC in the form of clergy sexual abuse, which came to define the final chapter of missionary leadership at the Chinatown church. Inscribing its insistence on truth and healing into the physical space of the church, PCC has embraced its response to the trauma as a defining element of its identity as a Chinese American congregation at the beginning of a new era beyond missionary control.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Preface	iv
1. Introduction	1
2. Religion and Race as Praxis	28
Vignette A: The Earliest Locations	51
3. Anchoring Memory	52
Vignette B: The Neo-Gothic Building	81
4. Institutionalizing a Community	84
Vignette C: The Post-Earthquake Building	123
5. Reimagining a Chinese American Church	126
6. Conclusion	161
Endnotes	164
Bibliography	192

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Philip Choy welcomed me into his home with tea and shared with me his vast knowledge of Chinatown architecture. Judy Yung met with me to share her vast knowledge of archives.

At the same time I was researching and writing this dissertation, I taught as a lecturer in the Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies Program at UC Berkeley. Balancing the two roles would likely have been far more challenging had it not been for all the support I received from the faculty, the staff, and my students. Michael Omi has been an inspiring mentor, from whom I learned a great deal about teaching at Cal, and the fifth-floor staff in Barrows Hall do a thousand things behind the scenes every day to make the classroom experience feel seamlessly smooth. My Graduate Student Instructors and my students have been unfailingly wonderful in every single semester I have taught at the university. The curiosity, energy, and good humor they bring into the classroom remind me why scholarship, teaching, and the effort that went into this dissertation are important and worthwhile.

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Elaine Kim chaired my Dissertation Committee but, for far longer than that, has been an amazing teacher, mentor, inspiration, and friend to me. Every piece of advice or encouragement she gives manages to communicate her regard for me as a whole person. This dissertation has benefited much from her careful feedback; my intellectual journey has benefited no less from her modeling of imaginative and engaged scholarship; and my growth as a person has benefited even more from her constant example of compassionate leadership.

In all aspects of my life, including this dissertation but extending far beyond it, my family is my greatest source of support. My Dad is undoubtedly happy that I have seen this project to completion. My sisters, Amelia and Belinda, whom I admire more than words can express, have cheered me on from the day I was born. They remember when I used to ask them how to spell every other word I had in mind to write and may perhaps, in part, cheer the completion of this dissertation as a tangible sign that those days are finally past. My Mom may never fully understand my explanations of what I have written here, but she will listen to me with her heart. And she will be the proudest of them all.

To all of these people, and many more left unnamed, I owe my gratitude. Thank you.



## Preface

I first came to the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown in the spring of 1991. Recently returned to the San Francisco Bay Area, I was looking for a church to join, preferably a Presbyterian one, since I had grown up in that tradition. At that point, the City's Chinatown neighborhood was relatively unfamiliar to me, and I had never heard of the church itself. I knew little about Asian American history, but having immigrated from Asia at a younger age, I thought I embodied everything that was necessary to know about an Asian identity in an American context. Chinatown, to my mind, was shopping, restaurants, and Chinese cinemas, none of which had been of particular interest in my earlier years. The idea that place can be a repository of history did not hold much significance for me, and likewise the thought that memory-laden places might contribute to the determination of identity.

What was important to me in that spring of 1991 was the nurture of my faith life. Though I had never seen myself as “evangelical,” in the way that that label is understood in the United States today, I had long understood faith as foundational to my sense of self and as an important connection to my extended family on my mother's side, for which religious truths have long been the touchstone for ethical living. Religion as the institutional formulation of faith—and thus, distinct from it, though related—was to me a practical step toward having a community of like-minded people with whom to be friends, with whom to be in community.

I had heard that the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown was peopled with “upstanding” individuals who espoused socially-conscious values, and it was on the strength of that description—somewhat vague in retrospect—that I found myself at the church's door. What awaited me behind it was warmth and friendship and a welcome that has persisted over two decades. To someone who was looking for community, this sense of invitation was, I think, that crucial witness-to-faith that I was hoping to find. If pressed, I might say that the congruity between faith and the hospitality that was extended to me is one of the main reasons I have stayed.

It was only many years later that I began to reflect on the historical significance of the church: the fact that it is the oldest Asian church on the North American continent. I am not certain when I was first made aware of this historical detail, but I am certain that it did not mean much to me beyond being an interesting piece of trivia, until I began to reconsider what it meant to me to be Asian American. Here I was, in Chinatown, worshiping with a group of people who looked like me, and who were also so clearly committed to their immediate Chinatown surroundings and spoke of that commitment in the language of religion. Inevitably for me—in this company—the deepening I sought of my religious identity meant the exploration of my Asian American one. What I have come to understand about this community over time is that, rather than these identities being entirely matters of elective choice and separate—what I had previously supposed—they, instead, grow up in the company of one another, affecting each other, much as

siblings who grow up together do. And also that, as we so often say in Ethnic Studies, “context matters”: Chinatown and this church are not ancillary to this community’s sense of self, but crucial in what they contribute.

In the spring of 1991 I came to the church looking for a religious “home,” in the simplistic sense of a building with people in it, who act in a particular way. Somehow, I expected that home to be fully formed, that I would only have to walk in and inhabit something that was pre-determined. I did not quite expect that I would be participant to the shaping of a place, that the memories of others would intersect with my own experiences to form a body of notions about this church that is continually and communally being negotiated. Rather naively, I did not expect that some memories would be painful, if not outright traumatic, and that others would be contested; that newcomers might upset existing ideas of what constitutes legitimate institutional memory; that what is remembered might be immortalized in new ways. My own views and expectations may have changed over the years, but still, it is not uncommon for me to find among my friends and fellow church-goers those who regard perceptions of the past as universal, linear, and static. In 2003, when I completed a set of interpretive panels for the church that drew from photographs and documents in its new archives, a well-meaning congregant wishing to congratulate me noted that the choice of emphasizing the past was a clever one, because, she said, “No one disagrees about what’s already happened.” This sentiment is surprisingly prevalent, and I have encountered it in different forms before and since. Where the presence of dispute is acknowledged, the usual explanation is that memory is “selective,” an argument that proposes differing judgments of what elements of memory are “relevant” and the subsequent extraction of only those, while the more basic assumption of a common past that is universal, linear, and static remains unchallenged. I think that perhaps such a concept of shared memory is insufficient. It does not seem to take into account those occasions when memory is uninformed, non-linear, and simultaneously capable of supporting opposing conclusions without breaking continuity.

And how we store, search, and retrieve our memories is changing. In the spring of 1991 the Internet was younger than it is today, and we were literally months away from the public debut of the World Wide Web. It would be more than a decade later before the church had its own website, its own digital vehicle for widely, quickly, and easily communicating self-interpretation. Today, those learning of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown for the first time can access a great deal of information online, which is to say that place-making has taken on a new dimension, whereby memories are mediated and legitimated somewhat differently, with implications for what is surely still to come. Watching these developments, I wonder how our senses of place may change as our ways of remembering and of communicating with one another continue to evolve.

In the meanwhile, I am reminded that much more that place is something alive, that grows and grows up under the influence of an evolving set of memories. In my better moments, I recall with gratitude how a consciousness of place has shaped my own sense of being both Christian and Asian American, and in my more thoughtful moments, I reflect that what it has done for me individually, it does at a collective level for this

community of which I am a part. And I am left thinking that it would be good to bring some of these considerations to the fore.

# 1. Introduction

To someone unfamiliar with the streetscape of San Francisco's Chinatown, it would hardly be a misstatement to say that it is an exuberant display of life. Pedestrian traffic is often thick, the omni-directional crossing lights on Stockton Street contributing to the impression that the flow of the population on foot sometimes dictates not only activity on the sidewalks but on the roadways as well. Open storefronts create niches in the public space, so that streets and alleys wend their way not only forwards and backwards, but also sideways in many instances, without the obstruction of walls, doors, or other manner of storefront architecture to stand in the way. The displays of wares, foodstuffs, and other goods for sale spill out of these shops onto the pavement outside, bringing with them associated sounds and smells and creating a minor topography of bays and coves overlaid onto the major topography of the hills on which Chinatown is built. Fruits and vegetables, meats, fresh seafood, clothing, housewares, electronics, jewelry, antiques, home furnishings, and a whole range of services from real estate sales to insurance, legal help to funerary assistance, are all to be found within a trapezoidal section of the city barely more than twenty-five blocks in size. Not to mention restaurants, of course, one of the main draws of the tourist industry to the neighborhood. Visitors come to eat and to shop and to catch glimpses of what still feels "exotic" and "authentic" to many: the temples in the back alleys, the fortune-cookie factory where samples are handed out for free, the roasted ducks and soy-sauce chickens hanging behind storefront glass. Between these eye-catching tableaux at street level, and often overlooked, are doorways leading up to homes, apartments, and tenement housing, including low-income SROs, single-room-occupancy units in residential hotels. Look up from the bustle of the street, and among the many balconies and fire escapes, one sees the telltale windows of these dwellings. Next to them are signs advertising the businesses below, some in paint, others in backlit plastic. Text is doubled, English following Chinese or vice-versa, so that the street-level density can seem mirrored in visual communication. And then it is echoed as well, the soundscape including not only English but various Chinese languages and dialects. For roughly a century, Toisanese and Sam-yup Cantonese—the "standard" Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong and the mainland-China city of Guangzhou—predominated, but especially since the immigration reforms of 1965, Mandarin is increasingly frequently heard, along with trace amounts of other regional forms of spoken Chinese, plus Vietnamese and the speech of other lands where the Chinese diaspora has spread.

Problematic though the equation of density, variety, and difference with "exoticism" and "authenticity" is, that density, variety, and difference are themselves nonetheless real and produced out of historical conditions. What the visitor encounters in Chinatown—sees, touches, tastes, hears, and smells—is the result of a layering of Chinatowns over time. The neighborhood is a palimpsest, reinscription upon reinscription, and perhaps nowhere is this more readily apparent than in the architecture of the area. Box-shaped buildings, punctuated by arched windows, and topped with oriental-fantasia pagoda roofs dating to reconstruction following the 1906 Earthquake

and Fire are emblematic—though far from universally admired—and these sometimes have for neighbors much more utilitarian structures built in the 1960s and 1970s. Remodeling and repurposing are the norm, so that modern shop-fronts nesting into early-twentieth-century brick buildings hardly seem out of place, and building materials, such as clinker bricks, sometimes predate the Great Earthquake itself. In its latest bid to upgrade its infrastructure, the city of San Francisco acknowledges the economic and sociopolitical significance of Chinatown and will terminate its planned Central Subway light-rail line—currently scheduled for completion in 2019—in the neighborhood, locating the stop on the corner of Stockton and Washington Streets.<sup>1</sup> Here, rather poetically, urban planning for the twenty-first century—the result of fierce political debate, advocacy, and lobbying—will find itself incarnated next to one of the oldest surviving institutions in the district and the subject of this study: the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown.<sup>2</sup>

## History and Place at the Oldest Asian Church in North America



Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, 2013

In the context of today’s Chinatown in twenty-first-century San Francisco, the church, usually referred to with the acronym “PCC” by its English-speaking members, appears as comfortably Asian American as any similar institution might after 160 years of presence in the city. How it came to be so, however, was not simply a matter of the passage of a sufficient amount of time. Over the last century and a half there were significant obstacles of law and politics to overcome; there were problems of cultural practice to master; and there were demands of financial sustainability to be met. The movement from “Chinese” to “Chinese American,” simultaneous with the movement

from “heathen” to “Christian,” was a multi-faceted process, complicated and, at times, painfully challenging. The story I explore here is a perspective on this journey of ‘coming to belong’ that takes into consideration the oft-neglected variable of geographic place. The question that animates this study asks how the church community came to be a distinctly Chinese *American* institution and an *Asian American religious* institution through negotiations over the meaning of its physical presence.

Without yet delving too deeply into the meaning of the term “place” as I use it in this project, the notion of physical presence, by its mere mention, unavoidably suggests issues of scale that are commandingly evident in any discussion of Asian American identity and which have been variously engaged in the literature of Ethnic Studies and its associated disciplines. Place at the national level—the United States as actor on an international chessboard—has implications for the discourses about citizenship and claims to geography. Place at the regional (West Coast/American West) and municipal (San Francisco) levels are relevant to discussions of patterns of immigration, labor opportunity, and cultural dispersion, and the neighborhood/district/Chinatown level of analysis places even more focus on settlement history, with consequent significance for considerations of exclusionary pressures. What this study is concerned with is the micro level of place, the level of an individual site—in this case, a building—the argument being, that, for this church, the building limns an entire racial/ethnic religious world. This approach to the question of scale stands outside the admittedly limited body of literature on ‘Asian America and place,’ but it follows logically from my argument that, while the sum total of the ‘world’—social, cultural, economic, and political—for Chinese American Christians was never so circumscribed as to be limited to a single building, what space they could formally call *fully* their own, where they could simultaneously be Chinese and American and Christian, was.

While the focus on what I term “place at the micro scale,” or the limiting of place to the geography associated with a single institution, is clearly a researcher’s analytical choice, I argue that the logic of the choice is, at the same time, a function of racial/ethnic and religious histories in the United States. The walls of PCC’s church building signify its own world, separate both from the dominant white American culture and from the non-Christian Chinese culture of Chinatown. True as this still is today, it is that much more true the farther back in time we look, until we reach that moment when virtually the entirety of the tiny community of Chinese Christians in this country claimed PCC as its spiritual home. That moment when the church was figuratively an island in ideological, theological, social, and cultural terms is clearly a distant memory at this present point in history when Asian American churches have become a highly visible part of the mainstream and certain Asian American churches align themselves with missionary movements bent on ‘re-Christianizing’ the American nation. The notion that PCC encompasses a separate world of any distinctiveness might seem less compelling in current circumstances, but I argue that, even today, place sets the institution apart. Bound by a unique polity that requires equity in the sharing of both space and administrative power, the walls of the church bind together a mix—sometimes an uneasy one—of communities differentiated by proximity to the immigrant experience, and by language, class, and political ideologies. This quirk in governmental structure distinguishes PCC

from other Asian American churches, which more commonly follow a hierarchical model of language ministries under the same roof or split along generational/language lines.<sup>3</sup> A century and a half after its earliest experience of being the only church home for Chinese Christians in the United States, PCC is, consequently, still an innovator with regard to negotiating pluralism: within its walls is a new experiment, a different conception of a racial/ethnic religious world that shuns the superficial parities of multiculturalism<sup>4</sup> and demands of those involved a wrestling over the meaning of resource and representational equality enforced by the need to share physical space.

This physical space, the building housing the church community, is something of an architectural oddity in its neighborhood context. Rendered in Palladian style and exhibiting its characteristic symmetry and classical Greco-Roman elements, the most distinctive feature of the building is its main entrance, raised above street level and fronted by a portico, or entrance porch, featuring unfluted ionic columns. The lower two floors of the current building date back to 1907, newly constructed then after the Great Earthquake and Fire destroyed its Neo-Gothic predecessor. In 2003, a year-long major remodeling was completed, which among other things, added a third story to the structure. The building's significance on the Chinatown streetscape lies in its role as a physical reminder of the fact that this particular church community enjoys longevity that few institutions in Asian America can match. PCC's founding in 1853 places it at the dawn of Chinese immigration to the United States, places the founding, in fact, at the very beginning of major migration from China.<sup>5</sup> The church simultaneously holds the twin distinctions of being the oldest Asian Christian church, Protestant or Catholic, in North America<sup>6</sup> and of being the first Chinese Protestant church outside China.<sup>7</sup> The building, set in its Chinatown environs, reminds us in a most tangible way that the history of this community is not geographically free-floating but anchored in time and space, encapsulated oftentimes within a particular physical structure, rooted in Chinatown, and subject to the unfolding history of the United States.

As historically distinctive and significant as this institution is, it is surprisingly little studied. Its position among early Asian American Christian organizations is noted in the scholarly literature, but beyond a handful of essays on its nineteenth-century origins and on individuals associated with that period,<sup>8</sup> no comprehensive history has been attempted. For contemporary scholars, a key obstacle to such a work is the lack of source material, the church itself having had no archives until 2004, with that newly minted collection being, as expected, more of a point of departure for records-preservation going forward than a truly effective retroactive accumulation of documentary history from the preceding century and a half.<sup>9</sup> Extant studies have drawn mostly upon denominational records, the church being, since its inception, a part of what is today the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

From a critical perspective, this source material from the early years of the church is problematic because of its establishment point-of-view during a time when anti-Asian sentiment is known to have been rife in this country and institutional racism was clearly apparent in legislation, court decisions, and quite simply, the practices of everyday life.<sup>10</sup> For scholars invested in a more balanced retelling of the past, much effort needs to be

invested in reading between the lines, searching for the “hidden transcripts,” to borrow a term from political scientist James C. Scott.<sup>11</sup> While I rely, in part, on some of the same source material, developing a comprehensive history of PCC is not my aim. Rather, I am interested in how members of the current church community appropriate “history” in creating a sense of place, in creating for themselves, intellectually and emotionally, an environment at once meaningfully relevant to themselves and meaningfully tethered to the landscape of religious Asian America.

To be sure, this task requires some “re-membering” of the past, some re-stitching together of memories from different sources, including the problematic ones to which I alluded above. In this sense, the study that follows is involved in a historiographical project: contribution to the body of knowledge on the development of this venerable institution is very much intended, even if that is not the only, nor the primary, objective here. In examining institutional memory, I begin with the proposition that it resides in a number of different sites, primary documents, interpretive histories, and individual memories among them. While I will be using the terms “institutional memory” and “collective memory” virtually interchangeably in the text ahead, I note here that, while all institutional memory is collective, not all collective memory achieves “institutional” status. There is an additional element of power at play in the latter, meaning that public legitimation of collective memory is necessary before it becomes the ‘official’ version that represents an institution. This legitimation might come in the form of preservation in a recognized ‘archive’—for example, the primary documents and interpretive histories to which I refer above—or it may come through articulation by leading members of a community, or through some other power whose voicing eclipses competing narratives. Institutional memory—that form of collective memory I explore in this project—is, thus, the dominant set of collective memories at an institution. I argue further that this collective memory of the community is processual rather than static, formed and reformed continually as members of the church pick and choose from historical resources, remember and forget, and remember inaccurately or partially, and manipulate what they believe to be fact to fit their own needs and desires in the present.

The spine around which I build this project is the revisitation of three moments from the church’s past and present that I believe are key to shaping the ways in which members of the current community think of this body with which they identify. While the “moments” are of different chronological lengths, each varying from years to decades, I argue that they are individually identifiable as distinct turning points in the life of the church: its founding, its institutionalization, and its recovery of a sense of self after an experience of extensive trauma. These moments are significant precisely because they are key to defining—and *redefining*—PCC as an Asian American religious institution. With the formal founding of the church, I argue that Asian American religion—that is, religion that is Asian American at the core of its constitution—was imagined for the first time in this country. But it was in the subsequent institutionalization of the church that ethnic Chinese ‘lived into’ the faith and made Chinese American Christianity their own. A century and a half later, the church, confronted with globalization along with every other corner of American society, is having to re-examine what “Chinese American,” in



fact, means, as the Chinese diaspora grows and challenges the sufficiency of an institutional identity so heavily determined by white missionary influence.

In each of these three moments, the mixture of Christian language and practice with Chinese traditions and lifeways set the community apart from both its racial/ethnic kindred and its white Christian peer institutions. To a certain extent, the church community already recognizes that these moments in its history are cornerstones of collective memory, and in one form or another, mention of them is already in frequent circulation within discourses of institutional identity at the church. Surprisingly though, it seems never to be noted that these three moments—the first two at the beginning and the third at the end—bracket the missionary period, that twelve-decade-long span from the mid-1850s to the mid-1970s when PCC was formally a mission establishment of the Presbyterian denomination. The common narrative at PCC is that the denomination established the church for the Chinese, and the church, over time, naturally evolved from a Chinese institution guided by white leaders into a Chinese American one. This simplistic rendition exposes the relative lack of acquaintance with the complexes of details that, in fact, surround each of the cornerstone moments. I argue that the process of development was one marked far more by active struggle than is generally recognized and that the denomination and its missionary impulse, despite whatever good intentions, have often been forces against which the church community has had to push back in order to realize its Chinese American Christian character.

By re-examining primary source material surrounding these three key moments in the church's life, interpretations of which already undergird arguments by members about how the church was or is, I hope to deepen, complicate, and expand understandings of their interpretive use in the service of institutional self-conception. In hearkening back to them, this study asks how closer consideration of the historical record might challenge accepted meanings and the limits of narratives surrounding these moments. An accompanying second task of this project builds upon this identification and analysis of the indicated moments by examining the ways in which they participate in the mechanics of the place-making process, by which I mean the process of investing physical space with shared meaning. I argue that an institution's claim to space—making the place its own—involves its membership forming and sharing a collective memory that lays claim to a past in that place. Consequently, this project attempts to deconstruct the process by which place is created in the collective mind. It is not sufficient, I am suggesting, to think that institutional memory is simply the sum total of facts about the past known by individuals within a community. Place is built on a framework of shared memory that is inhabited, navigated, and emotionally experienced, much like the Chinatown of my introductory description. How, then, might we think constructively about the ways by which this process of translation from information to habitable memory happens? How, in particular, might we think about how it happens for a racial/ethnic minority institution in the context of the United States? And how, to be even more specific, might we think about how it happens for a religious minority—meaning, in this case, a Christian church—within the historically delimited racial/ethnic space of Chinatown?

What I put forward in this project is a heuristic: firstly, the proposition of three key turning points in the life of PCC, and then secondly, the proposition of ways by which these turning points become the building materials of a sense of individual and collective place. The “heuristic” aspect of the project lies in the recognition that I will be speaking of process as though it is a linking of discrete elements, whereas in reality, individuals far more likely engage with the process in a continual manner and one that invites more content than merely the three cornerstone moments I intend to describe. That said, the isolation of discrete elements in the place-making process allows us as observers to slow down the investigative procedure and contemplate detail in a more analytical and manageable manner.

Theorizing the place-making process in this way allows us to contemplate how received history—more accurately, fragments of historical knowledge—is used in the work of collective self-identification. Received history, in the form of narratives with particular perspectives and teleologies, is rarely incorporated without modulation: amendment, truncation, re-interpretation, and re-arrangement in new narrative streams. This project’s focus on how that modulation is practiced at PCC explores the influence of religious resources (language, concepts, practices, etc.) in shaping an Asian American institutional identity and seeks to offer some insight on how the process proceeds in a minority-community-within-a-minority community, namely the Christian community when that was, in a meaningful sense, still a minority group within Chinese America.

The final piece of the project is to inquire after what significance these moments so critical to the life of one single Asian American institution—as internally variegated as it may be—might have for the history of the American religious landscape as a whole. PCC is, in this respect, a pioneer institution in far more ways than simply being chronologically the first Asian American church. The three cornerstone moments that create a sense of place and institutional identity there open new spaces within American Christianity previously inaccessible to Asian Americans. They do this by reimagining what is sacred, by introducing the elements of race and ethnicity into the calculus of what ought to be set apart as holy.<sup>12</sup> Through the language of Christianity and its own history, PCC not only claims what is sacred for itself but models for other ethnic Asian communities the possibilities of agency in sacralizing the America they are claiming as home.

## **The Church Community and the Institutional as the Scale of Study**

The locus of agency in this place-making process I propose to investigate is the current community at the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown. Its members are the ones choosing and modifying memories, deciding what elements of the past are relevant to the institutional identity it seeks to project, both for others and for itself. It might reasonably be argued that the place-making agent, more broadly defined, in reality extends beyond the collection of individuals who frequent the church building at 925 Stockton Street, and that, indeed, collective memory and the relevance of the church’s institutional history rests, in addition, with those who may have been active participants in the church

community in the past and who no longer associate with it on a regular basis, and with a broader public (in the Chinatown neighborhood and beyond) that interacts constantly with the presence of the church as a physical and symbolic reality. I do not deny that these, too, are loci of agency in the place-making process—if somewhat secondary—but simply note that they are not the subjects of concern in this study. My focus is on those who ‘practice church’ now, at the Stockton-Street site. And so, it is appropriate here at the outset of the study to offer an introduction to the community.

Historically, PCC has always been a part of the Presbyterian denomination, which over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a number of schisms and unions at the national level. Through these many divisions, the affiliation of the Chinatown church remained, in each case, with the largest and oldest bloc. Aligned with the northern branch of the church since the Civil War, PCC became part of today’s Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or PC(USA), when that new denomination was formed in 1983 to formally heal the century-old North-South rift. Though the largest of Presbyterian denominations in the United States today, PC(USA) is not the only one. It is, however, the denomination referenced for inclusion in the inexact, though generally useful, term “mainline Protestant denominations,” which indicates the major, historic Protestant groupings—including the United Methodist Church, the American Baptist Churches, the United Church of Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Disciples of Christ, and the Reformed Church in America—in contrast to Protestant churches that self-identify as evangelical, fundamental, or charismatic.

The PCC community is today an aggregate of three smaller sub-communities, distinguished from each other most apparently by linguistic identification. In the official parlance of the church, it is one “congregation,” comprising three “language ministries” or “language worshipping communities”—Cantonese, English, and Mandarin. In accordance with the Presbyterian tradition of representative governance, the church is led by an elected and ordained board of “ruling elders”—simply referred to as “elders” in most instances—working in cooperation with three pastors—alternatively, though rarely in practice, referred to as “teaching elders”—one for each language ministry. Because elders are ordained, individuals who are ruling elders at a given church are generally elders there for life. At PCC, the Session, or the collection of all elders currently serving three-year terms, comprises up to thirty people: nine elders from each worshipping community, plus the three pastors, the latter taking turns to moderate the Session meetings. The elders on Session cooperate on issues pertaining to the church as a whole, such as items related to the physical plant or personnel policy; bring to the larger community matters that require the discussion and vote of the entire church, such as annual budgets and the approval of candidates for pastor; and generally act as the official voice and leadership of the congregation in its entirety. The internal governance and leadership of the language ministries, however, is left to the nine ruling elders and the pastor, collectively referred to as the “Commission,” from each of the respective worshipping communities.

This federated model for governing a trilingual church has been in place at PCC since the late-1980s and is unique both within PC(USA) and within the academic

literature on Asian American churches. While there are other multi-lingual and *de facto* multiple-worshiping-community local churches within the denomination, the concepts of *de jure* equal representation among the different constituent groupings and “co-pastors” with equal governing authority are nowhere else put into practice. The size of PCC’s Session is large compared with those of churches of similar size, and the multi-tiered system of governance, in addition to the practical needs of translation at Session and committee meetings, makes for a more complicated and oftentimes more cumbersome process of collective decision-making. But within the culturally plural context of the church, this federated model exercises a structural check to excesses of claims to power from any single language community.

In a manner of speaking, the Cantonese Ministry is the oldest of the three worshiping groups, Cantonese being the language of evangelical outreach when the church was founded. At the time, in the mid-nineteenth century, the great majority of immigrants from China were from the Canton Province in China’s south,<sup>13</sup> and white American missionaries recruited to work with these newcomers in San Francisco and elsewhere in the U.S. were selected, in large part, based upon facility with this regional language, facility acquired over years of prior service in China. The Cantonese Ministry at PCC, however, has experienced such change due to natural attrition and, more significantly, due to schisms within the sub-community, that the membership of the current assembly is in no meaningful way a direct descendent of the original congregation. The latest schism, which occurred in the mid-1980s over issues of pastoral authority, the working relationship between the language ministries, and the possibility of a shared vision for the entire church, resulted in the dismissal of the Cantonese pastor at the time, the Rev. Calvin Wong, and the departure of three quarters of the Cantonese-speaking church members, who followed him to establish an independent congregation, Chinese Grace Church.<sup>14</sup> Already more than decimated, the population of the worshiping community was further reduced by the departures of additional members in the wake of ensuing disagreements over the direction of the ministry and over the attributes to be sought in a new pastor. Currently the smallest in number among the three language ministries, the Cantonese worshipping community, with fewer than forty registered members, averages forty-some attendees on Sundays, including visitors and regular non-member worshipers. The number of attendees has climbed steadily since the 2012 arrival of a new permanent pastor, the Rev. Ronnie Kaan, after a decade-long vacancy in that office. Pastor Kaan has put great effort especially into inviting the participation of more young people, the worshiping community prior to his arrival having come to comprise mostly retirees, 90% of them women.<sup>15</sup>

The registered members of the Cantonese Ministry are mostly monolingual. While some are immigrants from Hong Kong, many others are originally from Canton Province in mainland China. Seniors today, many of the current members were not extensively educated in Mandarin in their youth, as younger people throughout China today tend to be. The economic profile of the worshiping community skews heavily toward the working class, with the registered membership being mostly individuals beyond retirement age. With an average of barely forty members over the last decade, the burdens of leadership and financial sustainability have been heavy. The ministry has

not been able to field a full complement of nine elders, and pastoral representation has been intermittent. Financially, the Cantonese Ministry has struggled, having been faced simultaneously with a diminished membership, the continuing cost of everyday operations, and the need to amass a base amount to call a new pastor. By agreement of its sister ministries, it has been exempted from its share of the all-church budget<sup>16</sup> until it is again self-sustaining. In the meanwhile, providing pastoral care for the aging members and growing the size of the ministry have been identified as key priorities for the new pastor.<sup>17</sup>

The English Ministry has, in many ways, inherited the mantle of historical continuity from the Cantonese. For the purpose of serving English-speaking second-generation Chinese San Franciscans, regular English services on Sunday evenings were begun in 1944, organized by Richard Norton, a missionary who served at the church for a single year.<sup>18</sup> Before the end of that first decade, the English-speaking young people had their own elder representative on Session, eighteen-year-old Richard Hee.<sup>19</sup> Currently, with more youth in participation than either of its sister ministries,<sup>20</sup> the English worshiping community is demographically the youngest, with several of these young people being the third generation in their family to affiliate with the church.

The English worshiping community's outreach to youth is significantly strengthened by its longtime ties to the church's partner Presbyterian institution in Chinatown, Donaldina Cameron House. Founded in 1874 as a vehicle for rescuing trafficked Chinese women, Cameron House has evolved into a social-services and youth-services organization, all the while maintaining an extensive working relationship with PCC. Vis-à-vis the English Ministry in particular, this relationship was greatly strengthened in 1947, when the Rev. Frank S. "Dick" Wichman was named to the directorship of Cameron House and, simultaneously, to an associate pastorate at PCC. The dual nature of Wichman's appointment ushered in a four-decade-long arrangement, whereby ministers on the staff of Cameron House also served the church and were part of a "pastoral collegium" that included the Cantonese and Mandarin ministers. Under his tenure, Wichman expanded the youth services function of Cameron House significantly, and Cameron House became a feeder institution to the church, funneling into it large numbers of English-speaking youth. Many of the adult members of today's English Ministry were themselves introduced to PCC through this connection. With the church and Cameron House nurturing more distinct individual identities over the last two decades and church attendance no longer a compulsory element of participation in Cameron House activities, the feeder connection is today smaller in scale, but Cameron House remains fertile ground for the recruitment of young people, and the Rev. Kimberly Elliot, who has led the English Ministry since 2010, devotes much energy to ministering to Cameron House youth and working cooperatively with its staff.

The English Ministry at PCC is also the most racial/ethnically diverse of the three, its sister ministries both being at least 99% Chinese. 88% of the English worshiping community self-identifies as Chinese, and roughly 3% as being of other Asian ethnicities. The largest non-Asian category is "Caucasian," at about 7%, with the remaining 1% identified as "Other."<sup>21</sup> With the number of ethnic Chinese just below 90%, the

worshiping community is neither truly multi-ethnic nor multi-racial, but it is different in character from either the Cantonese or the Mandarin ministries. Here the membership is also predominantly monolingual, although in this case, the language of fluency is English. Language capacity, coupled with cultural fluency stemming from the fact that most members of the worshiping community are second- through fourth-generation Chinese Americans, results in greater identification with U.S. society. Among the English-speaking, there is generally less concern with social, political, and cultural happenings in China and elsewhere in the diaspora than there is in the two sister ministries, and there is greater confidence in individual ability to negotiate the American cultural milieu. On controversial contemporary social issues such as abortion rights, homosexuality, and gay marriage, the English Ministry is decidedly the most “liberal” of the three worshiping communities, and differences on how the church ought to witness to its faith in regard to these issues have been the source of considerable friction between the three ministries in recent years. Increasingly, the trend has been toward autonomy for the language ministries with regard to the positions each will teach its own membership or communicate externally.

Of the three worshiping communities, the English is the most financially secure. The adults in the English Ministry are mostly of the professional class, and individual and familial financial stability, coupled with a larger membership of earning age, has translated into consistency in tithing support. As of the end of 2012, official membership stood at 132, quite evenly divided between sixty-nine females and sixty-three males, with an average Sunday attendance of 108.<sup>22</sup> This larger membership and, for many, personal histories of training in the finer points of Presbyterian governance from the Cameron-House days of their youth, have together also meant a larger pool of leadership potential. While some individuals have amassed enough three-year terms as elders or deacons to total decades, nonetheless, there have generally been enough qualified candidates for office to avoid instances of individual overextension of the sort often apparent in the two sister ministries.

The most recently founded of the three worshiping communities is the Mandarin, the first service in that language being held in 1958 under the direction of the Rev. Teng-Kiat Chiu, who had been hired five years before to lead the Cantonese Ministry.<sup>23</sup> It would be another two decades before the Rev. David Kao was called in 1976 to be the first dedicated pastor for the Mandarin Ministry, and in its ‘official narrative,’ the Mandarin Commission often looks to 1976 as the founding date of the community.<sup>24</sup> Today, the Mandarin Ministry numbers eighty-some people on its membership rolls, with about that many attending on a given Sunday morning, including visitors and regular non-member attendees. In addition, the worshiping community has hosted a Sunday-evening Restaurant Fellowship since 2004 as a means of outreach to Chinatown workers, especially those in the food-service industry, who need to be at their places of employment during daytime hours on Sundays. The attendance at the Restaurant Fellowship consistently numbers between forty and fifty. While many who attend are regulars, most have not joined the church as formal members.

Noting that “Our existence is based on the endless new Asian Mandarin-speaking immigrants from various parts of the world that pass through Chinatown as their ‘first stop’ in America,” the leadership of the Mandarin worshipping community, headed until October 2013 by the Rev. David Pan,<sup>25</sup> consciously focuses on the Chinatown population as the foundation for the ministry’s growth. Himself Fujianese Chinese from Indonesia, Pastor Pan was particularly attuned to the diasporic nature of the Mandarin Ministry and concurred with his colleagues in the Mandarin Commission, both that there is a need for Christian outreach to the transient ethnic Chinese newcomers for whom San Francisco’s Chinatown is a ‘first stop’ and that there are special challenges that come with such an attempt to knit together new believers and potential believers who hail from different points of origin, and who may thus not share the finer details of cultural background.

Of the approximately eighty members, about half are over sixty-five years of age, and the remaining half is divided roughly evenly between young people under thirty and those between thirty and sixty-five.<sup>26</sup> Among the three language communities, the Mandarin Ministry has the largest number of program attendees who are not regular members of the church. These are most prominent in the Sunday-evening Restaurant Fellowship but are also present in the Sunday-morning worship service and are sprinkled throughout various other smaller programs (choir, women’s fellowship, etc.). In practice, this means that the financial burden of the ministry’s work is very unevenly distributed. The bulk of this responsibility is borne by the quarter of the regular membership who are of earning age, with the balance aggregated from the proportionately smaller contributions of young people, retirees, and non-member program attendees. Leadership responsibilities also tend to fall repeatedly on the shoulders of a core group of working-age and recently-retired registered members.

While fellowship groups (ones for youth, women, young parents, grandparents, etc.), activity groups (senior centers, church-sponsored sports teams, music classes, etc.), study groups, and working committees fielded by all three language ministries meet both on the church premises and off-site throughout the week, Sunday mornings are, by far, the busiest time in the everyday life of the church. The third-floor sanctuary is used sequentially for worship services, by the Mandarin Ministry from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM, by the English Ministry from 10:45 AM to 11:45 AM, and by the Cantonese Ministry from Noon to 1:00 PM. The Fellowship Hall on the floor below is used for post-worship-service “tea time” and lunch gatherings, as well as for Bible studies; and the Library on the first floor and multi-function rooms on the same level and in the basement are used for classes, for youth and children’s ministries, for choir practices, and for meetings of various committees and the Session. On Sunday evenings, the Mandarin Ministry’s Restaurant Fellowship meets in the second-floor Fellowship Hall for a combination of worship, study, and dinner. As might be expected, Sundays are the central moment in the weekly life of PCC. Although not inclusive of the entire breadth of church-related activities, Sundays do give a representative snapshot of that which most members of the community would consider the core of the church’s many functions. Indeed, for the majority of church-goers at PCC, Sundays are, by far, their most frequent point of connection to the church. As such, the church community is most easily for them imagined as that group of individuals, practicing those various things that they do, in that

specific building on Stockton Street, in San Francisco, on Sundays. And each week, most of these individuals come back to this particular place for a particular type of experience, because over time, the intersection of place, people, and practice have, for them, combined to produce an enduring sense of meaning.

For a majority of the members of PCC, the church is a primary tether to the surrounding Chinatown neighborhood and its denizens. Some see Chinatown as part of their ethnic inheritance as Chinese Americans descended from Cantonese immigrants; others see the neighborhood as an evangelical mission field to which they are called by faith; and others, still, see it mostly as an ethnic enclave offering the practical conveniences of restaurants and shopping. But to all of these, the church is a primary point of connection—both physical and emotional—and a source of identity in explaining their affiliation to the neighborhood. Especially because the majority of the registered members live outside Chinatown, PCC provides a lens through which to understand their relationships to it. More specifically, the church provides a hermeneutic for understanding *historical* connections in which they play a part. That is to say, the members of the church are offered particularity of identity by the knowledge that they continue a lineage of Christians within Chinatown, a smaller and smaller minority the farther back in time one looks, and yet, one that in the present enjoys a comfortable relationship with the Christianity of the dominant culture. For members of the English Ministry, this narrative of ‘having arrived’ and ‘having come from somewhere,’ all in the company of an enduring community, is a powerful narrative of connection. For the more evangelically-inclined immigrant members of the church, those of the Mandarin Ministry especially, the narrative is somewhat different, though no less powerful. The story of connection for these individuals tends more to emphasize a continuation of a Chinatown Christian identity that has always stood apart by virtue of its faith, been in the minority, and responded affirmatively to the vocation to “bring others to Christ.” The sense of ‘having come from somewhere’ is shared, but the notion of the present leans more heavily on the idea of a tradition of challenging the status quo.

Regardless of the emphasis in perspective, what is important to note is that these narratives of identification would not be possible without the presence of the church and its language of faith. Nor is it the case that these particular affiliative ties are possible merely with the presence of religion more broadly defined, meaning that individuals are not offered anchor points to ethno-religious identity—identity that takes into simultaneous consideration a Chinese heritage and a Christian one—merely by adopting labels of “Christian” or “Presbyterian.” What the faith community finds in PCC is a particularity of communal historical development and a physical site on which that history is centered. Put differently, this place of the church is where its members see their own reflection most fully. In Chinatown, they may see racial and ethnic similarity with which they identify, but in the church, they see, in addition, a repository of similar values, vision, and worldview. In considering the place-making practices of this community, it follows, therefore, that we should focus on the institutional scale, focus on the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown specifically, rather than on the neighborhood or on the collection of all Christian establishments in the quarter.



## Methodology and Researcher's Positionality

I have been suggesting that a community's sense of who it is today is premised not simply upon a sense of who its members are in the present but also upon a sense of the lineage from which they are descended. Origin stories are a good example of those narratives of the past that orient a community as it seeks to understand itself and the practices and traditions that it holds dear. For religious institutions, there are, in addition, holy scriptures, traditional worship liturgies, forms of spiritual devotion, and collections of social teaching, which serve as vehicles by which continuity is preserved, albeit subject to constant re-interpretation. At PCC, the Protestant Bible is revered as central to the faith, and Presbyterian perspectives on the interpretation of its content and the incorporation of the resulting beliefs into worship and daily living are regarded as the church's inheritance from the sixteenth-century Reformation that divided the Western Church into Roman Catholic and Protestant. When members of PCC speak of being Christian at a universal level, these are the elements of the broader Protestant faith that they claim individually, claim to share with each other, and claim to share—to greater or lesser extent—with other Christians everywhere. As noted above, however, this study is interested in the particularities of an ethno-religious identity that is founded upon place, and this means that the 'local' history of PCC is critical. What has happened to past generations of believers at the Chinatown church is what this generation of believers will look to, I argue, in sharpening their concept of what the universal image of the Christian church-goer means *in practice, in this place*. That, and what this generation of believers has itself experienced as it has struggled to keep the faith.

For perspectives on the church's past, I turn to a number of different archives: those at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s national repository of denominational records; the archives at the San Francisco Theological Seminary, PC(USA)'s main theological school on the West Coast; and the archives at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, home to PCC's own archival collection. Housed at these three locations are denominational records, local church records, missionary correspondence, and a complete collection of *The Oriental*, the bilingual newspaper published by PCC's founding pastor. To further augment the picture of the early Chinatown church found in these sources, I turn, in addition, to two newspapers published by the wider Presbyterian community in California in the mid- to late-nineteenth century: *The Pacific* and *The Occident*. The overall thrust of this archival research is to assemble a sense of how different elements within the Presbyterian denomination perceived the work at the Chinatown mission church, these being the sources from which the current PCC community draws its sense of historical self-understanding.

With respect to more contemporary development of the church—from the mid-twentieth century to the present—I rely upon contemporary church documents in circulation and, in addition, upon oral history interviews, fifteen that I conducted specifically for this project, and the transcripts, housed with the church archives at the Bancroft Library, of a series of seven more that I conducted in 2004 as part of the Historical Documentation Project that established archives for PCC. When considering

the place of knowledge, specifically historical knowledge, in the process of place-making, it necessarily follows that contributions to institutional memory will not be evenly drawn from among all members involved. Some, by dint of more extensive participation, better memories, or a greater inclination toward analysis, will possess more communicable knowledge than others and bring that knowledge to bear. In other words, some voices will inevitably be more influential. No attempt, therefore, is made at achieving a representative sampling of interviewees, my argument being that “representative” is, in this instance, a meaningless modifier. Rather, interview subjects are chosen based upon their familiarity with the church community, their leadership responsibilities within it, and their knowledge of episodes of particular interest to this project.

The project itself grows out of a long process of participant observation. I came to this church in 1991 and have been a member since 1992. I was ordained a deacon<sup>27</sup> and, subsequently, an elder, serving on Session in the latter capacity during the major renovation of the church’s physical plant leading up to its centennial in 2003. During my term on Session, I undertook the work of building archives for the church, creating a three-way partnership, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, between PCC, the PANA Institute (Institute for Leadership Development and Study of Pacific and Asian North American Religion) at Pacific School of Religion, which acted as the executive arm for the project, and the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley, which ultimately assumed custodial responsibilities for the collection. In addition, I served on the Board of Cameron House from 2002 to 2004, during which time the Board-appointed Healing Task Force published its Final Report on the Rev. Dick Wichman’s abuses, a document key to the institutional memory of the third cornerstone moment about which I write.

All of this is to suggest that I come to this project with both the advantages of an ‘insider’ within the church community and with the complications that such ‘insider’ status can confer. Because of the tri-fold division of language ministries peculiar to this church, the complications of insider positionality have their own particular bent. While I have served on Session, sharing in the leadership of the church in its entirety and while I speak Mandarin and Cantonese and maintain good relations with members of all three language ministries, I am, nonetheless, primarily identified with the English worshipping community. Within the English Ministry, my two decades of membership mark me relatively solidly as a part of the community, and yet, it is important to note that I did not grow up in Cameron House/PCC circles and, equally importantly, that I was not yet a part of the church when the scandal of pastoral sexual abuse discussed in Chapter 5 first broke in the late 1980s. Together, these last two factors lend a simultaneous ‘outsider’ aspect to my positionality as researcher.

Because the identity of the church community is ‘rehearsed’ in multiple and oftentimes subconscious ways, the issue of positionality is one of some import in the actual practices of research. Apart from the church’s literature, website, and spoken messaging from the chancel about its own identity, there is much more that is communicated in private conversations, in knowing silences, and in slightly oblique references in public liturgy, directed toward those with personal histories with the

institution. While most of this is not intended primarily to exclude the uninitiated, it does, nevertheless, function as a ‘familial language,’ access to which is earned only over time with a building of trust, relationships, and goodwill that mark inclusion as an insider. At the same time, some degree of outsider status is helpful to allowing questions, especially those about painful histories, that are ordinarily not voiced by longtime ‘family members’: where insiders may be expected to honor memories with silent acknowledgment, outsiders are sometimes allowed some additional latitude for inquiry.

In the conduct of research for this project, I attempt to hold the tension between insider and outsider statuses, between the obligations of a responsible observer and those of a contributing member of the community. I do not regard it as my place as a researcher to pass evaluative judgment of practices and perspectives, but it is part of this project to attempt new angles of vision on what obtains and on the opportunities that these insights might suggest. In pursuit of such positioning I have, over the course of researching and writing what follows, attempted to consciously minimize my own role as an opinion-maker within the church. Although, by virtue of ordination, I remain an elder at the church, I have declined opportunities to serve on Session and on committees of either the Session or the English Commission; I have not preached—as I would occasionally do in the past—though as a practice of responsible citizenship, I do serve from time to time as liturgist<sup>28</sup> during worship services, a position that admittedly requires some level of theological interpretation but is generally perceived as reflecting already accepted and widely shared theological tenets rather than offering key new theological insights as preaching is presumed to do; and I intermittently participate in the worship services of the Cantonese and Mandarin ministries. What this requirement to balance responsibilities as a member-researcher illustrates continuously is the way in which the multiplicity of sources in archival research is paralleled by the multiplicity of constituencies in accountable participant observation.

### **Theoretical Consideration: Bricolage of Source Materials**

When considering the producers of the historical material that contribute to the institutional memory at PCC, one might be struck by the difference in type between the producers of the archival material and the producers of the more contemporary oral histories. The former group consists mostly of missionaries and other non-Chinese agents of American Christianity, concerned, for various motives, with the evangelization of the Chinese. The latter, by contrast, consists of the members of PCC itself, mostly, although not entirely, ethnic Chinese, but regardless, the inheritors of the community historically *being* evangelized. And yet, narrative strands from both types of sources are intertwined in the self-understanding of the present community. The right of the community to employ whatever resources it chooses in its work of self-definition is certainly not being challenged here: the validity and functionality of any community identity ought to have as its final arbiter the community itself, this ever more so as it relates to communities that have suffered historical discrimination and domination. However, as a theoretical consideration, it is important to reiterate that the work of reconciling memories for the purpose of forming an identity is different from the work of

historiography, however often and indiscriminately the word “history” may be used to refer to the product of the former task. In that former work, perspectival consistency is secondary to relevance to contemporary circumstances: that is to say, whether the material from historical sources functions as confirming or challenging, the systematic articulation of that material as a unified whole is less important than the fact that it speak to the needs of the present.

The fact remains, however, that the investments of missionaries oftentimes vary greatly from the investments of the missionized, and however justified the juxtaposition of their two accounts in an inheritance claimed, that incongruous juncture itself requires some theoretical attention. In the broader perspective of a global analysis of imperialism, there has always been some historical irony to the notion of colonized Asians adopting the religion of their colonizers, sufficiently so, that in Asian American Studies, the place of religion as a framework for analysis has traditionally been suspect. And while the reasons for a dominated people’s acceptance of a worldview that accompanies their own defeat and humiliation are varied and complex, what stands out in the case of PCC is the fact that an otherwise socially and historically aware contemporary community would accept the narratives from recognizably paternalistic sources. Why this is so is due mostly to the paucity of primary material of any type to which to refer and to the fact that virtually nothing remains of any records and remembrances which might have been kept by Chinese members from the early period of the church. As a consequence, the contemporary PCC community draws upon the materials it has available to it and stitches together from obviously disparate sources the stories it tells itself about itself.

One problem this practice poses involves the coherence of the stories that result. If, as is common practice, we were to think of history as a systematic narrative of the past that privileges continuity and coherence, the sense of self-understanding that PCC has—and indeed many, if not most, institutions have—falls short in terms of internal consistency and teleological development. The mismatch of sources I note above is only one of a number of unreconciled ‘borderlands’ that lead to contradictions and a multiplicity of perspectives undermining coherence. Other points at which differences come into contact include disagreements within the community—currently and across time—at the ideological, theological, racial, ethnic, generational, and cultural levels, among others. Unlike the intellectual product of a single historian, institutional memory as ‘practiced’ by PCC is, in this sense, multivocal, its breaks and internal contradictions precluding any single trajectory in its narrative.

Michel Foucault, in advancing his “archaeological method,” explores what he perceives as the failure of conventional modes of historiography to understand and account for discontinuity, “abandoning the irruption of events,” he argues, “in favour of stable structures.”<sup>29</sup> While uncovering the various discursive modalities which enable multivocality at PCC is not the direction toward which this project is headed, Foucault’s critique is nonetheless useful for elucidating the fissures inherent in the linkage of primary sources as disparate as missionary records and community memories. Foucault writes:

The problem now is to constitute series: to define the elements proper to each series, to fix its boundaries, to reveal its own specific type of relations, to formulate its laws, and beyond this, to describe the relations between different series, thus constituting series of series, or ‘tables’: hence the ever-increasing number of strata, and the need to distinguish them, the specificity of their time and chronologies; hence the need to distinguish not only important events at quite different levels (some very brief, others of average duration, like the development of a particular technique, or a scarcity of money, and others of a long-term nature, like a demographic equilibrium or the gradual adjustment of an economy to climatic change); hence the possibility of revealing series with widely spaced intervals formed by rare or repetitive events.<sup>30</sup>

If we invert for a moment Foucault’s insight as a call for the deconstruction of received history, the passage above might be read as an unveiling, a demystification, of the *work* that is required to hold together such series as missionary records—the proper constituent parts of which require careful determination—and the chronologically more recent memories embedded in oral histories, themselves filled with breaks and a multiplicity of perspectives. That these “series” of such different character can be held together as meaningful “tables” requires effort on the part of the church in such respects as, for example, erasing the traces of racism in its institutionalization, or at least tempering it to an ‘acceptable’ level; reinterpreting trauma, so that its narration is not itself newly trauma-inducing; and revising an accounting of the past to gesture towards the inclusion of new groups whose presence were not, in fact, prefigured.

The church’s continual engagement in such *work* is attributable to its investment in the concept of tradition. In many ways, of course, religion, in the broad sense of the term, can be—and is—regarded as one of humanity’s greatest and longest-standing bastions of tradition, its tenets both religion’s institutional skeleton and its institutional armor.<sup>31</sup> “[Tradition] is intended,” Foucault writes, “to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successive and identical (or at least similar); it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same; it allows a reduction of the difference proper to every beginning, in order to pursue without discontinuity the endless search of the origin; tradition enables us to isolate the new against a background of permanence, and to transfer its merit to originality, to genius, to the decisions proper to individuals.”<sup>32</sup> In the Christian tradition of the church, this “genius” to which Foucault refers is putatively Jesus Christ,<sup>33</sup> and PCC, like virtually every other Christian church, sees itself as descended from the community of followers who first gathered around Jesus and recognized, if only to a limited extent, his uniqueness and the distinctiveness of his role in history. At PCC, this drive to preserve a reasonable claim to rightful descent consequently motivates a constant modulation of self-understanding that downplays the discordant, the sharp-edged contradiction, the tear in the fabric of continuity. Tradition’s allowance, in Foucault’s terms, of “rethink[ing] the dispersion of history in the form of the same” is embraced by PCC in its tendency to see itself as part of a whole that ‘always’ was: a Christian church rooted in Jesus Christ and his teachings, a Presbyterian

community descended from the Magisterial Reformation, a Californian institution steeped in the history of the American West.

Significantly, however, what distinguishes PCC and grants it an identity of its own is not its embeddedness in these progressions, which it, and every other church, holds so dear, but those episodes of discontinuity—or “threshold, rupture, break, mutation, transformation,” as Foucault puts it<sup>34</sup>—that are antithetical to the notion of tradition and, hence, regarded as threatening and requiring of modulation or erasure. Here, PCC most often—though not in every instance—behaves much like Asian American communities more generally, in the way that these have often sought to suppress those memories that are painful and humiliating, when these, in fact, are those very experiences that lend communities particularity and rootedness. The barrenness of the Chinese “bachelor society,” the shame of the Japanese Internment, the “stoop labor” of early Filipino agriculturalists, the isolation of Korean American military wives, the fear of death and piracy among Southeast Asian “boat people”: if these are embraced, they seem to be so mostly by a generation that did not experience them firsthand, and even then, the voices cradling these memories are few. The narrative of inclusion, understandably valorized by the dominant culture, is far easier fare—easier to digest, easier to reproduce.

I argue, however, that these ruptures and discontinuities may, in fact, be some of the most significant occasions for a community’s work of self-definition, and the three determinative moments that this project examines are critical to PCC’s sense of its own connectedness to geographical place. Their recognition by the church signals that they are within the community’s consciousness, but in each case, the narrative is modulated: details are altered or excluded, the threat of silencing was and/or continues to be real, and multivocality is funneled down toward univocality. Foucault holds that, in discourse, the “enunciative field” (what can be spoken and what is said) comprises the “field of presence” (statements in circulation), the “field of concomitance” (confirming analogies), and the “field of memory” (statements once known but no longer accepted or discussed).<sup>35</sup> The emphasis on historical resources in this project, whether archival or oral-history, is an attempt at regaining those elements of the field of memory that might further illuminate the nature of discontinuities that knit the community to place. Those ruptures that tear PCC from the sense that what *is* has always *been* are paradoxically those very moments that most strongly bind it to Chinatown, to American history, and to its particular place—temporal and physical—within both.

### **Theoretical Consideration: The Practices of Place-Making**

Place-making, as I note above, is defined in this project as the investment of physical space with shared meaning. While the process is defined narrowly for the purposes of this study—and then narrowed even further by my emphasis on the engagement of historical resources more specifically—the idea of place as “meaningful location”<sup>36</sup> is one widely employed in the fields of geography, anthropology, and political science, among others. Political geographer John Agnew sharpens the definition by

detailing three fundamental aspects of “place.”<sup>37</sup> The first of these is “location,” or the notion that place can be referred to by specific spatial coordinates, which one can find, for instance, on a map. PCC’s current location might be described as 925 Stockton Street, San Francisco, CA 94108; as being on the west side of Stockton Street in San Francisco’s Chinatown, between Washington and Clay Streets; or at the global-positioning coordinates of N37° 47.6655’, W122° 24.4863’. Place-making at this level is the association of an entity with a location, but in practice, it can be much more complicated and involved than the mere ideational linkage of an institution with a set of GPS coordinates. As we will explore further in chapters 2 and 3, claiming a physical site in San Francisco has for PCC at times been an exercise far from straightforward. The existence and location of Chinatown as a whole has been at risk at different historical moments, and in each of these, the location of the church was simultaneously jeopardized. Even without such external pressures, in more recent times place-making in regard to location is revisited with every discussion that arises about the changing demographics of the congregation and the appropriateness of a Chinatown address in an era when Chinese American Christians are to be found not only throughout the city of San Francisco but throughout the wider Bay Area as well.

The second aspect of place outlined by Agnew is “locale,” or place as the “material setting of social relations.” At this level of definition, place takes on a materiality beyond reference points on a map. PCC as locale has meant a series of different physical structures over the last century and a half, each of which I will describe in the introductory Vignettes preceding Chapters 3 through 5. The different buildings, of course, mean different series of place-making processes of construction and maintenance. Place-making in this sense involves the myriad details ranging from the original purchase of the land, to the erecting of the various structures, to the continuing care of the physical plant, to the payment of relevant taxes and fees, to the provision of those services that render the space habitable in the different historical contexts (e.g. gas, plumbing, electricity, communications, etc.).

Agnew’s third aspect of place—what he calls a “sense of place” and by which he means “the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place”<sup>38</sup>—is that part of the definition with which this project is most concerned. In the case of PCC, place, in all three of its aspects, is so inseparable from the life of the church that it is, I argue, a fundamental part of its identity. It is important to note that this deep connection between place and identity is not characteristic of all institutions to the same extent, but because the physical and social mobility of the Chinese population in the United States was so long circumscribed and because the mobility of the Christian population within Chinatown was, for a period, limited even further, place has played an especially pronounced role in the church’s past. In the place-making process, therefore, the sense of place the community constructs reflects to a significant degree its sense of self. This sense of self is captured in the notion of ‘the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves,’ and these, in turn, can be expressed in different ways: in the ways a religious community conducts worship, in the ways in which it practices hospitality, in the ways in which it introduces itself to outsiders, and in the ways in which it rehearses its communal story within its own walls.

This project is interested in how received history—inherited historical accounts—is incorporated into the formation of a sense of place and how an expanded understanding of the same historical episodes might enlarge or deepen the community’s image of itself. Insofar as that sense of place is foundational to the community’s sense of self, the processual question to be asked is: How do historical accounts of the church’s past get internalized into the community’s collective memory and its perception of itself? To unpack this process of incorporation, I turn to the writings of William Gibson for theoretical tools. Gibson, an American-born Canadian science-fiction writer and essayist, is a winner of the Nebula Award, the Philip K. Dick Award, and the Hugo Award, three of the science-fiction community’s most prestigious, but to those outside that community, his most impactful contribution to popular culture is perhaps his 1981 coinage of the term “cyberspace.”<sup>39</sup> And it is, in fact, Gibson’s engagement of the idea of cyberspace that I mine for a relevant model of place-making.

Gibson first employed the term in a short story entitled “Burning Chrome” (1982), which together with three others of his short stories, “Fragments of a Hologram Rose” (1977), “Johnny Mnemonic” (1981), and “New Rose Hotel” (1981), functioned as the prototype for his “Sprawl” trilogy, introducing the global setting and some of the characters who would subsequently reappear in the three novels of the trilogy. Of the three longer works—*Neuromancer* (1984), *Count Zero* (1986), and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988)—the one in which the idea of cyberspace is most fully developed is the first. Set in the 2030s,<sup>40</sup> *Neuromancer*, reduced to its most basic plot line, is the story of a small group of humans entangled in an artificial intelligence’s elaborate scheme to ‘evolve.’ The artificial intelligence Wintermute knows itself to be part of a greater “*potential* entity,”<sup>41</sup> the realization of which requires its combination—like two lobes of a brain—with a second artificial intelligence, *Neuromancer*. Programmed with “the compulsion that had driven the thing to free itself, to unite with *Neuromancer*,”<sup>42</sup> Wintermute is nonetheless not entirely certain what that “*potential* entity” actually is until its accomplishment comes to pass, at which point it discovers that it is a sentient cyberspace.

Cyberspace, prior to sentience, is at one point succinctly described in the novel as an “infinite datascape,”<sup>43</sup> the accumulation of all digitized and connected data in the world. In a lecture at the 2010 Book Expo America, Gibson noted that in the story, “there’s something *like* the Internet, but called ‘cyberspace’.... More accurately, there’s something *like* cyberspace, but called ‘cyberspace,’ but that gets confusing....”<sup>44</sup> (my italics). Put simply, Gibson’s point is that the cyberspace of *Neuromancer* and its related stories is not exactly the Internet we experience today through the World Wide Web, local area networks (LANs), and other common forms of digital connectivity. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, putting it perhaps more strongly than I would, writes that, “Other than a common fan base driven by a burning desire to see Gibson’s vision as the end and origin of the Internet, Gibson’s cyberspace has little in common with the Net.”<sup>45</sup> It is worth remembering that *Neuromancer*’s publication came a full seven years before the World Wide Web’s introduction to the public and that Gibson’s cyberspace as a literary project is less concerned with accurately anticipating our current interface with the world’s accumulated digital data than with exploring the implications of our evolving relationship to that data. Mark Hansen, artist and journalism professor at Columbia



University, in a short piece for *The New York Times* entitled “Data-Driven Aesthetics,” writes that, “With a few exceptions, data has no natural ‘look,’ no natural ‘visualization,’ and choices have to be made about how it should be displayed. Each choice can reveal certain kinds of patterns in the data while hiding others.”<sup>46</sup> Applied to *Neuromancer*, Hansen’s point about digital art is an apt one, in that Gibson’s words “visualize” a very particular version of cyberspace that highlights the types of patterns, activities, and relationships he attempts to explore.

This vision of cyberspace—a three-dimensional grid of neon lines called the “matrix,” punctuated by colored cubes and spheres and pyramids and towers representing personal and institutional caches of data—is relevant to the study here about place-making at PCC because of a pronounced overlap in perspective. Gibson’s project imagines a representation of data mapped over physical space. Data in the matrix is not inextricably commingled but bundled in discrete and identifiable nodes represented by the simple shapes within the grid: the data belonging to a corporation in a particular location in Switzerland, for example, is represented as a unit, located within the matrix near the representations of data from other institutions in the same European city.<sup>47</sup>



Visualizing data connections mapped over physical space.

Given the similarities, Gibson’s narrative of the engagement of data being key to cyberspace’s eventual sentience can be read as a tale rich with markers useful for describing how memory animates a sense of place. Admittedly, *Neuromancer* is thematically far fuller than what I have been describing, and the story as a whole is not unproblematic when seen through the critical lens of Asian American Studies. Chun’s essay that I referenced above takes particular note of the Orientalist impulse in the incorporation of Asia, Asians, and Asian commodities into Gibson’s particular brand of cyberpunk writing, but I wish to note here that my project is less interested in the racial implications of the future world Gibson creates than in his “visualization” of cyberspace and his characters’ interaction with it. In other words, only one small, instrumental piece of the Gibsonian future is of concern here, and of that piece, content—the imagined mechanics of cyberspace—more than context is the subject of focus.

Employing the device of a voiceover in a children's program, Gibson offers a formal definition of cyberspace in *Neuromancer*:

Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts.... A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding....<sup>48</sup>

Users, or “operators,” experience this “unthinkable complexity” by “jacking in,” connecting their minds to cyberspace by projecting their consciousnesses into it, using “dermatrodes” strapped to the skin across their foreheads and controlling movement with their fingers via cyberspace consoles or “decks.”<sup>49</sup> Readers experience this mental journey—and indeed the entire narrative—from the perspective of Henry Dorsett Case, a particularly gifted “operator,” although not entirely a “legitimate” one, but rather, a “console cowboy,” or the rough equivalent of what we might call a “black hat hacker” today. Case specializes in breaching security, most often for the theft of data, and hence his value to employers and the artificial intelligence Wintermute.

The most critical phrase of Gibson's definition is clearly “consensual hallucination.” In the term “consensual,” Gibson puts forth a vision of cyberspace that is shared, if not public, paralleling the notion of “shared meaning” in my definition of place-making. While it is true that individuals can nurture senses of place that are so driven by personal experience and private memories that they do not resonate with the conceptions of others, these will never form the basis of institutional memory. Like the consensual nature of Gibsonian cyberspace, institutional memory is collective, communal, and, at times, contested. Hallucinations, meanwhile, are defined by neurologist Oliver Sacks as “percepts arising in the absence of any external reality”<sup>50</sup> but, nonetheless, “projected into external space.”<sup>51</sup> Gibson's science fiction effectively reconfigures what he calls “the nonspace of the mind” into Sacks' “external space,” a collectively accessible location that is capable of hosting shared percepts. The world of cyberspace thus becomes a useful analog for the communally shared mental processes of place-making: both are experiences of the mind, and the former offers a schematic approach to imagining the latter.

## **Sacralizing New Worlds**

These shared mental journeys of the community at PCC are simultaneously the story of a racialized group of immigrants finding its place in America and the story of a racialized group of believers finding its place in a white-dominated American Christianity. Both worlds being navigated are, in a sense, ‘new’—no more familiar to the early Chinese arrivals than the American continent was to eighteenth-century European settlers, and no less challenging today than a globalizing world, with its myriad demands for negotiating difference, is for many communities everywhere. That PCC is a church—

rather than, say, a fraternal organization or a commercial interest—has meant that meaning-making in these new worlds has been key to its *raison d'être*, existentially central to every moment of its very being. Making sense of what it means to be Chinese Christians in the United States has, at every step along the way, meant making sense of what it means to be Chinese in this country. The struggles and setbacks—more so even than the joys and achievements—of the Chinese American community as a whole, Christian or not, has required interpretation, because here in this country, the racialized Asian identity has been an inheritance impossible to escape. Interpretation, has, in turn, meant for PCC filtering events and experiences through the lens of Christianity and casting their significance and implications in religious terms. In emphasizing place-making, I argue, firstly, that those experiences that are the most immediate and particular to the church, far more than subscription to some putatively universal set of Christian beliefs and doctrines, are those things that make the community most distinctively Christian, most clearly a community of believers that has taken ownership of its own faith. And secondly, that these experiences are indelibly marked by the realities of race and ethnicity. In other words, the cost of being Chinese American Christians—the painful memories of which are so seldom celebrated—is what distinguishes these people most, both as Chinese Americans and as Christians.

The first portion of Chapter 2 looks at place-making more closely, building toward the eventual examination of religious space as place. To understand PCC as a Chinese American religious space, however, it is necessary to understand the racialized context of which it was/is a part, and the second portion of the chapter examines the place of American Chinatowns—and these Chinatowns as “place”—within Asian American Studies literature. The historically extended concentration of Chinese within these urban districts has made their geography and their geographical implications an integral part of the narrative of Chinese American incorporation into different bodies politic. In much of the literature surveyed, the notion of “place” is not the critical lens through which the various Chinatowns are viewed.<sup>52</sup> Taken together, however, the varied perspectives on Chinatown spaces offer a relatively chronologically thorough and thematically varied picture of how race and place intersect at the level of the ethnic neighborhood/enclave/ghetto. While the institutional emphasis of this study aims for finer resolution than is offered by any of these views of Chinatowns more broadly, the survey is critical for establishing the social contexts within which PCC has existed in different eras. As I visit the various sets of problematics scholars have used to frame their analyses, I connect these broader investigations of Chinatowns with the specific history of PCC to illustrate how the church’s past nests to a significant extent within the broader currents of social, cultural, and political history affecting San Francisco’s Chinatown in particular, but also Chinatowns as a North American construct more generally.

Chapter 3 begins the project of narrowing the focus to the institutional level of the PCC community and of investigating how religion has set the church apart, even as race set Chinatown apart. Just as the Chinese in the early San Francisco Chinatown were a minority in a mostly white California, the eventual believers for which the first physical incarnation of PCC was established were imagined by their advocates to be a moral and religious vanguard within a heathen Chinese world that straddled the Pacific. To the

white American majority and even the missionaries most critical to envisioning the Christianization of the Chinese, this project of conversion was hardly an undisputed good, and the Rev. William Speer's insistence on the inaugural church building met with significant opposition. I argue, however, that the success of his act of establishing a *physical* church space for the Chinese was significant far beyond facilitating the mechanics of evangelization. Rather, it amounted to a lasting sign of the sacralization of race: the first tangible geographic marker, based upon a *theological* foundation, that Chinese in the Americas had a stake in the Christian inheritance of this nation. The chapter presents this genesis of the church as an orienting memory in PCC's current self-understanding and an entry point into the "matrix" of its collective memory.

Preceding Chapter 3 is a brief description of the building that Speer commissioned, and similar vignettes precede chapters 4 and 5, each painting a picture of the physical space occupied by the church in the era discussed in the related chapter. The three structures described are each marked by conditions both inherited and created by the church community. Reflective of the time periods in which they were constructed, the buildings delimited to a certain extent the community's 'practice' of place. The sense of place with which the current congregation at PCC engages comprises, in part, histories enacted with these church buildings at their geographic center. Certainly the church's life was lived also beyond the walls of these buildings, but especially when existence in Chinatown was so heavily circumscribed by racism well into the 1960s, a Chinese Presbyterian identity meant a close association with these spaces recognized as specifically Chinese Presbyterian. Knowledge of how these earlier structures appeared and were experienced is not widespread today, and the vignettes serve the task of mining the Foucauldian "field of memory" discussed above.

After Speer's departure from San Francisco in 1857, there was a year-and-a-half interlude before the Presbyterian denomination found and appointed his successor, the Rev. Augustus Loomis. Chapter 4 discusses the eventual overlapping tenures of Loomis and the Rev. Ira Condit, the third missionary appointed to the church, as an alternative genesis account, given that the tiny original membership had all but evaporated by the time of Loomis' arrival. Within the institutional memory of the church, two genesis accounts create a level of 'play' within the system, allowing for differing perspectives on the original mission of the church. Contrasting visions between the language ministries today consequently find individually justifiable traction that each 'has been the mission of the church from the very beginning.' Under Loomis and Condit, PCC was institutionalized, and the foci of its work and the nature of its relationship with the national church were regularized, thereby defining the church's place in Chinatown in publicly understandable terms. Much of this institutional character imparted by the missionary leadership, a good portion of which survives to this day, was shaped in the decades of the 1870s and 1880s, when anti-Chinese sentiments were at their zenith, but in the steady growth of the church during this trouble-filled period, the Chinese practiced a counter-narrative that redefined the meanings of the religious space. What the church meant to them, I argue, was considerably different from what it meant to their white American leaders. By contesting the missionaries' priorities through their various everyday practices, the immigrants inscribed into the church a sacralizing of the present

moment that was at odds with the future-oriented evangelical agenda of their ministers. And in claiming the present through this new vehicle of Christianity, they truly made the faith their own.

Throughout Loomis' and Condit's pastorates and well into the mid-twentieth century, Chinatown's boundaries reflected some very real limits on the mobility of the Chinese who called PCC their church home. In the 1960s when these conditions finally changed definitively, the Rev. F.S. "Dick" Wichman, the last minister to be appointed to the church by the missionary establishment of the Presbyterian denomination, was the *de facto* senior minister at PCC and the Executive Director of Cameron House, and his vision for the ascendant generation of English-speaking young people, in particular, was transformative in the way it imagined as their Christian duty active civic participation not only within Chinatown but also beyond it. In an era when the United States was experiencing tremendous social change, Wichman's leadership helped to place many at PCC squarely in the midst of it, helped to make them feel that the new directions in which the nation was headed held a place for them, too. Then in 1987, ten years after his retirement, public accusations were brought against Wichman of sexual abuse of a number of boys and young men under his charge and of abuse of the powers of his previous offices. The end of the church's missionary period was, thus, for many marked by the untenability of the notion of the church as a safe place.

Chapter 5 explores how the members of the English worshiping community of PCC sought to counter this epistemic violence, publicly revealing the wound inflicted on the community and then demanding that truth be the balm for healing. The drive for transparency and the privileging of the voices of the abused was an exercise in reversing the obfuscation that Foucault suggests operates behind artificial tendencies toward narrative continuity. Here the church was actively seeking to reveal the ruptures, cleavages, and scars of the past, believing that the embrace of the painful would unleash creative possibilities for understanding how to be a church. Not only was it reclaiming place by redefining safety, in seeking restorative justice it was articulating a new ethno-religious identity in the post-missionary era. A new complicating factor that marked this post-missionary era, however, was the division of the church into three language ministries with different histories of Chinese American experience. Healing the cleavages that had marked the end of the missionary period, it turned out, simultaneously meant addressing cleavages resulting from past abuses of power which, in this case, were not sexual but cultural: the scars of an English-language/American-culture-led dominance. Interestingly, opportunities for healing the wounds of both the relational rift between the language ministries and the sexual abuse came in the form of place-making acts, specifically, the shared planning surrounding the church remodeling in 2002-03 and the installation of artwork commemorating the efforts of healing from the sexual abuse in a likewise remodeled chapel at Cameron House. The church's reconciliatory efforts of reclaiming a sense of safety and reimagining collectively the physical structure of the church sacralized the notion of place itself, making it that vehicle through which PCC lived its faith and reaffirmed the shared nature of that faith.

Among American institutions generally, let alone Asian American institutions, PCC's 160-year history distinguishes it as one with extraordinary longevity. Describing it as simply a Protestant church is vastly inadequate, as it would be to describe any church as simply a generic representation of some imagined universal form. In PCC, Asian American history intersects with American Christianity, and over time, the particularities of this intersection have not only provided the church with a distinctive identity but have done so in ways which foreground Asian American race and ethnicity in the broader conversation around American religion.

## 2. Religion and Race as Praxis

In the late nineteenth century, the building occupied by the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown was Neo-Gothic, a style recognized both then and now as being closely associated with the Christian churches of Medieval Europe. The structure had, in addition, a bell tower, a feature which made it further apparent that the building was a church. In contrast, the visual context of today's Chinatown is so architecturally eclectic, and the repurposing of older buildings has been so extensive, that the more muted style of PCC's current home is far less emblematic and annunciative of the nature of the institution it houses. The church consequently relies more heavily on the display of its name to identify it on the crowded streetscape. A slightly shortened version of it in Chinese characters—literally translated as “Chinese Christian Presbyterian Church”—can be seen on the entablature crowning the portico, and at the base of the portico, at roughly eye level for pedestrians on Stockton Street, is the name in English.



The name of the church displayed on the building exterior.

These displays of the name most certainly serve an explanatory function, but at the same time, they can be understood as shorthand for another set of markers, both complex and extensive, that signify in far greater depth this place as religious space. Roger G. Kennedy, former Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, in his volume on the architecture of houses of worship, *American Churches*, offers the pithy insight that it is “the content, not the container, [that] makes a building religious.”<sup>1</sup> What that “content” comprises, however, is decidedly broad. Kennedy goes on to suggest that the variety we see in church buildings “is an outcome of human energy that wishes to find physical means of expression for a very difficult but necessary task, worship of a Mystery.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, the content of a religious building might

encompass both a manifestation of the Mystery itself—“God” in Christian terms—and all that is understood as worship of that Mystery. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the first religious sanctuary of special note was the tabernacle—a sacred space delimited by curtains of fine linen and covered by a tent formed from curtains of goats’ hair—which accompanied the Israelites in their desert wanderings after their escape from captivity in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> In that portable sanctuary, both elements of Kennedy’s “content” were to be found, according to the biblical account. The priests performed their sacred duties there, mediating between God and the Israelites,<sup>4</sup> and God manifested the divine self there as a cloud covering the tent by day and a flame within the cloud by night.<sup>5</sup>

While the belief in God’s presence may be a significant motivator of the actions of believers within a church space, it is the actions themselves in which we are most interested, both because an evaluation of the presence of the divine is beyond the scope of this study and because the actions of the believers are what articulate with our definition of place-making as an investment of a physical space with shared meaning. Geographer Tim Cresswell argues that:

People read places by acting in them. Our actions in place are evidence of our preferred reading. Just as a book comes to have meaning through our reading it, so a place comes to have meaning through our actions in it—by “practice”—and through our reactions to this practice. When we are silent in the library or kneeling in the church we are “reading” the place. This practice is, in turn, informed by the always already existing meanings of the place. Kneeling in church is an interpretation of what the church means; it also reinforces the meaning of the church. Place is produced by practice that adheres to (ideological) beliefs about what is the appropriate thing to do. But place reproduces the beliefs that produce it in a way that makes them appear natural, self-evident, and commonsense. We are silent in a library because we believe that it is appropriate to be silent in libraries, and by being silent in libraries we contribute to the continuation of silence. Thus places are active forces in the reproduction of norms—in the definition of appropriate practice. Place constitutes our beliefs about what is appropriate as much as it is constituted by them.<sup>6</sup>

In this sense, the displays of the PCC name on the exterior of the building is a signifier of an intricate complex of religious praxis that occurs within the church’s walls, the day-to-day, moment-by-moment practice of religion, as opposed to some theoretical summation of the meaning of faith.

Most obviously included in this praxis of religion are the display of symbols and the rituals commonly associated with church life on any given Sunday: the robes of the worship leaders, the colorful stoles, the cross on the wall, the prayers, the hymn-singing, the sermons, the sharing of the bread and wine at Communion, and even the coffee hour or tea time that often follows worship services. But in addition, a shared faith also plays a central role in the nurture of relationships: it offers place and occasion for the



formation of friendships, mentorships, and other types of associative bonds at the church; it provides a platform for shared activity; and it conditions relationships by offering a common worldview and a shared language for the expression of values and morals. Another way of putting that last is to say that religion as praxis includes the ways in which people's thinking—their mental practice—both when they are alone and when they are in the company of others, come to be shaped by their faith. And this conditioning of thought and expression is ever more obvious when believers are conscious of their own presence in a religious space, when they are, as Cresswell puts it, “reading” the church space where they are. There is an old joke which illustrates this connection between religious praxis and place particularly well:

A Sunday-School teacher seeking to introduce a story to his class of young students holds up a picture of a rabbit. “Who can tell me what this is?” he asks. When the children respond with a suspicious silence, he prods them by enthusiastically explaining, “It hops; it's got long, floppy ears and a fluffy tail; and it loves to eat carrots!” The children stare back uncertainly, until finally, one brave little girl raises her hand hesitantly and offers, “Well...it sounds like a rabbit.... And it looks like a rabbit.... But it must be Jesus.”

The point of the story, of course, is that the children of the Sunday-School class have internalized a certain ideological framework—though admittedly an exaggerated one—which conditions what can be thought and can be said in a space read as “church.” The children act and speak in a particular manner—their interpretation of practicing their religion—because they are at church, and their location is simultaneously produced as a religious place—as a church—by this practice of investing meaning.

Religion as communal praxis transforms faith from what religion scholar Peter W. Williams calls “personal religion” into “public religion,” or as he defines it, “the religious expression and organization of a group of people who have constituted themselves, formally or informally, as a religious *community*.”<sup>7</sup> Although the italics are Williams', they conveniently highlight that portion of the definition which is most problematic—and pivotal—for this study as well, namely *what community* is being designated. Certainly, when the members of PCC practice together, they simultaneously produce and reproduce the PCC community itself. It might seem a forgone conclusion that this continual production and reproduction of PCC serves at the same time to constitute a larger Christian church universal, but that has, in fact, not always been the case. As we will examine in chapters 3 and 4, race and ethnicity were for a long time complicating factors. The possibility of Chinese being regarded as Christian equals to white Americans, or as Christians at all, was held to be in doubt by much of white America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. “Heathenism” was believed by many not to be an issue of either ignorance or volition but, rather, an element of the ‘essence’ of Chinese character. Thus, even as missionaries labored to convert the Chinese, the existence of a prevailing social environment of hostility called into question the assumption that the practice of Christianity by these early groups of Chinese at PCC served, in fact, to constitute the *same* broader religious community as that of white Americans. The

American Protestant church well into the twentieth century was by no means a church universal but, rather, comprised separate churches for whites, African Americans, Native Americans, and Asians. Nominally, they may all have been Protestant Christian institutions and may all have supposedly embodied the biblical notion of racial/ethnic equality that in Christ “[t]here is no longer Jew or Greek,”<sup>8</sup> but the reality of enforced racial segregation well into the middle of the twentieth century belies the claim. Each of the three pivotal moments explored in chapters 3 through 5 involves the PCC community at different stages of its life engaging the question of what kind of community it is constituting by its particular praxis of public religion.

Race/ethnicity, the very factor which complicates this question, can itself be understood as praxis. Like religion, race/ethnicity is also performed: enacted in unspoken, internal dialogues, and rehearsed in interpersonal relationships. Aside from race and ethnicity as concepts theorized and debated, they are additionally ‘lived’ every day in the form of stories and art, social inclusion and exclusion, economic harms and benefits. And like religion, race/ethnicity acts to constitute place and is, in turn, constituted by it. The following chapters of this study examine the intersection of race and religion at the institutional level of the local church, but in order to understand the significance of ‘Chinese-ness’ at that scalar level, it is necessary to first look at it more broadly at the level of the Chinatown community of which the church was a part.<sup>9</sup> The social forces which determined the life opportunities of the Chinese at PCC affected Chinese in the United States more generally, and the church’s religion-inflected responses to these pressures constituted its praxis of theologizing, of ‘living’ its beliefs in the face of everyday experience, key moments of which have lingered on in the church’s institutional memory. To understand the church as place, therefore, it is helpful to first survey what we know about Chinatown as place.

## **Race/Ethnicity, and Chinatown as Geographic Context**

The Presbyterian Church in Chinatown in many ways epitomizes Chinese American history. It reflects the development of Chinese communities in the United States, insofar as its own history nests temporally within virtually the entire length of the history of Chinese America on the U.S. mainland. Its earliest members arrived with the first cohorts of Chinese immigrants; it was established in the city that was, for a century, the main gateway, for arriving Chinese and a key center, if not *the* center, of Chinese American life; and its ‘Americanization’ as an institution saw it through the milestone events of an initial welcome of arriving Chinese, then rejection and Exclusion, the broader anti-Asian initiatives of the Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924, the Second World War and token acceptance, antagonism again during the Korean War, the Immigration Reform of 1965, the geopolitical tensions of the Vietnam era, and the love-hate tensions of Sino-American politico-economic relations in the rapidly globalizing world since.

That race and ethnicity have mattered to the development of PCC is clearly no surprise: if views on race and ethnicity in this country have affected the life chances of

individual ethnic Asians over the past century and a half, and those of ethnic Chinese more particularly, then we should expect that those same views would have had real-life consequences as well on the development of collectives such as PCC, which identify clearly as Chinese American institutions. What I wish to emphasize here, however, is the fact that there is also a spatial component to PCC's location within American temporality, that being its continued existence within the geographic confines of San Francisco's Chinatown. Not only has that subjected the church to the vicissitudes of municipal politics, of the sort clearly seen in San Francisco's city governance today, but it has also subjected it to cultural perceptions focused particularly on the district, to international politics, and to the nodal pressures of a globalized diasporic Chinese economy. In these respects, San Francisco's Chinatown, as the geographic context of PCC, has shared much over the years with historic Chinatowns elsewhere in North America. By "historic," I mean such Chinatowns as the ones in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Honolulu, and Vancouver, British Columbia among others—communities which trace their origins to the nineteenth century and which were shaped by racist governmental policies of exclusion that defined demographic make-up, economic opportunity, and the possibilities of integration with the larger surrounding society.<sup>10</sup> Though the specifics of the different locations may differ, the broader strokes of the multiply angled arguments that geography conditions the functioning of racial/ethnic ideology obtain equally.

## Early Chinatown in Visual Representation

Anthony Lee, examining visual representations of San Francisco's Chinatown over the hundred years from 1850 to 1950, photographs in particular, argues that they are never neutral depictions of life in the quarter but have always made political statements that resonated with political considerations in the wider American society. Often presented in Orientalist fashion, these images by white American artists evidenced an evolving struggle over "desire" for what the Chinese subject represented and the drive to depict "difference" from that subject regarded as less modern, less virtuous, and less "evolved," all the while invariably asserting power over this Chinese "other."<sup>11</sup> John Kuo Wei Tchen, looking more specifically at the work of famed early-twentieth-century photographer Arnold Genthe, similarly notes how the photographer deliberately creates the impression of an exotic "Canton of the West" by printing and publishing "his most purely 'Chinese' photographs, those which did not show Caucasians intermingling with Chinese in the streets." On occasion, Genthe also manipulated his images, retouching them to exclude white subjects and English signage, as well as telephone and electrical wires, indicators of a modernity at odds with the developmentally static world he was attempting to create with his photographs.<sup>12</sup> Drawing upon writings the photographer himself left behind, Tchen is careful to note that, "He [Genthe] did not so much view the Chinatown photographs as visual documents faithfully describing the life of the quarter as he used the subject matter as a vehicle for his personal artistry and as a means of earning a living."<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, precisely because Genthe's work is so visually compelling, it is not an overstatement to say that the photographs have come to be received as *both* historical document and artwork and that, in either guise, the power of

the white “gaze” is affirmed, at the same time that the artificially generated absence of white subjects maximizes distance and difference.

Relative to PCC, Lee’s argument about representation as political statement can be seen in the image below of Mrs. Ira M. Condit (Samantha Davis Knox), the (second) wife of the third minister appointed to the church, with members of her Bible class.<sup>14</sup>



The pavilion and moon gate visible in the backdrop, together with the traditional Chinese garb and the queue worn by six of the twelve Asian-featured men—the queues are not visible, but inferable from the half-shaven pates and hair drawn tightly back—establish definitively the ethnicity of the students. Interestingly, there seems to be a very deliberate subtext of ‘evolution’ in the positioning of the subjects. Immediately to Mrs. Condit’s left and right are two of the four most Westernized of the men—again, as seen in clothing and hairstyle—the other two in the same category bracketing the frame on each end of the back row. While the four outermost in the seated front row are visibly ‘traditional,’ the middle four in the back row alternate between being fully ‘traditional’ and being ‘transitional,’ the Chinese clothing of the latter juxtaposed conspicuously against their simultaneous abandonment of the queue, a key identifier of Qing-Dynasty Chinese-ness and maleness, suspending the subjects between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern,’ ‘Chinese’ and ‘American.’ Mrs. Condit’s positioning at the very center of the photograph and the casual tilt of her body and easy smile, in contrast to the stiff formality of her students, attest to her clear authority and power in the group. Her race and gender, of course, also stand out in stark contrast, establishing the preeminence of the white, Victorian-era American woman over her Chinese male wards. That there are twelve men in this photograph may be entirely coincidental, but in the lexicon of Christian iconography, it is, of course, reminiscent of Jesus with his Twelve Disciples, particularly

as depicted by Leonardo da Vinci in his painting *The Last Supper*: four balanced groupings of three disciples, with the closest disciples physically closest to Jesus in the painting.<sup>15</sup>



Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, circa 1495-98, Convent of Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan

To a Christian viewer of the Condit photograph, neither the similarity in arrangement nor its suggestions of hierarchy would likely have been lost. Read as 'textual' documentation of everyday relations between Mrs. Condit and her students, the photograph is rich with suggestion about the accepted/expected social order.

## **Racially-Charged Boundaries and Borders**

Visual representation, of the sort that Lee describes, was a manifestation of a widespread ideological perspective held by white Americans toward Chinese in the latter half of the nineteenth century and at least the first half of the twentieth, which asserted the superiority of whites and the undesirability of the supposedly inferior Chinese. The passage by the U.S. Congress of the Page Act in 1875 was an early signal on the national stage of the exclusionist direction toward which the country would head. This very first of federal laws to restrict immigration denied entry to three groups of persons deemed 'undesirable': Asians coming as forced laborers, Asian women presumably attempting to enter for "lewd or immoral purposes" (i.e. prostitution), and convicted criminals from any country. While the 'moral' descriptor in each of the three categories arguably trumped the racial and gender descriptors, it is clear that both race and gender were already firmly associated with social acceptability by this early point in the country's consideration of its immigration policies.<sup>16</sup> Judy Yung notes the 'success' of the law, calculating that, "between 1876 and 1882, the number of Chinese women entering the United States declined relative to the previous seven-year period by 69 percent."<sup>17</sup> The Exclusion Act of 1882, which denied Chinese laborers entry to this country, was the first instance in

American history of the nation overtly barring immigrants on the basis of race, nationality, and class<sup>18</sup> and a watershed moment in American public discourse on the extent of socially and legally permissible discrimination. Certainly, there were less subtle expressions of hierarchical thinking that resulted in death, dismemberment, and impoverishment of the Chinese, but passage of the Exclusion Act was a signal event, because hostility based upon racialized ideology had found such clear expression in the representative system of government that the United States held—and still holds—as central to its national identity. The renewals and expansions of the law in 1888 and 1892 and its extension without time limit in 1902 (approved by Congress in 1904) further attested to the ideological traction it had secured in the public's mind.<sup>19</sup>

The Exclusion Act was also geographical in its motivations and execution, in the sense that borders were now to be policed on the basis of race, and the interaction between the 'here' of the United States and the 'there' of China would be different from what it had been before. While Chinatowns in the United States ostensibly fell within U.S. borders, a similar functional understanding of a modern, white, Christian 'here' and a backward, Chinese, heathen 'there'—meaning Chinatown—was nonetheless at work. In San Francisco, Chinese persons were effectively prevented by social sanction and legal hurdles from living beyond the boundaries of Chinatown until passage of California's Rumford Fair Housing Act in 1963. In what was one of the earliest academically rigorous sociological studies of the Chinese in the United States, Mary Coolidge wrote in 1909 about the nineteenth-century development of San Francisco's Chinatown that, "On account of the strong anti-Chinese prejudice, no other lodgings would take in Chinese and there came to be blocks and blocks of buildings, subdivided like the cliff dwellings into tiny rooms six by ten or twelve feet, containing nothing except bunks, and each accommodating from two to ten men."<sup>20</sup> To Coolidge, the physical and geographical manifestation of Chinatown was indelibly marked by segregationist pressures. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1947 that restrictive covenants in title deeds were unenforceable,<sup>21</sup> but even so, more than a decade and a half later the Rumford Act was still challenged all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court before it was ultimately upheld.

*At least* until passage of that California law—and in reality, well afterwards—Chinatown, to many white Americans, was a literal and figurative dumping ground for all things Chinese: Chinese people and their belongings, and the fears, fantasies, hopes, and disappointments the white public associated with them. When anti-Chinese violence was at its height in the 1870s and 1880s, San Francisco's Chinatown was oftentimes the intended destination toward which the Chinese were being pushed in the violent purges known in Mandarin Chinese as *paihua*—literally "the driving out of the Chinese"—and usually translated into English with less particularity simply as "the driving out." When the Chinese were driven out of Eureka in 1885, 310 men and women were loaded onto two steamers and shipped down the Pacific coast to San Francisco.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, in Seattle the following year, about a hundred Chinese were loaded onto a San Francisco-bound steamer, 250 short of the intended number only because the mob could not produce the requisite fare the ship's captain demanded before boarding the captive would-be passengers.<sup>23</sup>

## Constructing, Surveilling, and Policing Chinese Morality

Because the Chinese were restricted to Chinatowns, both in San Francisco and elsewhere in the country, their circumscribed environs were often subjected to external definition over which they had limited control. Beyond having their depictions manipulated in the sorts of cultural production that Lee and Tchen describe, which highlighted provinciality, backwardness, and ruin, Chinatowns were also infamous for alleged criminality. That nineteenth-century Chinatowns virtually everywhere were perceived as being hotbeds of gambling, prostitution, opium use, and *tong*<sup>24</sup> violence is a well-known and oft-repeated chapter of Chinese American history. In turn-of-the-century New York, George Washington Connors, better known as “Chuck” Connors or the “mayor of Chinatown,” was famous for his tours of the district, which included hired Chinese performers playing opium-crazed thugs battling each other in knife-fights over “slave girls.”<sup>25</sup> In San Francisco, the same type of tourist attraction, which presented the Chinese as curiosities, freaks, and moral aberrants, had proliferated sufficiently by the beginning of the twentieth century for then Chinese Consul General, Ho Yow, to respond with a community decree forbidding Chinese participation: “No Chinese tour guides are allowed to show Westerners [Chinese] women with bound feet; no Chinese tour guides are allowed to show Westerners opium dens and whore houses....”<sup>26</sup> Mary Ting Yi Lui uses the 1909 death of a nineteen-year-old white woman named Elsie Sigel in New York City to illustrate how these Orientalist fantasies of Chinese criminality and, especially, the supposed threat of perverse Chinese sexual rapacity toward white American women were capable of being projected onto the delineated Chinatown space, even when the alleged crime had no apparent connection to the district.<sup>27</sup> Even though Sigel’s body had been discovered in a trunk in midtown Manhattan, the New York City authorities nonetheless made Chinatown a focal point for surveillance and other strategies of heightened policing in the subsequent municipal, national, and international manhunt for her lover and alleged killer, a Chinese man named Leon Ling. What was particularly salient in Lui’s detailing of the events were the observations that Sigel’s body had not been discovered in Chinatown, that neither Ling nor Sigel had either lived or worked in Chinatown, and that the two had not met in Chinatown. Nonetheless, Chinatown became a geographical proxy for the depravity that was believed to be fundamental to the Chinese character and served as a focal point for white anger.

Vis-à-vis the religious community in San Francisco’s Chinatown, the best known expression of this discourse on Chinese morality are the accounts of trafficked Chinese women being saved from sexual slavery and oppressive marriages by white American churchwomen from the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the first quarter of the twentieth. Records from the Presbyterian denomination, of which PCC is a part, show how emblematic of its mission among the Chinese the denomination felt the work of such women as Donaldina Cameron to be.<sup>28</sup> Cameron came to San Francisco in 1895 to serve as assistant to Margaret Culbertson, then matron of the Chinese Mission Home, which had been established by the Woman’s Occidental Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in 1874 specifically for the rescue of Chinese women from slavery. Cameron went on to serve as matron herself from 1900 to 1934 and was so influential in shaping the institution that it honors her in its name today, that having been changed from

the Chinese Mission Home to Donaldina Cameron House in 1942. Like the matrons before and after her, Cameron was lifted up as a self-giving individual who forsook wealth and opportunity to bring life and the Christian message to hundreds of Chinese women, who were assumed to otherwise have been relegated to lives of misery and servitude at the hands of co-ethnic oppressors, mostly male but sometimes also female, and always to be considered unscrupulous regardless.<sup>29</sup> What is noteworthy in the context of this discussion about perceptions of the moral environment of Chinatown is that, during this time when the Presbyterian denomination sought to emphasize the relevance of its ministry among the Chinese, and Christian women's organizations sought to emphasize the impact of female missionaries, the immorality of Chinatown was trumpeted by both these white American organs, in order that an appropriate backdrop to white Christian virtue might be provided. In this respect, PCC and its sister churches in Chinatown became the actual agents of moral surveillance and policing. And because all of these nineteenth-century churches were denominationally affiliated, the platform from which their ministers and other staff-persons issued their reportage was effectively a national one. What the missionaries in San Francisco had to say about Chinatown was heard through the church network in Chicago and New York and in cities and towns around the country where there were no Chinese at all. Readers and listeners in these far-flung places consequently had opinions about San Francisco's Chinatown—and by extension, about Chinese people in general—and they voted in church assemblies and in national political arenas on the basis of these accounts they had read or heard, but had never witnessed or experienced first-hand.

## **Physical Containment of Chinatown Spaces**

Surveillance and policing based upon this external determination of the character of Chinatown extended to physical containment as well. Beyond social backwardness, “heathenism,” immorality, and criminality, the health and hygiene practices of early Chinese immigrants was considered suspect and an extension of the inferior state of their humanity. Joan B. Trauner writes:

In the era when health officials looked to sanitary reform as the primary means of preventing epidemic disease, the presence of an alien population living in substandard quarters was both socially and medically threatening. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Chinese were to become medical scapegoats; up and down the Pacific coast (and in the Hawaiian Islands) local health officials rationalized the failure of their sanitary programs by tracing all epidemic outbreaks to living conditions among the Chinese.<sup>30</sup>

Not that the alleged offending markers of Chinese-ness were held to be separate and distinct: dirtiness and disease, immorality and unenlightenment (usually meaning the lack of Christian belief) were intertwined as an existential complex. In San Francisco, Chinatown and the related satellite sites of passenger ships arriving from Asia, immigration holding sheds on the waterfront, and, from 1910 to 1940, the Angel Island



Immigration Station, were consequently under sustained surveillance for such contagious health hazards as syphilis, smallpox, leprosy, tuberculosis, and trachoma, the presumption being that these geographic concentrations of Chinese bodies and Chinese life practices indicated key nodes in disease vectors, if not the points of origin. Surveillance could include such intrusive practices as house-to-house inspections and record-keeping of observations, with fumigations and the demolition of suspect buildings possible as technologies of supposed disease control.<sup>31</sup>

In the late 1890s, bubonic plague was a major concern to American public health officials, and its discovery in Honolulu's Chinatown in late 1899 led to a new—and disastrous—level of containment. A controlled burn of selected buildings was ordered on January 20, 1900 by Henry Cooper, the president of the Honolulu Board of Health, but a rising wind quickly fanned the flames beyond control. The fire consumed all of Chinatown, burning for seventeen days, destroying thirty-eight acres and four thousand homes, and leaving 4,500 people homeless.<sup>32</sup> When examining physicians in San Francisco several months later pronounced the cause of a death in the local Chinatown to be bubonic plague, the reaction from city authorities was barely less extreme. In a drama that played out over the next five years, widespread fumigation and disinfection with sulfur dioxide were supplemented with an attempt at mass inoculation of the Chinese population with the experimental Haffkine vaccine,<sup>33</sup> widespread efforts to exterminate rats in the sewers with poisoned fish and an extremely toxic fumigant, an order to cement basements and cellars as a “rat-proofing” measure, and, most significantly, two virtually back-to-back quarantines of all of Chinatown, which together lasted over three months from March till June, 1900.<sup>34</sup>

In our current discussion of geographically defined control and containment, this last measure is especially noteworthy for its limitation on the physical mobility of the Chinese population, its chokehold on incoming resources to the district, including food, and its targeted economic impact on Chinatown businesses. The quarantine of an entire district stood in marked contrast to the then-prevailing practice of imposing a quarantine solely on specific buildings where evidence of disease had been found. In the designation of the quarantines' boundaries, the underlying racism in the approaches of San Francisco's public health authorities was readily apparent. Nayan Shah writes:

The Board of Health imposed [the] second quarantine of Chinatown at its borders of Kearny, Broadway, Stockton, and California Streets. These borderlines did not guarantee racial homogeneity, since some Chinese lived outside these borders and a handful of whites lived within the boundaries. This reality encouraged the board to leave the exact boundaries to the discretion of the police and public health authorities. The deft selection of quarantine lines was not lost on the *San Francisco Chronicle* correspondent who remarked that by a “careful discrimination in fixing the line of embargo, not one Caucasian doing business on the outer rim of the alleged infected district is affected.... Their Asiatic neighbors, however, are imprisoned within the line.” The only Chinese and Japanese residents

allowed to leave the quarantine zone had to carry certification that they had received the Haffkine vaccination.<sup>35</sup>

In 1900, the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown was situated in its present location on Stockton Street, albeit in a different structure. As such it was on the westernmost boundary of the quarantine, and its inclusion or exclusion was most likely at the discretion of the local health officials. Existing church records, including correspondence from Condit, the minister then in charge, do not indicate what, if any, restrictions were imposed on the church, but we do know a little more about the situation at its sister institution, the Chinese Mission Home. While the Home's location on Sacramento Street, half a block above Stockton, is squarely within Chinatown today, during the quarantine it fell just outside its designated borders. The fact that the resident young women were nonetheless all Chinese somehow still did not cause them to be held subject to the racialized regime of disease control imposed by the city. In her history of the first century of work at the Mission Home/Cameron House, Carol Green Wilson writes:

This was a time when Chinatown was under strict quarantine owing to an alarm of bubonic plague. No one was allowed to cross its borders, in or out, without permission from the Board of Health. But fleet Kum Ching [one of the younger girls in residence at the Mission Home] had sped past the warning shots of the officer on guard and before he could catch up with her had dodged through byways and alleys into the arms of Miss Cameron.<sup>36</sup>

Wilson's account of the warning shots gives a sense of just how strictly the boundaries of Chinatown were policed during the crisis and the threat of deadly force under which the denizens of the district lived. How, precisely, the Mission Home escaped the cordon, given the race and ethnicity of its charges, is unclear, but the close working relationship that the staff at the Home had developed with the city's police and judiciary through the rescue of the Chinese women and the prosecution of traffickers no doubt helped.<sup>37</sup> We might reasonably speculate also that the mission of the Home to both Christianize and Americanize the women and girls it rescued would have served as a compelling argument to the racially biased health authorities that the Home, with its white American standards of hygiene in contrast to the nearby Chinese dwellings, could safely be regarded as unlikely to harbor the plague.

## **Contesting Racialized Space at Different Scalar Levels**

But to say that the Chinese were subjected to denigrating stereotyping and discriminatory policing and legislation is, of course, far from claiming that they submitted passively. In the courts alone, evidence of resistance is substantial. Sucheng Chan puts the count of lower-federal-court cases during Exclusion (from 1882 to 1943), involving Chinese as either plaintiffs or defendants, at more than 1,100. In addition, the Chinese were involved in some 170 U.S. Supreme Court cases during the same period.<sup>38</sup> Beyond fighting legal battles in the American courts, the Chinese also resisted limitations

on mobility and on their freedom to determine the character of their own communities through direct action, for example, by engaging in a week-long strike on the Transcontinental Railroad in 1867. And, they resisted through circumvention of discriminatory laws, as with the Exclusion-era practice of claiming citizenship and bringing over “paper sons/daughters” from China after immigration records in San Francisco were destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Kay Anderson, looking at the Chinatown in Vancouver, B.C., argues that the district is a spatial manifestation of a historically determined racial discourse driven by economic and political imperatives at three levels: the national, the provincial, and the local.<sup>39</sup> In other words, race and geography intersect at different scales, the dialectical relationship of externally imposed forces and the resistance of the Chinese to persecution determining the character of Chinatowns during this period when it was physically unsafe, socially unacceptable, and, in some instances, legally forbidden for Chinese to live and move freely beyond the districts’ borders.

Substitute “state” for “province,” and Anderson’s argument would apply equally to the historic Chinatowns in the United States. By the time Congress passed the Exclusion Act in 1882, raising the most significant trans-Pacific barrier up until that point, the Chinese in California, and San Francisco more specifically, had already faced numerous attempts by the state and local governments to circumscribe their environs and limit their mobility. The California Legislature passed acts in 1855, 1858, and 1862 aimed at levying taxes on the Chinese to discourage their arrival in the country and to limit their economic activity, especially their work in the gold fields.<sup>40</sup> Ruled unconstitutional by the state supreme court in each case, these short-lived legal measures nonetheless illustrate how opposition to the Chinese took root early in California and commanded enough support among influential parties to meet the approval of state government. And even the protections of the state constitution, the very instruments used by challengers to overturn measures advocating unfair taxation, eventually succumbed, if only briefly, to mounting racist ideology. The initial form of California’s second constitution, passed in 1879, provided that no state entity, county, municipality or corporation could employ Chinese, proclaimed that the presence of foreigners who were “ineligible to become citizens” was dangerous to the well-being of the state, and declared that “no native of China, no idiot, no insane person, or person convicted of any infamous crime shall ever exercise the privileges of an elector in this state.”<sup>41</sup> These provisions were, however, found by the U.S. Circuit Court the following year to be in violation of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>42</sup>

An additional provision of the state constitution, one most pertinent to our discussion here, authorized municipalities to remove Chinese residents from within city limits to outlying areas. This provision was assumed to have been voided by the same circuit-court decision which had nullified the others, but nonetheless, it remained on the books until November 4, 1952<sup>43</sup> and was used twice in California—in Nevada City in 1880 and in Sacramento in 1886—as legal justification for attempts at passing municipal ordinances for the removal of Chinese communities.<sup>44</sup> And while the Fourteenth Amendment had offered some protection to the Chinese vis-à-vis the racist provisions of the California Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1923 nonetheless upheld the state’s Alien Land Law—first passed in 1913 to forbid the ownership of agricultural land

by “aliens ineligible to citizenship,” and amended in 1920 to forbid the leasing of farmland to them, then amended again in 1923 to prohibit sharecropping contracts—and found it *not* to be in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>45</sup>

In San Francisco, meanwhile, punitive city ordinances had been used for decades to circumscribe the Chinese community and discourage its proliferation. Some of these involved spatial limitations directly, while others targeted economic or cultural activity in attempts to create an environment hostile to the Chinese presence. A few examples include a tax of \$50 on anyone “not eligible for naturalization” aboard a ship attempting to dock in California (1855), an ordinance that forbade the transport of goods for sale on shouldered poles (1870), another which required 500 cubic feet of space (“air”) per person in a lodging house (1870), a law that prohibited the use of gongs at theatrical performances (1870), and an ordinance which levied a higher annual fee for laundries that used no horses for conveying deliveries (1873). While the Chinese were almost never specified by name in these pieces of legislation, the fact that they were clearly and consistently the parties most grievously affected demonstrates the racist intent to target them in each instance.

Most illustrative of local white American interests making aggressive incursions on the geography of Chinatown were the attempts to move the district, in part or in whole, to another location entirely. The following from Philip Choy knits together the moral, religious, health, and economic issues discussed above and shows how they were used to undergird the city government’s designs on Chinatown:

In the municipal report of 1885 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors documented justification for the removal of Chinatown. A special committee was appointed to investigate and report on those conditions of the Chinese quarters that were injurious to the public health or public morals. The committee reported on Chinese idolatry, gambling and opium dens, labor competition, and violations of sanitary, housing, and fire ordinances. Other topics covered included relationships within families and between the sexes. The report’s findings were that sexual relations among the Chinese provided for the gratification of the animal proclivities and that the presence of Chinese women had given (white) boys an opportunity to gratify themselves at very slight cost. The report continued on with the discovery that white prostitutes were patronized almost entirely by the Chinese and that there were numerous instances of white women cohabitating with “Chinamen.”<sup>46</sup>

Given the Board’s apparent fixation on the subject of Chinese sexuality, it is perhaps not a surprise that the first attempt at relocation, which took place in 1854, a mere two years after the beginning of large-scale migration from China, involved the conviction of several Chinese madams for operating brothels. While extant documents do not record the punishment ultimately enforced, the women were given the alternative of paying a \$1,000 fine each, or “removing outside certain limits which the Court would hereafter prescribe.”<sup>47</sup> At various points, the city authorities re-engaged this attempt to displace

prostitutes and brothels and in 1866 even won an agreement from the women involved to occupy only those buildings and locales approved by the Board of Health and the Police Commissioners.<sup>48</sup>

Far more ambitious, however, were the proposals to move Chinatown in its entirety to another site. As San Francisco grew, the benefits, economic and otherwise, of Chinatown's central location and the consequent value of the real estate there also grew increasingly obvious. Plans were put forth to transform the area into a park or a business district, with the most serious threat among these being advanced in the wake of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, when the district lay in ruins and was at its most vulnerable. The city's Board of Supervisors appointed a subcommittee to study the question of relocation, and within a week of the disaster, it had announced that Chinatown would be moved to Hunter's Point. The rush by Chinatown merchants and property owners to rebuild was in large part an effort to circumvent the city's intentions. Interestingly, the pseudo-Oriental style—"the eclectic use of standard classical building elements—brackets, cornices, parapets, Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian capitals, antefix, and acanthus—combined with an oriental roofline"<sup>49</sup>—which came to characterize the new Chinatown rising from the ashes of the old was a deliberate attempt to win favor in the court of public opinion. Even before the Earthquake, when San Francisco was entertaining the proposal for a new master plan for the city, the Secretary of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Look Tin Eli, and other prominent merchants, including Tong Bong and Lew Hing, had proposed a vision of an orientalized district of "veritable fairy palaces filled with the choicest treasures of the Orient,"<sup>50</sup> which, they argued, would change the public's negative impressions of Chinatown and attract tourists.<sup>51</sup> With the threat of wholesale relocation of the district after the Earthquake and the need to win public support for the Chinese residents' desire to stay, the plans for an orientalized streetscape seemed a wise choice for both protective and economically proactive reasons, and the legacy of that set of decisions has been, to this day, a most influential determinant of the visual manifestation of the district.

## **International, Transnational, and Global Perspectives**

Beyond the three scalar levels at which Anderson identifies the interplay of forces determinative of Chinatowns' conditions and geography—the national, the provincial/state, and the municipal—there are three more discussed in the literature on Chinatowns which I wish to identify, these being the international, the transnational, and the global. The international, I identify as that level of direct interaction between nation states through their official representatives, the key states here, of course, being China and the U.S. With the arriving Chinese in the nineteenth century excluded from American citizenship, the expected protector of immigrant welfare and interests was the government of China. The Qing state, however, was decidedly ambivalent toward this role. While emigration, especially to Southeast Asia, had been a reality since the late sixteenth century and diasporic Chinese communities were well established, nonetheless, imperial decrees in 1712 and 1724 forbidding emigration were officially still in effect. The Qing court, early in its rule, had feared re-consolidation of the surviving elements of

the previous dynasty, the Ming, which it had toppled in 1644, and the decrees against emigration were part of a broader attempt to preempt any effort by these disaffected parties to recapture power with the help of political and financial bases established overseas. And while China had indicated in treaties with Britain and the United States during the 1860s that it was supportive of regular overseas migration, it was not until 1875, over two decades after migration to the continental United States had begun, that the Qing government appointed its first mission to the U.S. Even then, it was nearly another two decades still before the government finally abandoned in 1894 its official policy of discouraging the return of emigrants, at last removing from the books the more-than-a-century-and-a-half-old threat of capital punishment.<sup>52</sup> What characterized the involvement of the Chinese government with the immigrant community in the United States during much of the period of migration prior to Exclusion was a noticeable neglect.

To be sure, the Chinese state in the late 1800s was weak, humbled mid-century by Western powers in successive defeats during the First (1839-1842) and Second (1856-1860) Opium Wars; internally riven by regional conflicts—such as the Red Turban Rebellion (1854-1864) and the Bendi-Kejia (Punti-Hakka) clan wars (mid-1850s to mid-1860s) in Canton—and the Taiping Rebellion, a civil war of national scale, which, measured in lives lost, was one of the costliest wars in human history;<sup>53</sup> defeated by another Asian nation, Japan, in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895); and chastised by imperialist Western powers after its half-hearted support of the Boxer Uprising (1900) to expel Western influence was also rewarded with defeat. In its diplomatic relations with the United States, China was, as a result, at a distinct disadvantage. Though the United States had not been an aggressor during the First Opium War, through diplomatic gamesmanship with a crippled China it was, via the 1844 Treaty of Wangxia, nevertheless able to demand most of the privileges won by the primary aggressor—and victor—Great Britain. And even after China had established formal governmental representation for its citizens in the U.S., when the rising tide of anti-Chinese sentiment finally brought about the Exclusion Act in 1882, China was unable to prevent either its enactment or exercise, despite the law's abrogation of the 1868 Burlingame Treaty, which had provided for unobstructed trade, travel, and migration between the two countries. In other words, China's weakness in its international role manifested itself in negligible political support for the Chinese in this country.

By contrast, because Japan during the same period was a rapidly rising military power—having won first the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and then the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, thereby becoming the first Asian nation to defeat a European power in open battle—it was accorded considerably more respect by the United States and won concessions and protections for its citizens abroad that the Chinese could not command. With the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement, Japan agreed to halt the emigration of laborers in the face of rising anti-Japanese sentiment, but other classes of Japanese immigrants were still allowed entry into the United States, as were parents, wives, and children of laborers already in this country and “picture brides” arranged in marriage to bachelor laborers. These same concessions were not available to the Chinese under Exclusion, and more importantly, the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Gentlemen's Agreement were

fundamentally very different types of measures: the former was a law unilaterally passed by the United States and enforced at its will and pleasure, while the latter was an arrangement to which Japan was recognized as having voluntarily ‘agreed,’ with the power of enforcement resting in the hands of the Japanese government. Locally, in San Francisco, an attempt in 1906 to segregate Japanese schoolchildren along with Chinese and Korean ones, drew protests from the Japanese government and the eventual intervention of President Theodore Roosevelt. Though hardly pro-Japan himself, Roosevelt was anxious to avoid provoking an international confrontation and convinced the San Francisco Board of Education to rescind its decision in exchange for a future measure to more broadly curtail Japanese immigration. While this incident ultimately led to the restrictions of the Gentlemen’s Agreement, what is notable here is the fact that Japan’s international stature resulted in the personal intervention of the U.S. President in what was ostensibly a local matter, and the fact that, in the short term, the Japanese community in San Francisco won for itself some immediate relief from racist persecution. We might reasonably extrapolate from such differences between China’s and Japan’s relationships with the United States that the Qing government’s ineffectuality on the international stage contributed to the overall heavier impact of anti-Chinese hostility in the U.S., the same hostility that led to the balkanization and growth of Chinatowns in San Francisco and elsewhere.

Inadequate in its international relations with the United States though China often was in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, the very presence of the Chinese state—together with the enticing market and resource base that it represented—nonetheless imposed some level of demand for accountability from the American government, which otherwise might have been entirely absent. Chinese diplomats officially protested violence and other outrages against the immigrant population—for example, the 1885 massacre of Chinese coal miners in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory and the “driving out” of Chinese from Seattle in 1886—and hired lawyers to sue for damages in the wake of racist roundups in Eureka, Santa Cruz, Felton, and Truckee,<sup>54</sup> but for the most part, advocacy of this sort effected little good. One notable exception directly pertinent to our discussion of San Francisco’s Chinatown space is the role that Chinese governmental intervention played in the wake of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Government representatives were directly involved in the relief effort, providing food and housing and attending to other needs of victims. Chinese Minister Liang Cheng arrived in Oakland four days after the quake to lead the relief effort, and under his direction a project was begun to build 112 cabins for the homeless. Funds from China’s central government and from private individuals in China were also routed through these diplomatic channels, and Liang made special arrangements to enable widows, the extremely poor, and the elderly to return to China if they so chose, directing the consulate general to provide each returnee with a free ticket and five dollars in cash.<sup>55</sup> More importantly, a delegation from the Chinese Legation stepped in to actively oppose San Francisco’s plans to relocate Chinatown to Hunter’s Point, providing a reminder that insistence to do so could provoke an international incident. Furthermore, because China’s consulate-general building, diplomatically protected as Chinese soil, was itself located within Chinatown, its claim to the location stood as a tangible impediment to wholesale removal of the district.<sup>56</sup>

The 1911 revolution in China completely transformed the political landscape of the country and brought new political actors to the fore. Somewhat surprisingly, the United States was the first nation to recognize the new Republic of China. Within the country itself, however, the central government's hold on power was often tenuous over the next four decades, the road toward national unification marked by open battles between the Chinese Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang, or KMT), warlords, and the Chinese Communist Party (the CCP). While the Nationalists nominally represented the new republic, the country was, in fact, fractured and, after the pacification of the warlords in 1927, descended into civil war between the KMT and the CCP. In the immediate aftermath of World War I, China refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles, in large part because the allied powers, including the United States, had refused to support the Chinese claim to the return of formerly German concessions in Shandong Province, which Japan in 1915 had forced the weak republican government under President Yuan Shikai to cede. In the interwar period, Japanese expansionism further complicated the existing internal power struggles, and the need for an anti-imperialist effort grew increasingly pressing until the moment the Second Sino-Japanese War formally broke out with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7, 1937.

Peter Kwong stresses that all of these pressures within China translated into activity at a transnational level, which dramatically shaped the Chinatowns in the United States, the one in New York most particularly, but ones elsewhere also. I use the term “transnational” here, in contrast to the foregoing term “international,” to stress those interactions across national boundaries, which, whether or not they involve formal representatives of nation states, involve non-state actors as well, meaning private individuals and groups in the United States, China, and elsewhere. Kwong notes how competition between the Nationalists and the Communists for the loyalty and financial backing of diasporic communities in the U.S. led to interference in Chinatown politics and, especially, the persecution of perceived Leftists by representatives of the KMT and their allies in the conservative old guard of Chinatown leadership, most specifically the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, heretofore the chief organ of local Chinese representation since the Gold-Rush era.<sup>57</sup> This interference on the part of the Chinese state, whether Nationalist (Taiwan, since 1949) or Communist (mainland China), is termed “extraterritorial domination” by L. Ling-chi Wang and constitutes one half of the “dual domination” paradigm he advances for a more complete analysis of the forces shaping Chinese America. Chinese in the United States, Wang argues, have been confronted domestically by “racial exclusion” from mainstream American society and transnationally by demands from the Chinese state for loyalty in the cultural (being sufficiently “Chinese”), political (supporting appropriate political factions and institutions in either Taiwan or mainland China), and economic (sending remittances and other forms of financial support) realms.<sup>58</sup> In the geography of San Francisco's Chinatown, racial exclusion, as we have seen above, was historically the primary determinant of the district's boundaries. Extraterritorial domination, meanwhile, is often signaled by the flags of Taiwan and mainland China flying from the rooftops of key buildings, these indicators of territoriality and influence being at their most abundant and obvious on the respective national days of October 1 for mainland China and October 10 for Taiwan.



Yong Chen, arguing also that the frame for understanding San Francisco's Chinatown in the first century of its existence needs necessarily to be a transnational one—or, as he puts it, understanding the district and its people as “a Pacific Rim community”<sup>59</sup>—notes that many of the most key exchanges across the Pacific were effected without the involvement of state actors. While he offers some challenges to the widely held view that nationalism was weak among the early immigrants from China,<sup>60</sup> Chen nonetheless concurs with the generally accepted premise that the escalation of anti-Chinese activity in the United States, combined with national humiliations in China such as defeat at the hands of Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War and the failure of the Boxer Uprising, led to a recognizably new level of nationalism among immigrants in this country by the turn of the twentieth century. What is notable is the transnational reinforcement for this growing sense of Chinese nationalism, which sometimes operated *in opposition* to the intentions of state actors. Chen offers as a prime example the 1905 Boycott in China of American goods, in protest against the persecution of Chinese in the United States.<sup>61</sup> The multi-month boycott drew in cities from Hong Kong northward along China's eastern seaboard, reflecting widespread recognition in the country by this point of the importance of the diasporic community in the U.S., identification with it, and an investment in its fate. The boycott was very much driven by activity in China, and while the immigrants in San Francisco's Chinatown and elsewhere in the United States were ostensibly the reason for the protest, they acted mostly in support of their co-ethnics overseas. The Qing administration, however, bowed to pressure from the United States and condemned the boycott and actively worked to end it. The fact that the Chinese government and its people labored at cross-purposes illustrates how acts of transnational solidarity can operate along multiple channels, involving the state in some (e.g. the transfer of relief funds after the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake) and circumventing it in others. These transnational networks, which transported human bodies, material goods, financial resources, and cultural capital, are examined in much of the literature, including Chen's study, as spanning the Pacific between pairs of locations, for example Canton and San Francisco, but Adam McKeown argues that it is helpful to understand them as more than simply bilateral relationships. Rather, he argues that these transnational nodes were part of a larger inter-connecting web of networks between Canton and Chinatowns in locations as distant from one another as Peru, Chicago, and Hawaii.<sup>62</sup> The circulation of goods and bodies and ideas was, consequently, subjected to influences born of multiple and distinct sets of local circumstances. Apart from the immediate issues of exchange and communication, these transnational perspectives together suggest that the spatial construction of historic U.S. Chinatowns might be understood differently, raising possibilities for reconceptualizing territoriality and geographic reach more broadly.

The geopolitics of World War II and the American need of China as an ally against the Japanese in the Pacific theater brought about the formal end of Exclusion in 1943, but the subsequent token annual admission of 105 immigrants from China changed the character of the Chinese American community less than the 1947 expansion of the War Brides Act to allow entry of women married to Chinese American G.I.s. In either case, the impact was small relative to the changes to the demographics of the community ushered in by the passage of the 1965 Hart-Celler Immigration Act. Instituted during the height of the Cold War, the immigration reform was intended to attract scientific and

technical expertise to the United States in its struggle for global dominance against the Soviet Union, and simultaneously, it was to act as an international public-relations tool attesting to the ‘freedom-loving’ character of the U.S. and be a means for easing immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The dramatic increase over the following decades in the number of arrivals from Asia was a largely unintended consequence, but ethnic Chinese now began arriving from different countries and continents, the cohorts no longer being from Canton almost exclusively and the individual immigrants no longer being mostly males of working age. This new wave of Chinese immigrants has come at a time of tremendous change worldwide. Not only have they witnessed the end of the Cold War, but more significantly, they have since been a part of a world changing at breakneck speed. Transportation, communications, manufacturing, and finance have all undergone—and continue to undergo—such transformations that economic, social, and political organization have deviated from the rigid rules of the past. Commercial jetliners, the Internet, instantaneous electronic transfers of capital, and robotics in manufacturing and logistics are all elements of the spatiotemporal-shifting phenomena characteristic of postmodernity that David Harvey refers to collectively as “time-space compression.”<sup>63</sup> Together with ascendant neo-liberal economic policies pursued by most capitalist countries during the 1980s, which led to widespread privatization and deregulation, these technologies of shrinking distances and hypermobility have brought vast amounts of new financial capital and labor to historic Chinatowns in the United States, reshaping in particular the ones located in what Saskia Sassen refers to as “global cities,” those transnational hubs of corporate administration, banking, communications, and legal support, such as New York and Los Angeles.<sup>64</sup>

Engaging this global perspective, Jan Lin describes how the influx of capital, banking services, and the monies of overseas Chinese previously excluded from investment in New York’s Chinatown have reconstituted the district into an ethnic economic enclave integrated into a global capitalist economy.<sup>65</sup> Observing the early stages of this same phenomenon of transnational capital seeking the highest returns globally, Peter Kwong is quick to point out that this “speculative capital” was not the genesis of the revitalization of the district’s economy but was instead attracted to the infrastructure put in place by previous generations of local entrepreneurs and investors.<sup>66</sup> Kwong notes further that racist exclusion and neglect of Chinatown historically and its consequent incomplete social and economic integration into the surrounding city has continued to mean that new capital is disproportionately the result of investments made by ethnic Chinese. Nonetheless, Kwong and Lin agree that the operations of transnational capital have led to dual circuits of immigration, marked by class, access to capital, gender, and point of origin (i.e. urban or rural, Taiwan or mainland China, etc.).<sup>67</sup> Lin refers to these as a more mobile, more educated, and more affluent “upper circuit,” which tends to locate itself in satellite Chinatowns (in Queens, Brooklyn, etc.) and other outlying areas, and a more working-class, less educated, and less affluent “lower circuit,” which is geographically locked into Manhattan’s Chinatown core (what I refer to as New York’s historic Chinatown).<sup>68</sup> Kwong uses the terms “Uptown Chinese” and “Downtown Chinese” to refer to the same distinctions,<sup>69</sup> and both authors emphasize how globalization has exacerbated economic disparities, so that the Downtown Chinese are often exploited as laborers, with the “enclave” character of Chinatown suggesting that

their exploiters are, more often than not, co-ethnics commanding access to globalized capital.

San Francisco is not quite a “global city” on the order of New York or Los Angeles, in terms of nodal location within financial networks or on the map of cities hosting headquarters of transnational corporations, but it is a major port city and air transportation hub and its proximity to Silicon Valley makes it a key location in the world of technological innovation. Many of the same operations of Chinese transnational capital are thus reproduced in San Francisco, economic stratification being apparent between the more working-class residents of the city’s Chinatown and the more affluent residents of Chinese and Asian American communities elsewhere in the Bay Area. Membership at PCC has likewise been influenced by these immigration dynamics. Because the church is situated in San Francisco’s historic Chinatown, much of the growth in participation in recent years has come from among the Downtown-Chinese denizens of the surrounding neighborhood, at the same time that the core membership mostly comprises individuals and families from outside Chinatown. In this sense, the geographic location of the church is itself a reflection of some historic tension in the evolution of the Chinese community in the San Francisco Bay Area as the region globalizes.

### **“Chinatown” in the Church’s Name**

The literature surveyed above combines to tell the story that nowhere in the United States is Chinese-ness as a lived reality—a praxis internalized, performed, and contested—more deeply imprinted spatially than in this country’s historic Chinatowns. As part of the one in San Francisco, PCC participates in this ongoing national narrative of Asian Americans and race, while at the same time distinguishing itself additionally—particularly so in its early existence—through its practice of its religious identity. The church’s name, on its surface, suggests this intersection overtly, including both mention of religious affiliation, “Presbyterian Church,” and mention of racially determined place, “in Chinatown.” Upon examining the evolution of the institution’s name more closely, however, one detects a significant underlying contradiction. The rationale for the most current version of the name is recorded in the church’s 120<sup>th</sup>-anniversary yearbook (1973):

[C]ommunity awareness led directly to the decision to change the Church’s name. The proposition, first moved by Betha Hoy in Nov. 1957 but tabled to Nov. 5, 1958, was to replace the name “Chinese Presbyterian Church.” Among the new suggestions made were “Speer United Presbyterian Church”, [“]Pioneer Presbyterian Church,[”] and “Stockton St. Presbyterian Church.” In the end, after six ballots, the name was changed on Dec. 28 to “The Presbyterian Church in Chinatown.” The major factor behind this name’s victory was due entirely to its emphasis on the Church’s understanding of their [*sic*] mission being the responsibility to serving its surrounding community, whether the people were Chinese or not.<sup>70</sup>

The yearbook account does not record why, precisely, the vote was delayed an entire year, but it is clear that in none among the proposed alternatives to the church's current name is the primary ethnic affiliation of its membership designated. Far more than the desire for some specific new name, the account seems to suggest a desire to distance the church from identification as Chinese. The last sentence of the quotation hints that the downplaying of race/ethnicity behind the various proposed options was deliberate, explaining in the process that the term "Chinatown" in the name finally chosen was perceived as historically deracinated and as referring to location only.

This rationale is somewhat curious, given that in 1958-59, Chinatown was still a highly insular and segregated place. The Rumford Fair Housing Act (1963), which provided much needed legal support for mass Chinese residential relocation out of Chinatown was not passed until half a decade later, and the Gulf of Tonkin Incident (1964), which went on to become a symbol for the justification of the escalation of U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam War, bolstering along the way the resistive impulses of the emerging Asian American movement, was likewise a half decade away. The Rev. Calvin Chinn, a former pastor of the English Ministry, responds to the question of the boundaries of Chinatown in the 1950s this way:

It was very defined. Oh yeah, we knew exactly what our boundaries were. Broadway Street to the north, the Stockton Street Tunnel to the [south], and I think in our day, it was probably Powell Street [to the west], Powell and Grant [to the east], maybe Kearny [east] and maybe Mason [west], but, I mean, you know, the geographic, political, racial boundaries were very, just, clear.<sup>71</sup>

In other words, in 1958-59, the "surrounding community" so intentionally noted in the yearbook quotation was most definitely predominantly Chinese, and the suggestion that it might be otherwise was premature—and still is—given political circumstances. Thus, the name change, *as explained*, took the church from a name that clearly referenced its membership to a name that referenced a mission which, in fact, as implied, did not exist.

More likely, the name change reflected an internal debate about whether the church was Chinese in character or was simply one more component in a church universal to which any Christian could lay equal claim regardless of race/ethnicity or history. Despite the acceptance of the new name ultimately, the year-long delay in the vote may have signaled resistance to the more assimilationist aspirations that welcomed integration at the price of a distinctly Chinese institutional character. In this sense, the tension would have been over the rightful place of race/ethnicity in the praxis of religion. My contention, of course, is that the point is moot: at PCC—Presbyterian from its founding and immersed completely in Chinatown, likewise, from its founding—the praxis of religion and the praxis of race/ethnicity are inseparable. And this perspective is now widely held at the church. Despite the justification for the name change given in the 120<sup>th</sup>-anniversary yearbook, virtually everyone in the church community today understands the phrase "in Chinatown" in the institution's name as a reference to its

historical inheritance, rather than as a reference to its geographic location alone. Even in the English Ministry, where the demographic make-up is the most racial-/ethnically diverse, the embrace of a Christianity for all people comes with the recognition of a past and a present that are inextricably linked to the racial/ethnic praxis which defines Chinatown as place.

## Vignette A: The Earliest Locations

On January 14, 1853, the Rev. William Speer reported in a letter to John Lowrie, the Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., that “Yesterday, I leased the second story of a storeroom for a chapel and schoolroom. It will require near \$200 to fit it up properly, and \$60 a month in rent, for a period of six months. If brick and lumber are sufficiently cheap next summer and fall I think I may be able to purchase a lot and build a church from funds obtained here.”<sup>1</sup> That first chapel was located on Sacramento Street, in the very heart of Chinatown, and it served as the initial home of the mission church. The inaugural service a month later, however, was held at the First Presbyterian Church on Stockton Street.<sup>2</sup>

As he anticipated, by June Speer had purchased for \$3,000 a lot at 800 Stockton Street, on the northeast corner of the intersection with Sacramento Street. It measured 44 feet on the sloping Sacramento-Street side and 37 feet on the level Stockton-Street side. The building itself, or what came to be widely known as the “mission house,”<sup>3</sup> was constructed of brick<sup>4</sup> and had a flat roof and arched doorways and windows on the first floor.<sup>5</sup> The first story was fourteen feet tall; and the second, ten.<sup>6</sup> Inside, the mission house featured a basement with a school/reading room, the building’s only septic-tank toilet, and a 23 x 28 feet storeroom, which Speer hoped to lease for rental income to help support the mission. On the first floor were a chapel, designed to seat 300 to 350 people, and a study. And on the second floor were the family apartments in seven rooms.<sup>7</sup> All told, the land and the structure together cost \$23,000.<sup>8</sup> The building was without indoor plumbing, and without installed light fixtures until the chapel and schoolroom were “furnished with gas pipes, and with a neat chandelier, by Messrs. Dhillhorn and Co., (194 Montgomery st. [sic])” in November 1855.<sup>9</sup>



The original mission house<sup>10</sup>

### 3: Anchoring Memory

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

- Genesis 1:1-2<sup>1</sup>

Cyberspace, as the deck presented it, had no particular relationship with the deck's physical whereabouts. When Case jacked in, he opened his eyes to the familiar configuration of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority's Aztec pyramid of data.

- *Neuromancer*<sup>2</sup>

If there is a distant moment from their collective past which the members of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown know better than any other, it is the founding of the church in 1853. Being the first Chinese church in San Francisco—indeed the first Asian church in all of North America—no doubt adds significance to an origins narrative, but even if that special distinction were lacking, the very idea of a beginning is virtually indispensable to the linear conception of history so commonly held. For PCC, the founding of the church has always been important in that conventional vein: for the community it answers the question, “Where do we come from?” and offers a location and a date of origin, which unlike a great deal else about the church's past, is not subject to widely varying interpretations. The origins narrative is a rock; it is an undisputed reference mark; it is an anchor point for memory.

But the founding of the church is not quite as straightforward as the simple recitation of place and date would make it seem. The notion, that amidst the racially prejudicial attitudes of white Americans against the Chinese in the mid-nineteenth century stood a sanctuary of Presbyterian acceptance, is both simplistic and a greatly sanitized version of actual events. And yet, by reducing the narrative to a linkage between founding act, date, and place, an unspoken suggestion is too often left to stand that vision and beneficence marked a denomination's attitude toward the earliest arrivals from Asia, a heritage that the current Presbyterian denomination is only too happy to claim as evidence of a historical commitment to diversity. In the early 1850s, with Chinese immigration only beginning, but increasing at a rapid rate, there was, in fact, a wide range of attitudes among the white American public toward the new arrivals. Open hostility would not peak for another two decades, but physical violence against individual Chinese miners and economic exploitation of that group illustrate some of the more extreme racist positions already taking hold. Another perspective saw the Chinese as a welcome source of labor, and so long as the newcomers knew their place—meaning their subservient position in the American social hierarchy—they were welcome to contribute their sweat and effort to the development of the American West. Far from being limited

to non-Christian whites, the whole range of attitudes from welcome to rejection was to be found within American churches as well, Presbyterian ones being no exception.

This chapter explores the vision for incorporating the Chinese held by one particular individual—the Rev. William Speer, the founding minister of the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church, which would eventually become today’s PCC—and his efforts to incarnate that vision through place-making. Rather than being a mere instrument of the denomination that appointed him to the work, Speer struck out on his own in significant ways and created a pioneering framework for ministry to the Chinese long before other denominations and local churches did anything similar. At PCC today, the English Ministry claims his legacy of social service as the tradition in which it faithfully follows, orienting its collective memory accordingly. While he was far from being completely altruistic in his efforts, those efforts, nonetheless, laid the groundwork for Chinese American Christianity, and more importantly, I argue, Speer’s work initiated a new conversation about Asian American religion that had previously never existed.

## **Speer’s Call to San Francisco**

In 1852, the year that Speer arrived in San Francisco, 20,026 Chinese entered the United States through the city’s Customs House.<sup>3</sup> While a tiny fraction of the nation’s overall population, the Chinese presence had nonetheless jumped from virtually zero—there were only three Chinese living in San Francisco in 1848<sup>4</sup>—in less than five years, and the funneling of all the arrivals through the Golden Gate made the population hyper-visible in the port city. They attracted that much more attention from devoted Christian church-goers, who, for some two decades, since 1830, had supported missionaries laboring to convert the Chinese in China and who, for just as long, had witnessed noticeably limited success on that front. In 1848, the Presbyterian denomination, assessing the magnitude of the needs in China, asked in anguished tones, “And what are we, so few in number, compared with the greatness of the work? We can merely go to here and there a village and in the briefest manner set forth a summary of Christian doctrine, and after a long interval repeat the visit. These multitudes must all perish, unless they believe in Christ; but how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?”<sup>5</sup> S. W. Bonney, a missionary sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, wrote in more personal terms from Whampoa, China on Dec. 20, 1851 that, “I am trying to do a little in imparting revealed truth to the Chinese here, but it is only as a taper in a dark dungeon.”<sup>6</sup> Bonney was introducing to a clergy colleague a Chinese Christian arriving in the United States and in his letter conveyed his hopes that “the brethren in San Francisco will devise some feasible plan for the religious instruction of the [arriving] Chinese.” Expressing frustrations common among his peers, Bonney stressed the advantages of mission work in California, pointing out that his compatriots on the West Coast would face far fewer hindrances in the way of linguistic and environmental challenges:

As they learn more and more of the English language, plain truths of the Bible can be communicated to them as Sunday School scholars are



taught in the Atlantic States. The Chinese language will not spread in California, and the English language is surely a far better medium to convey truth to them than their own crabbed, monosyllabic tongue. . . . I give all encouragement to every Chinaman who wishes to emigrate to California. Under the American flag and on American soil they will be free from the degrading influences of idolatry and heathenism.

As bigoted as Bonney's views may seem to us today, they do, nevertheless, offer some helpful insights into the religious context of his time. Apart from investments in trade, labor, and an expanded American role in global politics—all concerns of Christian America in the 1850s—there was a religious impulse toward evangelism of the world outside of the United States as part of a growing American imperial mindset. Often insecure about its own position vis-à-vis European nations, the United States nonetheless saw itself as part of the developed elite relative to the rest of the world. A latecomer without an existing presence in Africa, Australia, or South America to rival that of established Old-World powers, the U.S. recognized its geographic advantage of a long Pacific coastline and what maritime power—a growing navy and the burgeoning steamship technology—implied for the latest imperial prize, Asia. Like many other expansionist projects of the time, the American one often described its objectives in terms of developmental tutelage. Speer himself, writing in his major volume on the Chinese in 1870 after he had already left the work of Chinese missions, rhetorically asked “why the Chinese race have [*sic*] been brought here, and what lessons they are to learn,” to which he answered: for education in “the arts [and technology],” “our sciences,” “politics,” and “divine knowledge.”<sup>7</sup> The Protestant Christianity indicated by the term “divine knowledge” was widely recognized as both a mark of American identity and key to the cultural impact that was believed to be a fitting accompaniment to American commercial and military influence elsewhere across the globe. Just as much as the United States had to offer the less developed world in the sciences, technology, and democratic government, it was believed, there was an equal amount that it had to offer in terms of faith and morality.

What the snail's pace of evangelism in China had taught the American denominations, however, was that proselytizing to the Chinese, even on home territory, would be no easy endeavor. Unlike their impressions of other target populations for conversion to Christianity, the one American evangelists had of the Chinese was of deep rootedness in developed systems of philosophy, morality, and the arts, a rootedness considered to be an obstacle to Christian outreach. John Waldo Douglas, a Presbyterian minister who served in California for sixty-five years and was the founding editor of *The Pacific*, the local Presbyterian newspaper in the Bay Area, wrote of the Chinese that: “Older and more civilized with schools of philosophy and theology, with books and arts of surprising maturity long before the isle of our ancestors was known to ancient Rome, they gloried in themselves and looked with contempt on others. To such a people our first missionaries seemed like children come to teach the gods, not as to the Hawaiian, like gods descended to teach children.”<sup>8</sup> The language barrier was also significant, and the cultural divide seemed a yawning one in comparison to that faced by domestic missions evangelizing new immigrants from eastern or southern Europe. In 1852, apart

from the fledgling “Mission to the Chinese in California,” the Presbyterian denomination counted only two mission efforts within the United States to populations that were primarily non-English-speaking: “Missions among the Indians” and the “Mission to the Jews” (from Eastern Europe, who were living in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore).<sup>9</sup>

While some local churches in San Francisco had made tentative attempts to reach out to the arriving Chinese, they soon learned that they were ill equipped for the task. The Rev. Albert Williams, the founding minister of the First Presbyterian Church of San Francisco (today known as “Old First Presbyterian Church”), was among the first clergy to engage the Chinese. On October 20, 1850, together with the mayor of the city, John W. Geary, and the Chinese Consul Fredrick A. Woodworth, Williams organized a meeting in Portsmouth Square on the edge of Chinatown, and distributed Chinese language books and tracts, both religious and secular, to the three hundred or so Chinese gathered.<sup>10</sup> A year later, in the winter of 1851-52, in response to the request of four Chinese converts newly arrived from Canton—Lai Sam, Tong Achick, Lee Kan, and Lam Chuen—that the First Presbyterian Church establish missionary work among the local Chinese,<sup>11</sup> Williams’ congregation started a Bible Class for the immigrants, taught by Thomas C. Hambly, an elder at the church.<sup>12</sup> But with the Chinese population rapidly growing, the leadership at First Presbyterian knew they needed additional help, and the Session in 1852 urged the Presbytery of California to petition the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United State of America to extend its China mission by establishing an outpost in California.<sup>13</sup> Williams and his congregation had willingly engaged evangelical work among the Chinese, but the challenges they encountered and the limits of existing resources led to the conclusion that a dedicated mission worker was needed.<sup>14</sup> Bonney, writing from China to F. Buel, Esq., the agent of the Bible Society in San Francisco on Mar 2, 1852, suggested a potential pool of candidates from which to fill the need that was clearly percolating in the Californian city:

If a missionary is wanted for the Chinese in California, I would recommend that some of our fellow laborers who have returned on account of ill health, be sent for. The climate of California may suit them better. Rev. Henry Hickok, of the Methodist Mission, Rev. Thomas W. Tobey of the Southern Baptist Mission, Rev. E. C. Lord of the Northern Baptist Mission, *Rev. Wm. Speer of the American Presbyterian Board*, Wm. A. Macy of the American Board of Commissioners, Dr. Hepburn of the American Presbyterian Board. If these brethren are not better employed, or have not lost all their affection for the Chinese, could they not be useful to the Chinese in California? [My italics.]<sup>15</sup>

The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions had been founded in 1838 as part of a broader movement among American churches away from interdenominational cooperation overseas and toward more denominationally-based efforts. Previously an active participant in the interdenominational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America had fielded

missionaries under its own banner for a little over a decade at this point, and perhaps it is no surprise that it was eager to recruit one of its own to fill the new opening. Speer, who had received his B.Div. from Allegheny Seminary in Pittsburgh in 1846, had departed almost immediately for China after graduating and had served as a missionary at the Presbyterian mission in Canton from 1846 to 1850, when ill health forced his return. His facility with the Cantonese language made him well suited for the post in San Francisco, and he arrived from the East Coast via the Panama Canal on November 11, 1852,<sup>16</sup> together with his second wife, Elizabeth Ewing, to whom he had been married only half a year, since the previous April 20. At the time of his arrival, Speer was thirty.<sup>17</sup>



William Speer, 1846.<sup>18</sup>

Speer set about his work immediately, and by all accounts, he was well received by the Chinese for whom he worked tirelessly over the next five years. Barely four months after his arrival, Speer had apparently ingratiated himself sufficiently with the immigrant community that he was able to report to John Lowrie, one of the Corresponding Secretaries of the Board of Foreign Missions, that:

A pleasing remark of the increasing confidence and respect of the Chinese was shown a few days since in the request made by one of their most active men here that I should become their chief in this country. They need a general superintendent, well acquainted with foreign customs & business, in whom implicit confidence could be placed, & who would shield them if an American from many

annoyances, & acts of injury & plunder to which they are now daily liable. The individual making the request assured me he had consulted a number of his influential friends; but it was quite surprising to me that they should be willing to repose so much confidence in anyone not of their own people. The request will possibly eventuate in the choice of some member of the legal profession to act in some degree as a public advisor & friend.

Since Speer never went on to hold any formal title as an advocate for the Chinese, it is difficult to know the ultimate truthfulness of the comments made to him or if he misjudged in any way the sincerity of what was said, but, as can be concluded from reviewing his other correspondence and writings, he was not prone to self-aggrandizement, so his reporting, at least, can be held to be accurate.

It was understood by all involved that the spread of Christian influence among the Chinese in both the United States and in China was the ultimate goal of the mission, but in the early 1850s it was unclear how likely the Chinese were to remain in this country. Baptist minister O. C. Wheeler, characterizing the arriving immigrants as a God-given mission to white Christians, extrapolated from what he was seeing in late 1851 and rather optimistically predicted that, “Some of them have their families with them and as soon as may be will be followed by multitudes more, all longing for the time when they may take the prescribed ‘oath of allegiance,’ and become bona-fide citizens of the United States.”<sup>19</sup> The possibility of Exclusion not yet on the horizon, it was generally assumed that, even with extensive settlement, trans-Pacific traffic in both directions would continue and would grow. As editor of *The Pacific*, John Waldo Douglas captured the general sentiment in clerical circles, when he wrote of the handful of immigrant Christians and the slightly larger group of unconverted Chinese now coming into contact with Christian clergy, that:

Here, then is the nucleus of what we believe to be a widening circle. This almost incipient church is a germ of what we believe will grow on our soil into a tree of life, whose transplanted branches will yet bear fruit in China! ...Long may God spare them [Speer and his wife], and a growing church may He gather around them, from these congregating heathen, many of whose converts, educated in our Christian institutions may yet go back, laborers to the wide and whitening harvest fields of their native land. ...Such is the relation of the Mission to the Chinese in this state to the mission to China itself. And such the ultimate relation of the church in California to that and other Pacific nations.<sup>20</sup>

More so than simply the fact that the San Francisco mission was a non-English-speaking ministry, this sense of nurturing a native corps of evangelists for the eventual spread of the Gospel in the homeland made the Chinese mission functionally a “foreign mission.” For the purposes of the American Protestant church, San Francisco’s Chinatown was essentially an extension of China, but with all the resource and environmental advantages

lacking in Asia. Speer, himself, was hopeful about this new model of evangelical activity, arguing that, “The Chinese who emigrate here will, on the opposite side of the earth, imitate our social institutions, will adopt our manners to some degree, and be elevated by examples of Christian virtue....”<sup>21</sup>

As might be expected, Speer’s range of activities among the Chinese was oriented—as least ostensibly so—around the core mission of spreading the Gospel. He began regular Sunday services on February 13, 1853, a mere three months after his arrival. He had been prepared to begin even sooner but judged that, with the early arrival of Chinese New Year that year, the competition from festivities might impede a strong start.<sup>22</sup> That initial service, held at the First Presbyterian Church, was bilingual, as much a gesture to include local white Christians and to encourage their sense of ownership in the fledgling mission as to inaugurate preaching among the immigrants. The Board of Foreign Missions reported that, “The object and plans of the mission were... fully unfolded and appeared to awaken feelings of warm interest in all who were present. A liberal collection was taken, to which the Chinese very freely contributed.”<sup>23</sup> Subsequent services were conducted in Chinese, a characteristic which eventually set the Presbyterian ministry apart from that of other Protestant missions when those finally appeared on the scene a decade and a half or more later.<sup>24</sup> True to the Presbyterian denomination’s philosophy of understanding the San Francisco Chinese community as part of the China mission field, Speer and his successors, though they offered English classes at the mission, preached the Gospel in Cantonese, while their peers at the other denominations’ missions conducted their services in English.<sup>25</sup>

Having established regular religious services, Speer did not stand by idly, waiting for new worshipers to appear. Closely allied to the work of preaching were his efforts at visitation—the engagement of the Chinese in their homes and places of work, for the purposes of planting the very first seeds of the Gospel and inviting the listeners to church—and at the distribution of religious tracts. Speer both participated in these activities himself—traveling as far afield as Sacramento, Stockton, and Mariposa<sup>26</sup>—and enlisted the assistance of “native helpers” to accomplish the tasks.<sup>27</sup>

Almost exactly a year after his arrival, on November 6, 1853, Speer formally established the church which would eventually become the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown. In its day, the church was referred to by a number of different names, even in formal denominational documents. It was variously known as the Chinese Presbyterian Church, the Chinese Presbyterian Mission Church, the Chinese Chapel, the First Chinese Church, and the San Francisco Chinese Church. In many ways, its establishment was more significant as a symbolic gesture than a functional one, as it was started with only four members—Lai Sam, Lam Chuen, Ho Cheung, and Ho Chiu<sup>28</sup>—all of whom had already been converted to Christianity before they left China.<sup>29</sup> While the mission could have served equally well the needs of such a small community of believers and would-be believers, Speer’s act created the very first Chinese Protestant church on the continent and the very first Chinese Protestant church outside China, communicating in the process both a public recognition of the importance of Chinese America as a mission field and the Presbyterian denomination’s commitment to it.<sup>30</sup> In true

Presbyterian form—the denominational moniker deriving from the Greek *presbyteros*, meaning “elder”—the very first elder of the church was installed that day. That individual, Lai Sam, who worked as a colporteur for the mission, was, Speer noted, “the brother-in-law of the well-known Leung A-fah, so often mentioned in the Life of Dr. Robert Morrison, who was the first native Protestant preacher of Christ in connection with modern missions to China.”<sup>31</sup> Anglo-Scottish, Morrison himself was the first Protestant missionary to China, arriving there in 1807. And thus, for PCC today, this lineage of leadership reinforces a sense of apostolic succession, situating the church squarely within Christian tradition, with roots clearly traceable to the source of the faith, Foucault’s originary “genius.”

While evangelism was ostensibly the *raison d’être* of the mission, Speer, in many ways made his influence felt much more extensively through the “auxiliary” ministries he established. These—a night school, a medical dispensary, and a newspaper (though Speer interpreted the intended functions of this last one especially broadly)—were supporting efforts widely exercised in the missionary world, and Speer had had experience with all of them during his years in Canton. To them, he added the work of public advocacy, an undertaking which would win him renown as a champion of the Chinese.

The first of the auxiliary efforts to be established was the night school, which was begun at the mission at about the same time as regular Sunday services.<sup>32</sup> The curriculum, as intended by Speer, extended beyond English and the basic tenets of the Christian faith to include “lectures on astronomy, geography, chemistry and other sciences, illustrated by proper apparatus or a magic lantern.”<sup>33</sup> In the longer term, however, his plans turned out to be more ambitious than circumstances were ready to support. Attendance was irregular, the student population comprising many transient laborers temporarily in the city before heading off for the Sierra goldfields, and after the school had been temporarily discontinued and then restarted in June 1854, the Board of Foreign Missions, in its annual report, complained of the Chinese that, “Their desire of knowledge does not extend beyond the mere rudiments of English.”<sup>34</sup> By the beginning of 1856, Speer himself sounded discouraged, reporting to the Foreign Board<sup>35</sup> that:

In this department, there is at present nothing encouraging to notice, further than that the few who find time to come in without regularity, and the stragglers from the mines, have there in the evening opportunities to converse about religion and other matters; and thus acquaintance is made with them, a few tracts are distributed, and some little seed is scattered by the wayside. The school, in this country, cannot be relied upon as a means of imparting an education in English.<sup>36</sup>

Still, he continued to believe that there was an obligation to make available a general education for the Chinese, arguing to the San Francisco Board of Education in 1857 that the public provision of such an education was both a good the immigrants were due by right and a necessity for future socioeconomic health of the state:

As taxpayers they [the Chinese] have a civil right to school privileges. No portion of a miscellaneous population can without detriment to the general peace and welfare, without injustice to them and indeed to all others, and without ultimate great pecuniary disadvantage, be left unenlightened.<sup>37</sup>

The Board of Education, having recently voted seven to two in opposition to admitting Chinese into existing public schools, went on to refuse establishing a segregated school for the immigrants and did not act in support of Speer's offer to start a publicly-supported school for them at the mission.<sup>38</sup> During his tenure in San Francisco, therefore, the night school Speer established was significant for being the only educational institution available to the Chinese, however irregularly attended it might have been.

A physician by training,<sup>39</sup> Speer was also attentive to health conditions in the Chinese community. Much as addressing intellectual needs with schools was seen in missionary circles as a complementary form of witnessing to the Gospel, the provision of healthcare basics was seen as both a necessary foundation for spiritual communities and as an additional avenue of expressing Christian concern for humanity. Speer captured the spirit of this attitude well, when he wrote that, "There is no way to reach the heart so readily as through the relief of pain, or the remedy of disease."<sup>40</sup> But apart from medical care being an auxiliary to evangelism, Speer believed that the white American population was under moral obligation to provide such relief, because they held at least partial responsibility for the suffering some of the Chinese were experiencing. He pointed out that white Americans owned many of the ships bringing the immigrants across the Pacific, and the Chinese were disembarking diseased and ill from lack of proper ventilation, insufficient nutrition, and inadequate cleanliness aboard the often aging and repurposed ships, the duration of whose passage could be two to three times that of the faster clipper ships then available. On one vessel, a fifth of the passengers lost their lives, a tragedy Speer blamed on the fact that the only food available to them for a whole month was "a coarse indigestible starch" made from the roots of a tree.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, Speer argued, similar to the situation with the schools, the Chinese had been taxed for services they were subsequently being denied. Each Chinese passenger boarding a U.S.-bound ship in Hong Kong was required to pay "his five dollars commutation, or 'hospital money,'" in addition to the fare. The passengers were given to understand that these payments entitled them to hospital privileges upon arrival if needed, and while they had previously been provided with such, by 1855, while they were still being admitted to the former State Hospital on Filbert Street, they were generally being excluded from the new City Hospital on Francisco and Stockton Streets that had been completed in 1854. Speer noted that, "The plea has been that they did not bring receipts or certificates, to show that their fee had been paid. But no receipts were given, that ever we could see or hear of; and besides the ship, and not the passengers, is held responsible for the payment of the money." Without adequate care, a large number of new arrivals suffered unnecessarily, and many died. The Chinese protested this mistreatment and offered to put up their own hospital, if only they would be allowed to keep the hospital money, but this was denied them. Speer calculated that the state had collected some

\$250,000 of such fees by early 1855 and estimated that just a portion of this amount would provide the needed facilities and caregivers: “A few thousands of dollars would put up a suitable house; honest and benevolent men could be found who would administer its affairs; physicians and nurses could be more cheaply and effectively provided here than in any other place in the State.”<sup>42</sup>

Absent general access to public facilities, the sources of medical care in Chinatown were oriented virtually completely toward the provision of traditional Chinese medical care: herbalists and Chinese pharmacies,<sup>43</sup> and a more limited range of traditional medicines provided by some of the district associations.<sup>44</sup> Judging the availability of Western medicine to be thoroughly inadequate, Speer started a dispensary at the mission house in July 1854. Open on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the Dispensary was staffed by two volunteer physicians—Dr. W. O. Ayres and Dr. H. P. Coon (Coon’s services seem to have been replaced by that of Dr. F. Downer for at least a considerable portion of 1855)—while the pharmacy of Dr. S. Adams, on the corner of Clay and Dupont Streets, furnished the required medicines at discounted rates.<sup>45</sup> In the first half year of operation until the beginning of January 1855, the Dispensary saw 289 patients, 88% of whom suffered “from the debility and scorbutic affections caused by the small quantity and bad quality of their food on board ship, in connection with the absence of proper ventilation and cleanliness.” During the periods when large numbers of ships were arriving from China, it was not uncommon to find thirty to forty persons waiting at the clinic for treatment.<sup>46</sup> Careful to connect the medical work of the mission to its evangelical purpose, Speer reminded his supporters that, “In every community, and especially in those where the population is crowded, many persons are found suffering from the combined evils of disease and poverty. Institutions for affording gratuitous medical aid to such are now fully recognized as having a sure place among the objects of christian [*sic*] benevolence.”<sup>47</sup> That such a reminder needed to be issued at all suggests that the universal acceptance of Speer’s argument was not as undisputed as the statement on its surface made it seem, and even where the sentiment might otherwise have been generally accepted, the ambivalence with which white Americans were beginning to view the Chinese as a distinct group made the decision to open the clinic a considered act of advocacy.

The newspaper, entitled *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, was the latest of the auxiliary organs to be launched. Its total run lasted two years, the first issue being published on January 4, 1855; and the last, in December 1856. Initially, the paper was issued three times a week in Chinese, the Thursday issue with accompanying English copy. But after six months, in July 1855, the publication schedule was reduced to Chinese copy once a week and bilingual copy once a month. In February 1856, the schedule was further reduced to the monthly bilingual copy only. Clearly, the endeavor was extremely labor-intensive. Lee Kan, an alumnus of the Christian Morrison School in Hong Kong and one of the most active Chinese members of the church, edited and oversaw publication of the Chinese copy,<sup>48</sup> while Speer himself edited and oversaw publication of the English copy. The two versions, however, were not simple translations one of the other, Speer intending different objectives for each. The Chinese copy focused heavily on news from the immigrant community in different towns and cities and news



from China, along with information intended to be helpful to the Chinese for negotiating American society, and occasional information about Christianity. The English copy, on the other hand, focused on educating the readership about the Chinese in the United States, on providing news from China and elsewhere in the world, including Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, and on providing articles and editorials about American news events, especially as these had to do with “useful knowledge, morals and spiritual religion in this portion of our country.”<sup>49</sup> In actual practice, the range of topics covered in the English copy was truly impressive, Speer writing many pieces himself and gathering others from both local writers and from East Coast newspapers he had shipped to him. When he took sick in the middle of 1856 and left for Hawaii to recuperate, the loss of his editorial skills was clearly evident, and the quality of the content suffered a noticeable decline.<sup>50</sup>

As with the Dispensary, Speer took pains to explain the religious function of the newspaper:

Were there no religious and moral interests involved, we should not have put our hand to this work. . . . The most urgent reasons for commencing this paper have been those arising from our religious obligation. We have strained every nerve, by the preaching of the gospel, by the healing of their sick, by the instruction of those willing to learn in school, by the distribution of tracts among them, to make an impression. But the number is comparatively small that any or all of these agencies reach. We will try an additional power—that of the press; one felt by our nation to be great, and one that may be made to extend to every encampment of the Chinese.<sup>51</sup>

Speer was making an argument for the reach that he saw *The Oriental* enabling, but it would have been clear to all involved that the undertaking attempted broader objectives than the usual use of printing in the mission work of the time. In Canton, where Speer had been introduced to the uses of the Christian press, the matter printed was religious tracts and biblical materials. Some of these were subsequently shipped to the mission in California for distribution by Speer and the colporteurs he employed. The bulk of the content in *The Oriental*, by contrast, was secular, intended to familiarize the Chinese with their new environment and to familiarize white American Christians with the Chinese and the wider world. While addressing this range of concerns was consistent with the vision of Christianity Speer had put into practice with the night school and the dispensary, of the three auxiliary efforts, the newspaper clearly allowed him the greatest latitude for interpreting the meaning of Christian witness.

In its first year of publication alone, twenty thousand copies of *The Oriental* were distributed, mostly in California, Hawaii, and China.<sup>52</sup> Well aware of how the paper magnified his voice, Speer used it deliberately as a tool to aid his advocacy work on behalf of the Chinese. He solicited help from physicians elsewhere in properly diagnosing the illness with which he saw the Chinese arriving, utilizing the paper as a vehicle for reporting symptoms observed at the Dispensary and as a forum for debating

the relative accuracy of classifying the disease as either beri-beri or scurvy.<sup>53</sup> And in a more traditional vein of advocacy in the press, Speer defended the Chinese on political and legal issues and made room in the publication for their voices and those of other champions of Chinese rights in this country.

Unfair taxation was one of the issues he decried most vehemently: in particular, increases<sup>54</sup> to the Foreign Miners' Tax instituted in 1852 and the abusive practices employed in its collection. An earlier version of the tax directed at all miners who were not American citizens had been instituted in 1850, before the Chinese were present in the industry in significant numbers. That monthly tax of \$20 per miner consequently affected Mexican, South American, and European miners to a greater extent, and when these rose up in protest, the law was repealed in 1851. The 1852 law, which was worded to narrowly target miners not intending to become citizens, was effectively directed at the Chinese, because, of the many groups then working in the goldfields, theirs was the main one forbidden citizenship by the Naturalization Act of 1790, which reserved naturalization for "free white persons." Blacks and members of other groups that could otherwise have potentially been affected were present only in negligible numbers. The 1852 tax—sometimes referred to as a "license fee"—was originally set at \$3 per miner, but this increased to \$4 within a year, and a further increase was under consideration when Speer joined the fight. Collection oftentimes involved abusive excesses, driven by the fact that tax collectors received a portion of the monies they collected. Extortion and other abuses were common: sham receipts were issued; the tax was levied on the same parties multiple times in the same month; non-miners in mining camps were illegally taxed; individuals with cash were held liable for the payment of the tax levied on others for whom they had no actual responsibility; and those who resisted had their belongings confiscated or burned, or were themselves imprisoned, whipped, shot, and sometimes killed. Speer argued that the tax should not climb above \$4 and that county officials should be appointed to resolve disputes and other related matters, and he aired the complaints of the Chinese themselves and their reasons for opposing the tax.<sup>55</sup> Realizing that, by the time he joined the debate fully in 1855, there was already great momentum behind the taxation effort, Speer also leveraged the opinions of others sympathetic to his view, reprinting excerpts of articles from other newspapers and organizations that similarly defended the Chinese.<sup>56</sup> His efforts contributed to the repeal of the increase in the Foreign Miner's Tax at issue, although the stay was only temporary, and the climb above \$4 eventually resumed, the upward trend continuing until the tax reached \$20 in 1870, the year it was ultimately ruled unconstitutional.

The 1854 *People v. Hall* decision from the California Supreme Court was another piece of anti-Chinese policy that Speer fought. The decision barred Chinese testimony against white defendants, depriving them not only of a key means generally of participating in the legal process but, in many cases, also of a vital means of defense against false witness. Speer objected especially to how the Chinese were unjustly hobbled in their own protection and printed a written defense of the community, "An Answer to the Objections to Chinese Testimony," that he personally distributed to California legislators in 1857.<sup>57</sup> In it, he rebutted point by point, arguments in circulation—based upon race, religion, citizenship, and understanding of civic process—

against Chinese taking the stand. His advocacy on this particular issue might well have continued, but later that year, Speer left California permanently.<sup>58</sup>

More broadly, Speer's opinions on relations with the Chinese extended to support for trade with China<sup>59</sup> and for the employment of Chinese farmers, artisans, fishermen, domestic workers, and miners.<sup>60</sup> On the issue of agriculturalists specifically, Speer showed himself to be much more progressive than many of his peers, writing in *The Oriental* that, "[G]reat liberality should be shown by our legislature, perhaps grants of the tule land made free, to those who would guarantee their improvements within a certain period."<sup>61</sup> Overall, he advocated controlled Chinese immigration, with attention to its sustainability. He argued that such sustainability required legislation that would protect the Chinese from "sinking down into a state of despondency, poverty, and degradation," and that, at the same time, restrictions on the Chinese should be minimal, it being "safer and wiser to legislate too little than too much."<sup>62</sup>

Speer's efforts on so many different fronts took a toll on his health, and the pulmonary ailment that had forced his departure from China eventually became debilitating for him in California as well. He took an extended working sabbatical in Hawaii in 1856, in hopes that the change in climate would be a cure, but when he returned to San Francisco, his serious persisting cough returned with him. His ill health was regarded as potentially life-threatening,<sup>63</sup> and after consultation with both the denomination and with his peers locally, Speer and his family finally left San Francisco on April 6, 1857. The thought at the time was that if his departure resulted in recovery, he might return to serve in the city again, but he, in fact, never did so for any extended appointment.

Speer's commitment and hard work won him the approval of many in San Francisco's white Christian circles in this period when Chinese immigration was still perceived as a potential social good, and no less importantly, it won him the friendship and support of the local Chinese leadership. The favor with which the Chinese regarded him endured the length of his stay in the city, and when he was ready to finally depart, they presented him with "a magnificent gold watch and a quartz breast-pin." On the watch were inscribed the words, "Presented to the Rev. Wm. Speer by his Chinese friends in California, 1857." *The Pacific* reported that, at the same time, the Chinese presented Mrs. Speer with "a massive silver ladle," and "Our citizens also presented in a quiet way, (including the collection Sunday night at Musical Hall) some four or five hundred dollars in cash [over twice the monthly salary Speer was receiving from the denomination], as a token of their love and regard, to say nothing of many other valued gifts by their lady friends."<sup>64</sup>

## Origin as Guidepost

For PCC today, having an origin story as distinctive as it does underscores the existence of a collective memory with at least one portion easily referenced. However long an individual member has been associated with the church, its founding chapter a

century and a half ago is a reassuring reminder that the institution has ‘legs,’ that it not only enjoys longevity but is born out of a singular vision, as opposed to being a haphazard recent assemblage still searching for a purpose. The argument might be made that PCC merely participates in a much broader religious ‘purpose’ shared among Protestant churches the world over, but, in fact, the linkage to the mythology surrounding Speer serves a much more targeted function that speaks specifically to the church’s Chinese American character.

Firstly, the Speer narrative is very much about inserting the Chinese into the story of American Christianity as an institutional presence. The creation of the Mission as a ministry dedicated to the evangelism of the Chinese was a focusing of missionary energy at a level clearly beyond the well-intentioned but limited and oftentimes unsystematic efforts of local churches attempting to invite individual Chinese to their services and Sunday Schools. When Speer appeared in San Francisco, the final decision had not yet been made to locate the California mission in the city, and arrival at that choice came only after careful consideration of a number of different factors:

The first important question presenting itself on our arrival was that of the location of the centre of my missionary efforts. Bro. [Albert] Williams & others whom I have consulted here express the opinion that San Francisco is the point which should be chosen; & this, they inform me is the sentiment of the brethren in the interior of the State. The reasons given are these. In all other places the Chinese population is either limited, as at Sacramento & Stockton, or transient, as at the different mines. All the immigrants must pass through this city, which is the only port of entry for foreign vessels & here may receive tracts & the scriptures. From this the different sections of the country are easily & cheaply accessible to personal visitation. The people of this city are disposed to support liberally the work if performed in their midst by their contributions in money, & thus the greater expensiveness of living may be counterbalanced. From this point I can have most direct & cheap intercourse with the press at Ningpo & the brethren in China. And this climate is that which will probably prove most bracing & healthful, on account of its proximity to the sea, whose breezes sweep over & refresh it, but die away at thirty miles up the rivers and leave the swampy shores subject to fevers & to a high degree of heat.<sup>65</sup>

Speer’s mentions of Sacramento and Stockton as competing possibilities, however remote, offer some insight into how the mission might have seen alternate manifestations. Around the time of his arrival to the West Coast, the location of the state capital was in flux. With California only having become a state in 1850, the Legislature met in San Jose in 1851, in Vallejo in 1852, and in Benicia in 1853, before finally settling permanently in Sacramento in 1854. Had Speer realized the level of political advocacy he would eventually engage, the decision of which city would host the mission might have met with additional considerations. Or, Speer could have imagined a far greater role

for iteration in the structure of the ministry and established something more akin to a network than a single hub. But instead, Speer seems to have been invested in rooting the mission geographically from the very beginning, and with his choice of San Francisco, the center of gravity for Protestant missions to Chinese in the United States was suddenly defined as never before. Speer's person, as the embodiment of the Presbyterian missionary establishment, effectively put the mission 'on the map' even before the mission actually had a physical home. As the denomination's representative, he gave Chinese Christians and potential converts a legitimacy that the poorly resourced local churches simply could not, and his anointing of San Francisco created the notion of a locational 'first among equals,' that PCC enjoyed for a long time.<sup>66</sup>

In a Gibsonian cyberspace framework, this legitimacy and accompanying locational identity is akin to establishing a visible node in the matrix. And not just any node, but that crucial, easily recognizable, landmark node that orients the user upon her initial entry or re-entry into the matrix: "the familiar configuration of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority's Aztec pyramid of data" of this chapter's epigraph. If PCC's collective memory can be imagined as a matrix of memory nodes articulating with one another, the memory of Speer and his ministry is a locational anchor by virtue of its prominence in the knowledge base of the congregation and by virtue of the fact that the collection of stories is seldom subjected to the type of scrutiny among the church membership that leads to disputed interpretations. Even in those moments when the different language ministries may feel challenged to find commonalities in the present, this origin story of the church serves as a ready reminder that there is a shared past, however distant that may feel. Similar in some ways to the primordial ties of family name, place of origin, and shared language or dialect that bound early Chinese migrants in the nineteenth century into clan and district associations, the Speer narrative creates a new mythology of common ancestry that is both more accessible and more recognizable (in terms of racial/ethnic and historical attributes) than the broad, universal story of Jesus two thousand years ago. The broader Christian story is not replaced, by any means, but it is given specificity and grounded definitively in Chinese America.

Secondly, Speer's vision for the Mission, both lucid and singular, imbued the institution with a distinct character from the outset, a character that the English Ministry at the contemporary church claims as its historical heritage. Though Speer is not known to have used the term, his auxiliary ministries of the night school, the medical dispensary, the newspaper, and the political and social advocacy all fall easily under the heading of "social justice" that the English Ministry asserts as one of its defining characteristics. Describing itself in its latest Church Information Form, the English worshipping community explains in the very first sentence of its narrative depiction that, "Since 1853, our church has advocated for justice," the remainder of the paragraph elaborating how:

The church was renamed the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown (PCC) to be more inclusive of anyone who wants to worship and serve God. We have a strong spirit of volunteerism and seek to be a church that is biblically grounded in Jesus Christ, encouraging our members to serve and lead. We fought for low income housing in our community and

succeeded in sponsoring the HUD subsidized Mei Lun Yuen Housing Project. We have partnered in mission with Cameron House for over a century, as well as other community agencies, in supporting social, education, health and youth services. Our mission extends beyond Chinatown, such as home rebuilding in New Orleans [post-Hurricane Katrina in 2005].<sup>67</sup>

In that paragraph, the English Ministry tellingly aligns itself simultaneously with a broad Christian history anchored biblically in the Gospels and with a specific trajectory of interpreting those Gospels in social justice terms, rooted in Speer's start of the church in 1853. The place-making practice of investment with shared meaning is accordingly exercised both 'horizontally' through a sharing of identity across a body of contemporaries and exercised 'vertically' across time, by the linkage of the contemporary ministry with Speer's ministry of the past. While the English Ministry expresses values of broad inclusivity—one aspect of which is clearly inclusivity beyond a Chinese-only membership—and of a mission that “extends beyond Chinatown,” being ‘historically Chinese American’ and being situated in San Francisco’s Chinatown indelibly mark the contemporary community’s sense of self. In Gibsonian-cyberspace terms, the anchoring node of data analogous to this first chapter in PCC’s life is made more prominent (larger), visible (brighter), and relevant (commanding of the user’s attention) as a landmark by these place-making layerings of meaning.

Thirdly, Speer’s story is about working out in practice what being an ally to the Chinese meant and, on the part of the Chinese, discovering what the limits might be for the most fervent of their allies among white Americans. In shaping the Mission as a place, this was significant, because the entrée Speer provided to the American Christian establishment was not access the Chinese were able to secure for themselves at this point in settlement history. Thus, the lengths to which Speer was willing to go described in significant ways the breadth and tone of opportunities that would be made available to the Chinese. In this respect, Speer proved himself an ardent supporter through the energy and imagination he poured into his labors and the variety and extent of the results he was able to achieve in his four and a half years in San Francisco. His sincerity can most certainly be measured by the fact that he literally ‘worked himself to (near) death,’ the demands of his efforts—readily evidenced to this day in the intricacy, depth, and breadth of the newspaper he published—resulting finally in illness that necessitated an accelerated and sudden departure from the city and, subsequently, a protracted convalescence.<sup>68</sup> Nor was he compensated well for his labors, a fact made no easier by the birth of a son to him and Elizabeth in the middle of 1854.<sup>69</sup> In a letter he wrote the following January to Walter Lowrie at the Board of Foreign Missions, Speer explains: “The sum of \$200 a month has been allowed for salary. Of this we must pay \$50 a month to a woman, who does all our cooking, washing & other housework, with some nursing. Fuel costs \$25 a month; water \$10 to 12. So our salary soon flies. Retail prices are very fluctuating, & generally much higher than in New York [where the Board’s offices were located].” In the same letter, he goes on to note that, “It may help to form an estimate of salaries here to add that clerks and book-keepers generally receive from \$150 to \$400 & even \$500 a month.”<sup>70</sup> Not only did he find his own and his family’s living situation constrained by

the small salary he was being paid by the denomination, he also found himself constantly having to justify personnel and other operational expenses for the Mission to the Foreign Board.<sup>71</sup>

His perseverance through all of these personal challenges and his dedication, even long after he had left San Francisco, to what he perceived as the American calling to ministry to the Chinese—he published his 681-page volume *The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the United States* in 1870, and, in 1877, was still lecturing on evangelizing the Chinese and advocating for their right to naturalization<sup>72</sup>—attest to his enduring concern for the immigrants and their welfare, but that deep personal investment was nonetheless not without its own set of racial problematics. Wesley Woo has critically analyzed the influence of the ideology of Manifest Destiny on the work of the major Protestant denominations active among the Chinese in the Bay Area and the entwined dynamic of motivations to Christianize and to civilize that characterized the work of the missions.<sup>73</sup> Of Speer, specifically, Woo points to the way in which he understood the calling of the missionary as one to “pulverize, wet, mould and subject Chinese morality to the power of fire [as one might a piece of clay]—for despite its basically positive nature, it was still a heathen (i.e., un-Christian) morality.”<sup>74</sup> Speer’s understanding of the Chinese as a “race,” however, was embedded in a complex of ideas and beliefs that extended far beyond the mere assertion that their lack of Christian faith accounted for civilizational underdevelopment. More fundamentally, he believed—as many other white Americans of his time did—that there existed a natural hierarchy of races. Within this, he held the Chinese to be positioned highly, but nonetheless beneath whites: “In touching at the ports of the populous countries between India and China, and the beautiful islands of the Indian Archipelago, there is nothing the voyager is more impressed with than the superiority of the Chinese to all other races there, save only the Anglo-Saxon.”<sup>75</sup> Pacific Islanders he characterized as “a simple and reverential race, that received us [whites] like gods from heaven,”<sup>76</sup> while blacks, by starkest contrast, he denigrated as the “nerveless ‘sons of Ham,’”<sup>77</sup> even as he lamented that, “The sons and daughters of Africa, credulous and confiding, we have borne away from burning villages, and the bloody corpses of whole families and tribes almost extinguished, to distant hopeless slavery.”<sup>78</sup> This seeming remorse, though, is elsewhere tempered by the language of “educating” Africans: “He [God] sends three millions of the ignorant sable sons and daughters...to be schooled here...”<sup>79</sup>

The noticeable ambivalence is a result of apparent tension between Speer’s strong objection on moral grounds to the exploitations of slavery on the one hand and, on the other hand, the marriage of his theological views to his equally strong belief in the imperial destiny of the United States. Speer was an ardent apologist for American empire and in his comments about the desirability of a strong American stance globally can be detected clear competitiveness with—and perhaps some measure of envy toward—European powers with more established colonial holdings and imperial reach. “Now that the course of events has brought the American people into nearer, easier, cheaper, and more advantageous connection with the Celestial Empire,” he wrote, “than England, Holland, Portugal, Spain, or even Russia, can ever hope to enjoy, *shall we despise that for which they have made wars, maintained expensive monopolies, and poured out*

*millions of treasure?*” [Speer’s italics.]<sup>80</sup> While he did not advocate outright colonialism, he saw commerce with China, including the importation of labor, as an opportunity to raise the United States’ profile internationally in substantive ways. He was highly critical of what he perceived as gross mistakes of Western imperial endeavors in the past—slavery, the traffic in opium, the introduction of alcohol, the unfortunate transmission of diseases, etc.<sup>81</sup>—but he felt that these lessons had been learned and that, going forward, the potential benefits of commerce, labor importation, and other forms of contact ultimately far outweighed potential costs. He held England, in particular, to be a role model and harbinger of an American future on the global stage, sufficiently so that he declared, “We will thus do for China what England is doing for India.”<sup>82</sup> And with his critique of past excesses made, he seemed to have little trouble reconciling his religious faith with his faith in the imperial project, declaring that, “Commerce has been the channel through which civilization and the arts have streamed many a blessing upon barbarism, superstition, and degradation. It must be the chief auxiliary of Christianity in redeeming the world.”<sup>83</sup> While Speer’s rhetoric subordinated national interests to the fulfillment of religious destiny, he clearly saw that the coexistence of the two as not only possible but also necessary, and even desirable.

Consequently, Speer’s advocacy on behalf of the Chinese, while extensive, was tempered by a nationalism, which at this stage when the Chinese were regarded as a “race,” is difficult to separate from racism. He was not, for example, a proponent of unbridled immigration from China, arguing that, “[W]e [white Californians] are not ready to receive more Chinese, in the present condition of the State, and until they begin to disperse hence over the country; a process now commencing. Therefore it seems expedient to lay a heavier commutation tax upon their immigrants; which would check the poorer and more ignorant class, and bring in a handsome revenue.”<sup>84</sup> That statement from Speer not only reveals his willingness to use legislative and economic means to check immigration but is one of the few recorded instances when his class prejudices surface alongside his racial prejudices. In 1855, the year Speer made his argument, the city of San Francisco did indeed levy a \$50 tax on individuals aboard any ship attempting to dock who was “not eligible for naturalization”—code words for “Chinese”—but the law was ruled unconstitutional the following year because of its violation of the federal government’s jurisdiction over international “commerce,” understood by the court to cover immigration.

At the same time that Speer advocated for substantive protections for immigrant Chinese who were admitted to this country and for fair treatment toward them, he also had a clear agenda for their contributions to the American economy. In 1853, far earlier than many of his contemporaries, he foresaw the value of the Chinese as farmers, artisans and manufacturers, fishermen and fishery workers, servants, and miners. As laborers in the agricultural category, he pointed out that, “We believe few foreigners can be found superior to the Chinese.... And the cheapness of Chinese laborers is an important consideration.” He believed that exploitation of the cost advantage could be exercised in other sectors as well, the benefits multiplied through a corresponding exploitation of the perceived Chinese willingness to work in below-average conditions under white



supervision, with a goodly portion of their earnings inevitably put back into circulation in the American economy. He argued that, in the mines, for example:

...this people will occupy the poorer diggings, where Americans would not consider their labor remunerated. Like the Chinese miners in the Indian Archipelago, they will long continue to work sites abandoned by others. Thus they will put into currency gold that would have lain otherwise to be trodden by the feet of beasts in untamed wilds. But, further, they will be employed in large numbers as sub-workers, the laborious reapers, under American supervision, of the golden harvest gathered by our own citizens. And another consideration, is that the great mass of the slow earnings of these people must be expended here. It is but a small proportion they send away.<sup>85</sup>

But more importantly, Speer saw the voluntarily arriving Chinese as a convenient replacement for African slaves, the moral implications of the latter being obviously reprehensible to him, while at the same time, he anticipated that Chinese labor would be a boon to more geographically balanced American growth:

There are many in the Southern States of our Union now looking to the influx of this remarkable people with intense interest, as a possible means of relieving themselves from the intolerable burthens [*sic*] of African slavery. We look upon it, in its relation to African colonization, as a providential compensation. Prosperous, indeed, would be the day for the South, when the nerveless “sons of Ham” shall be supplanted in the labors of the field, the factory, and the fire-side, by the subtile [*sic*] and diligent descendants of the old and world-renowned dynasty of the “Han.” The South may then, with more hope to success, attempt to cope with the North in agricultural productiveness, in the manufacture of her cotton, and in general wealth.<sup>86</sup>

The Chinese, from Speer’s perspective, could thus be instrumental to a program of American economic development in a number of different ways: by providing cheap labor, non-competitive with white labor and subservient to its supervision; by filling occupational niches undesirable to white workers; by increasing the consumer base; by contributing to a greater North-South economic balance; and by replacing black workers in a racialized hierarchy of labor.

However much of an advocate of the Chinese Speer proved himself to be, his motivations were certainly not entirely altruistic. Reflective of the racialized thinking of his time, Speer’s racial prejudices were inextricably bound to his religious prejudices, and he employed the weight of his profession and his personal experiences as a former missionary in Asia to advance “expert” opinions on the spiritual status of the Chinese:

...[T]he poor Chinaman comes here spiritually and intellectually a degraded being. Notwithstanding his native intelligence, and the arts

and learning of his country, he trembles with a thousand horrible or absurd fears and superstitions. ...The torture of the soul thus under the influence of Satan is beyond the conception of those who have never observed its horrible evidences in a heathen country. And these men come here wholly ignorant of the true God, and judgment, and eternity. They will bring here the gods of hills and streams, of storms and fire, of paradise and hell; and deluded by the enemy of souls, they will bow down and worship them, instead of Him who is ‘God over all, blessed forever.’”<sup>87</sup>

Speer felt that this lamentable state of affairs obligated white Christians, as a matter of religious duty, to engage in the salvific work of evangelizing the Chinese. While he himself did not raise the same sort of alarm in these early years of Chinese immigration, arguments all too similar to his, about what spiritual baggage the Chinese were bringing, would in later years be mobilized to construct Chinese “heathenism” as moral contagion, liable to be spread to an unsuspecting white American public. These aspects of Speer’s thinking and their downstream implications escape most retellings of PCC’s origins, both inside the community and outside of it. The darker details certainly complicate the story in the way they create an ambiguity about the space in American society the church has generally believed was carved out for it by a friend and a sympathetic spiritual forebear. The less often these details are related, the more they slip from the collective memory and the more PCC as a place is memorialized as one having origins in unambiguous gift-giving from white allies, when evidence may indicate a more complicated reality.

## Allies and Allies

Among Presbyterians outside of PCC, the interpretation of the church’s founding often credits intentional support to certain groups of white Presbyterians, both in San Francisco and at the offices of the Board of Foreign Missions in New York. Stephen L. Taber, in his history of Old First Presbyterian Church, writes:

On November 6, 1853, at a heavily attended service, the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church, the first Chinese church in North America, was organized at Old First. This church was lead [*sic*] by William Speer, a missionary who had returned from China in October of 1852. By the end of 1853, a commodious mission building had been erected for this church by Old First with the contributions of supporters from other churches.<sup>88</sup>

While the November 6 service was indeed held at Old First and while Speer did seek the counsel of Albert Williams, its pastor, among others, that first sentence above—especially as read alongside the third sentence—seems to go further to imply that Old First’s role in the organization of the church was far larger and far more directed than, in fact, it was, and the third sentence seems to suggest that Old First’s financial

contributions toward the start of the Chinese Mission was also larger than, in fact, it actually was.

From the beginning, it was understood by Speer that should he decide upon the construction of permanent infrastructure, that expense would have to be borne largely by the local community in San Francisco, rather than by the Presbyterian denomination nationally. Within three months of his arrival, Speer had already assessed the limits of local Presbyterian support for such a project. He reported to Walter Lowrie at the Board of Foreign Missions that, while the white Christian community in San Francisco seemed well disposed toward the building of a mission house, “the Presbyterian portion of the community alone is not very strong.”<sup>89</sup> Consequently, Speer, ever the pragmatist, broadened his fundraising base to include “contributors from other denominations, & to those connected with no church at all but who felt an interest in our enterprise as a benevolent movement, & might be made its active friends.”<sup>90</sup> Because the Presbyterian denomination sought as much control over the new mission as possible, this broadening of the fundraising base was an unwelcome development and allowed to proceed only out of necessity. Justifying the action, Speer explained that:

This...course was necessary; because the Presbyterian church here [Old First] could do but little compared with what was required; because a number of its leading members looked on the enterprise with lukewarmness from the fear that it would divert contributions from our own members that they wished to see applied to building a new & large church edifice for the Rev. Mr. Williams....<sup>91</sup>

Thus, while the myth persists today that the local San Francisco Presbyterian community was pivotal to the establishment of the Mission, the evidence seems to suggest that good intentions may have outstripped substantive support, and in some cases, even the good intentions seem to have been qualified.

Assistance from the Presbyterian denomination nationally seemed to follow similar expression. Again, while enthusiasm to have a mission to the Chinese on the West Coast seemed high from the very beginning, the commitment to tangible investment toward such a goal nevertheless wavered, also from the very beginning. The Board of Foreign Missions noted in its annual report for 1853 that, “The leadings of Providence [toward the establishment of a mission] seemed to make the question of duty plain; although some hesitation was felt on account of the considerable expense involved in forming the proposed mission....”<sup>92</sup> The denomination was, of course, ultimately able to lay claim to the sending of the Speer, the first dedicated missionary to the Chinese in California, and while this act was undeniably notable, the ambivalence under which the denomination maintained his ministry is far, far less well known and virtually completely absent from the lore of the church, both within PCC and outside of it. The relative lack of support the Board of Foreign Missions extended him personally I have already detailed above. The limited salary made for difficult living circumstances, and the constant need to justify operational and personal expenses was a clear distraction, leading Speer to complain that the Foreign Board did not seem to understand the reasonable nature of his

funding requests.<sup>93</sup> Finding the overall situation virtually unchanged after more than four years, Speer, writing to Walter Lowrie on the eve of his departure from San Francisco in 1857, made note of the seeming hypocrisy of the white church—Presbyterians included—in claiming real concern for the Chinese, while its personnel investments in frontier California were so grossly disproportionately weighted toward ministry to white Americans: “Compare the field [California] which the Church of Christ thinks of such vast importance and influence prospectively as to concentrate upon it, in connection with the several evangelical denominations, about a hundred and twenty ordained ministers, and you find it embraces a white population of not over six times the number of people [the Chinese] to whom they have sent two—one of whom, Rev. Mr. Shuck [a Baptist missionary], spends his strength in ministering to an American congregation.”<sup>94</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly then, when the mission house was eventually built, the extent of denominational support, despite the Foreign Board’s insistence on Presbyterian ownership and control, was strikingly limited: of the approximately \$23,000 required, about \$18,000 came from local subscriptions, including over \$2,000 from the Chinese community, while the Foreign Board provided the remaining \$5,000, and then, only as a loan to be eventually repaid.<sup>95</sup>

The Board of Foreign Missions was, in fact, critical of Speer’s activities and his vision for the Mission for much of the time that he was in California. Its tight hold on the purse-strings aside, the Foreign Board also manifested its dissatisfaction in the heavy redaction of Speer’s reports before these were published as part of its annual reports. By contrast, when Speer’s replacement, Augustus Loomis, first arrived in San Francisco, his reports were included in their entirety in the annual publication. At issue seemed to be Speer’s emphasis on the auxiliary ministries at the expense, in the Foreign Board’s view, of the conversion of the Chinese, by which the denomination principally measured the success of its missionary efforts. Related to this was the issue of the objectionable independence with which Speer acted. The physical distance and the delays characteristic of transcontinental communications in the mid-nineteenth century made its missionary more difficult for the Board to control, and the criticism in this regard leveled at Speer put him on the defensive: “As to details,” he wrote, “a missionary in the field is usually told that after counseling with brethren around him, he must be responsible for them in a great measure; that it is impossible that fathers & brethren at a great distance, however superior to him in wisdom, can direct him as to the local necessities and occasional exigencies. For his administration in these matters his own character is held in pledge.”<sup>96</sup>

While its displeasure at Speer’s independent orientation was seemingly general, the Foreign Board also leveled noticeably focused criticism at his labors over *The Oriental*, publicly chastising him in its 1855 annual report to the church nationally: “If the Committee [the Executive Committee of the Board of Foreign Missions] had been consulted before it [*The Oriental*] was commenced, they would have expressed their doubts as to the expediency of entering on a measure, which will make such large demands on the time of the missionary, and leave to him so much less strength of personal labors in making known the gospel to the Chinese.”<sup>97</sup> In response, Speer professed “surprize [*sic*] and pain,” feeling “a severe wound inflicted where it was not

deserved.”<sup>98</sup> Speer documented in detail, with corresponding dates of missives sent, his previous mentions of the project to the Foreign Board in advance of its inception. “So far from having any thought of acting at variance from, or independently of the wishes of the Committee,” he wrote, “here is the purpose to commence a paper spoken of during a year and a half previous to its commencement. And it is approved in a measure in the Committee’s allowing it the use of their type (the most expensive item connected with its establishment) as being ‘an agency for good among the Chinese.’ Never once was a syllable uttered of disapprobation....” Obviously stung by the criticism, Speer requested “that the impression be removed from the minds of readers of the publications of the Board that one of its missionaries has engaged in an enterprize [*sic*] of which they did not previously know & on which they would have looked with disapprobation if they had been allowed the opportunity to counsel.”<sup>99</sup>

Speer persisted in the ministries he felt most suited to the needs of the local situation, exacerbating the strain on his relationship with the Foreign Board. The Board, in turn, escalated the conflict by openly threatening closure of the mission at the beginning of 1857, at which mention Speer replied, “At different times hints of such thought have come to us here,” suggesting that it was not the first occasion that such consideration by the Foreign Board had surfaced.<sup>100</sup> While the trail of communications between Speer and the Board indicate that his independent style was very much at issue, the objections raised by the latter formally suggested that its rationale rested upon other concerns, namely 1) “that the expectations of a large Chinese population in the State have been disappointed” [in fact, between 40,000 and 50,000 Chinese were in the U.S. at that point, most of them in CA]; 2) “that their treatment by the citizens of the State is the very reverse of what could have been expected” [meaning that evangelization of the Chinese should be discontinued, because other white Americans were treating them poorly, and they would, thus, be unlikely to respond well to the Christian message]; and 3) “that the mission is one of great expense.”<sup>101</sup> As might be expected, Speer found all three rationale to be unjustified and responded to each in turn, but fearing a lack of leverage in individual action, he drew in the involvement of the local presbytery, the Presbytery of California. In its minutes from February 18, 1857, the Presbytery declared, after discussion of the Foreign Board’s intentions and Speer’s opposition, that, “...[I]t is the opinion of this Presbytery, that the Chinese Mission in this City and State, cannot be given up without great dereliction of duty, therefore Resolved...that we do earnestly recommend to our Board, the continuation of their Mission heretofore.”<sup>102</sup>

The Mission remained open, but the incident illustrates clearly the fragility of the denomination’s support and its readiness at the time to abandon the ministry to the Chinese. But for Speer’s dogged resistance and the intervention of the local presbytery, PCC’s history might well have ceased a mere three and a half years after its start. Awareness of this conflict between Speer and the Foreign Board and of the “lukewarmness” of the support among the leading members of Old First Presbyterian Church enriches the context in which to assess Speer’s role as an ally to the Chinese. For all the problematics of racialized thinking behind his advocacy of the immigrants, his persistence in the face of significant pressure also demonstrates how ‘there were allies and then there were allies,’ meaning that not all allies exemplified solidarity to the same

extent. In this respect, Speer showed himself to be “a friend to the Chinese” to a degree that few of his contemporaries were able to match. The question this raises is what motivated him to go to such lengths.

## **Divine Intention, History, and Place**

Speer saw the imperial destiny of the United States not only in political and economic terms but in religious ones as well, as part of God’s greater intentions for humanity as a whole. This perspective, in and of itself, was hardly novel, being a basic tenet of Manifest Destiny, with its linked arguments for American exceptionalism, America’s role as a redemptive moral and social model for the rest of the world, and America’s calling to that redemptive act through its political and economic expansion. Where Speer differed from his contemporaries, however, was in his belief that China had an active, rather than a passive, role to play in the divine history unfolding. For most white Christian Americans in the mid-nineteenth century, the expansion of the United States territorially and commercially was seen to be the vehicle by which Christian influence would spread to the “heathen” world. Speer, however, looked to the future with decidedly more sensitivity to the interplay of forces around the globe. Having served in China and traveled elsewhere in Asia, he had greater firsthand knowledge of the non-European, non-American, non-white world than most Americans of his time, and the breadth of international news he included in *The Oriental* testifies to his awareness of the importance of lands beyond U.S. borders.

With regard to China, specifically, Speer was keenly aware of the weight of over four thousand years of history, regardless of the chaotic countenance the country was just then presenting to the rest of the world. Rather than seeing simply an empire in dramatic decline—what most of his contemporaries saw—Speer marveled at its longevity:

It was planted in the earliest generations after the renovation of the world and of human history by the Deluge [the biblical Flood]. Assyria, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, have risen and gone; their pride, their wealth, their dominion, all are things of the past. But the Chinese race is still the same, scarcely tinged by the admixture of others. . . . We contemplate, amidst all the ruins Time has wrought elsewhere, such an empire with constant amazement and curiosity. And when we behold at length a change in the wind of time beginning to blow the seeds of this stupendous ripe tree across the waters, so that they are seen taking root in our new virgin soil, the study of its whole character becomes to us a subject of such interest as has few parallels to it.<sup>103</sup>

And he found in that stately history special resonance for the United States: “We are the newest, as China is the oldest, empire of the world. Our institutions are but the raw experiments of yesterday. We are only beginning to realize that we have a national life, and that God has formed it for some great commission, the mere alphabet of which we are just learning to stammer.”<sup>104</sup>

Inexperienced as an empire though the United States might have been, nonetheless, in Speer's theological perspective, it was clearly destined to play a leading role in forging a global east-west linkage of Christian influence that had been so long coming. "For America there is reserved a peculiar glory in the history of mankind," he wrote, arguing that civilization, in the form of developed "political life, intellectual culture, advancement of the arts and religious experience," had flowed in two great streams, one coursing westward from southwest Asia through North Africa and Europe to the United States; the other, eastward through India and China to the western edge of the Pacific. Though the English had a firm colonial hold on India, the four hundred million of China's people, in comparison to India's one hundred sixty, seemed to Speer a convincing argument that China was the greater prize, one the United States was uniquely well positioned to win.<sup>105</sup> "The subject of Chinese immigration to this continent," he concluded, "is one of an importance and interest which language can hardly exaggerate. The reader of history beholds in this contact of the populations of America and China, on the shores of the Pacific ocean, the termination of that westward course of empire which began in the first periods of the history of man; and in it the completion of one great cycle of the Divine government on earth, and the commencement of another—the glorious and golden age of mankind."<sup>106</sup>

For Speer, divine history was on the verge of a great transitional moment, and the arrival of the Chinese to California was a key component to this grand human drama. Although he did see China, on the one hand, as a pool of resources to be exploited, he also, on the other hand, looked to it as more than simply the land of un-Christianized backwardness that many of his white contemporaries saw. Rather, he perceived in China a crucial piece of the divine puzzle-in-waiting. In a moment of confessional self-awareness, he wrote, "[W]ith the exception of the advance which the West owes to the power of Christianity, purifying and sweetening all the relations of man to man, as well as of man to God, and to that of the more true and penetrating scientific acquaintance with the works of God and its direct practical fruits, it is questionable whether European society has on the whole excelled that of China."<sup>107</sup> The chief differences between Chinese society and white American society, then, were Western scientific thought and the Christian religion, both of which he was confident Americans could successfully impart to the Chinese. It was a task, it seemed to Speer, to which Californians, in particular, had been called. "We live in a portion of our country," he noted, soon after his arrival in San Francisco, "seemingly appointed by God as the spot from which the chief influences tending to the civilization and christianization [*sic*] of Eastern Asia shall flow."<sup>108</sup> In Speer's view, Americans were well positioned to provide—and to profit from in doing so—the tutelage the Chinese required to play their role in advancing the course of human history according to God's intentions; the question was, 'Were the Chinese ready to learn?'

After over four thousand years of deepening civilization in China, the conditions had never seemed to Speer more ripe. He had left his mission post in Canton in 1850 just as the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) was beginning, and from San Francisco, he monitored the news of the conflict with great interest. Though heterodox in his interpretations of Christianity—to the extent of regarding himself the younger brother of

Jesus—the leader of the uprising, Hong Xiuquan, nonetheless identified himself as Christian, and especially in the early years of the rebellion, before the death toll reached the heights it did, many Westerners saw the possibility of Hong’s rule as an inviting alternative to the Qing Dynasty’s. Speer was among that number, and while clearly ambivalent about some of what he read and heard about Hong and his beliefs, he was nonetheless more hopeful than not that God was using the rebellion to usher in a new age of Christian influence in China:

With all the objections we have to the intermingling of selfish and antiquated political notions, and still worse, of corrupt and superstitious interpretations of Scripture, yet God has done already through this Revolution a hundredfold beyond our most sanguine prayers or hopes. We trust Him [God] for the future. In a generous interpretation of what we know about it, the Chinese Revolution is even thus far one of the most wonderful, and is certainly one of the most portentous, events in the history of the continent of Asia, or the world. The future will show it, I believe, to have been the commencement of a series of “overturnings” that shall result in the dominion “of Him whose right it is,” over those ancient nations that have so long resisted.<sup>109</sup>

If history were to bear out his expectations, Speer no doubt foresaw the first of those “nations that have so long resisted” to include China, and this optimistic view of the temporal alignment of events contributed to his sense that the Mission in California and the Chinese who were led there were actively contributing to bringing about the next stage in God’s plans for human history.

What was both striking and revolutionary about Speer’s understanding of the evangelization of the Chinese was that it was at once set into an understanding of world history and of divine history and that it accorded the Chinese a place of such prominence at a pivotal point in the grand chronology of global events. Granted, the Chinese were clearly seen as a lesser partner to the Americans—and the British (and presumably the citizens of other ‘first-tier’ European powers as well, though Speer does not mention these)—but the Chinese were perceived to be a partner, nonetheless, and not simply an object for conquest in the westward march of Manifest Destiny. China’s own imperial history was understood as a contribution to the then-current state of momentous global transition, and the immigration of Chinese to the United States, while to be controlled, was seen as being significant to the fulfillment of God’s will and a positive to be embraced. Set against this context, the reasons why Speer would persist in his ministry to the detriment of his own health and against the tide of criticism from the denomination is far more understandable. His establishment of the Mission and the breadth of his vision for its ministry were part and parcel of an attempt to bridge the Pacific that he saw as necessary to the next stage of God’s kingdom on Earth, a stage he believed, as a consequence of his investment in American imperialism, would be dominated by the United States. Christianity among the Chinese in California was thus perceived as an element of the future of American Christianity.



In this sense, the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church was the first expression of Asian American religion in this country. Unlike the Buddhist and Daoist traditions that had accompanied the immigrants across the ocean, this understanding of the function of faith *within history* did not center on the diasporic community's connection to the homeland. Rather, Speer imagined an emerging Chinese America, one which at that moment was not yet a reality. However much his vision of Christianity among the Chinese suffered from elements of hierarchical racialized thinking, his interpretation of world history and China's place in it meant that he also took race seriously and accorded it due consideration in his understanding of religion. The Chinese, in his view, were not going to dissolve into a "melting pot" of universal Western Christianity but, rather, had a Christian destiny of their own to fulfill. And part of that destiny he imagined being fulfilled along the Pacific Coast of the United States. Race, in this way, was sacralized—set apart as holy, for the distinct place it held in the intentions of the Divine—and this version of Christianity was neither merely Asian nor merely American, but saw the two coming together as the Chinese in the western states—and eventually, their brethren in China—became Christians in an American mold.

Given the depth of his conviction and the breadth of his vision, it is perhaps no surprise that Speer was not more cowed than he was by the denomination's eventual threat to close the Mission. "...I did not feel anxious," he wrote to Walter Lowrie, "for God will carry out His plans in His own time, by whatever means: if whatsoever is for the glory of His name, even though neither our Church nor any of her servants should be accepted as the honored agents."<sup>10</sup> The tone of reproach in that sentence is pronounced, for it suggests that the Presbyterian denomination was abandoning the guidance of the Divine, contemplating, as Speer called it, "a different interpretation of the leadings of Providence."<sup>11</sup>

That same conviction in the significance of the future role of the Chinese motivated Speer to labor tirelessly for a physical home for the Mission from the very beginning. While he took pains to ensure that the Mission and its physical property would be held under Presbyterian control, he did not allow the failure of Presbyterian resolve nor the shortage of Presbyterian funds to hinder the construction of the mission house. With San Francisco decided as the location, a permanent locale was of utmost priority to Speer, and the details of the one he created reflected consistently his faith in imminent progress toward a new chapter of human history. The careful choice of brick—as opposed to wood—as the primary building material and the repeated concerns about mitigating the threat from fires,<sup>12</sup> including the strategic placement of iron shutters over the most exposed doors and windows,<sup>13</sup> testify to Speer's desire for a lasting edifice, just as the chapel's capacity for 300 to 350 testified to his faith in the success of the ministry. Unlike the Board of Foreign Missions, whose attitude at times seemed to reflect a posture of 'testing the waters,' Speer was committed from the outset, leaning firmly on his faith in what the Mission represented in his vision of the larger historical context. In 1877, twenty years after he had left San Francisco and direct work with the Chinese, this faith had hardly dimmed, and Speer was still advocating for citizenship for the Chinese, arguing for their full incorporation into the American nation.<sup>14</sup> He laid the

foundation for a mission that would endure, because he believed the permanence of a Chinese presence in the United States to be in keeping with God's will.

## **Re-Orienting an Orienting Memory**

Innovative as he was, both in his theological thinking and in his practice of ministry, Speer did nonetheless come up short in that one particular measure of achievement which meant so much to his denomination overseers: a high conversion rate among the Chinese. He reported the Mission's first convert—a young man by the name of Yeung Fo—in 1856,<sup>115</sup> and a year later, with no news of any others, he had left San Francisco. Michael L. Stahler, in his biographical essay on Speer, has argued that the missionary's own standards for conversion prohibited widespread success, requiring “a statement of newfound faith, a full understanding of the Old and New Testament ‘in meaning and object’ and several months probation before the sacrament would be administered.”<sup>116</sup> It can be argued, as Speer himself certainly did, that the effect of evangelism is measured by far more than simply a count of converts, that the Gospel seeps slowly into the hearts of the unbelieving—which he drew to the church in healthy numbers—and that a witness of care and kindness are of the utmost importance alongside the preaching of God's word. In those respects, Speer contributed more perhaps than any other individual during PCC's earliest days, and it seems poetically appropriate that the origin story of the church, with its position of anchoring significance in the memory of the community, should simultaneously call attention to this complex man and to the many-layered impact he has had on the continuing life of the institution.

In this chapter, I have attempted to complicate and to re-orient the common recollections of Speer and his ministry beyond the widespread knowledge that he was PCC's founding minister and the initiator of a range of auxiliary ministries under the umbrella of what has come to be known as “social justice.” Speer was also a nationalist and an imperialist, and he believed that the Chinese were racially subordinate to whites. But he saw the Chinese as having a destiny ordained by God and significant to the divine history of the world he believed was transitioning to a new stage before his very eyes. The intersecting destinies he interpreted the United States and China to have allowed him to see a permanent place for the Chinese in this country, a place he imagined marked by the full rights of citizenship and by a Chinese American Christianity that I argue was the first form of truly relevant Asian American religion.

When Augustus Loomis, Speer's successor, arrived in San Francisco in 1859, he found only two members of the mission church remaining in the city.<sup>117</sup> In the sense of an active, continuing congregation, Speer's legacy did not seem to endure, but I argue that he had contributed immeasurably to the church's sense of place. Invested in a physical location of his choosing and a structural edifice of his creation was a set of ideas, beliefs, and practices—a set of “meanings”—that have survived that near demise of the church between his departure in 1857 and Loomis' arrival in 1859 to go on to guide PCC well into the present day. What the handful of Chinese converts arriving from Asia could not do for themselves, and what the denomination and the local Presbyterian

community contributed to only grudgingly, Speer saw to fruition with a vision that sacralized race. He imagined a Chinese Christianity that had a home in the United States and the world, rather than merely in China. For the Christian Chinese America he was certain God would shepherd into existence, he carved out a first foothold in American space and American history.

## Vignette B: The Neo-Gothic Building

In the decade and a half after Speer's departure, the number of Chinese who came through the doors of the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church continued to grow, sufficiently so that by 1872, the Board of Foreign Missions, concurring that room for the various facets of mission work—including worship, Sunday School, and the night school—was becoming too limited, authorized the purchase of an adjoining lot for a new building, the total budget for the land and construction together estimated at about \$10,000.<sup>1</sup> Negotiations for the purchase failed, however, and a much more modest alternative plan was decided upon “to expend a few hundred dollars in making certain changes and repairs in the mission-house, thereby better adapting it to its varied uses; but it is likely that a larger place will have to be secured before many years.”<sup>2</sup> The Board of Foreign Missions reported with delight, in the meanwhile, that there was a movement afoot in the Synod of Cleveland to raise funds for a larger building.<sup>3</sup> Much needed repairs, including the maintenance work of painting, were made in 1879,<sup>4</sup> but the goal remained a larger home for the Mission.

In 1882,<sup>5</sup> a move to a larger structure was finally made, and the Chinese Mission relocated to the former premises of the First Presbyterian Church of San Francisco, which stood on the lot the present PCC occupies (though prior to the second decade of the twentieth century, the address was listed in the city directory as “911 Stockton Street,” rather than the current “925 Stockton Street.”<sup>6</sup>) The structure, purchased by the Board of Foreign Missions for \$22,500, was an imposing Neo-Gothic-style brick building, 61 feet wide by 117 feet long, faced in plaster, that rose to over forty feet and had a bell tower that reached perhaps an additional twenty feet beyond the apex of the church's peaked roof.<sup>7</sup> Two short flights of steps led upwards from the street through a low ironwork fence to a first outside landing, and from there, three more separate short flights of steps led from the landing to three grand doorways, a large central one measuring nine feet wide by thirteen feet four inches tall, flanked by two others, only slightly smaller at five feet four inches wide by ten feet ten inches tall. The doors and the equally impressive windows in the front of the church were all framed by peaked arches consonant with the Gothic style, and the central door was set beneath an elaborate ogee arch,<sup>8</sup> a design element repeated in the wall of the chancel area, the focal point of the sanctuary.

Inside, the building was essentially divided into two parts: a two-storied anterior section with “front rooms” and an entry hall downstairs, and a lecture room upstairs; and a much larger single-storied rear section entirely devoted to the sanctuary or “audience room.” The sanctuary was a very large chamber, nearly sixty feet wide, which measured thirty-eight feet four inches in height from the floor to the apex of the peaked ceiling at the point of entry. To the left and right of that entryway, built into the walls running the length of the sanctuary, were matching sets of five windows rising above wainscoting on the inside surfaces that reached to the level of the sills. Each window was five feet six inches wide by twenty-one feet tall. Three aisles ran down a slightly sloping floor, dropping eight inches over the length of the room, which measured close to seventy-five

feet long. At the far end of the room was the chancel area, the ogee arch in the back wall an echo of the front entrance, here framing the pulpit. The pulpit was itself set atop risers totaling thirty-seven and a half inches in height, which more than erased the drop in elevation over the length of travel from the entrance to the chancel. Twenty rows of pews in the center section and twenty-two in the sections against the outside walls were arranged in slightly curving fashion centered on the elevated pulpit. Six additional shorter pews were arranged to each side of the pulpit, set at a right angle against the wall at the rear of the chancel.

The building was reportedly renovated and adapted to the needs of the Mission before the Chinese took occupancy,<sup>9</sup> but repurposing of its rooms continued over the years. By 1896, the pastors' study was being occupied by the Loomis Memorial School during the week and by the "Primary Sunday School" on Sundays. What was formerly the "Ladies' Parlor" was given over to the Young Men's Christian Association and to the Senior and Junior Christian Endeavor Societies. And the original Sunday School Rooms were divided by partitions to accommodate a study "for both Pastor and native assistant Pastor," a schoolroom for the Occidental School, and a room shared by the Evening and Sunday Schools and the King's Daughters women's fellowship.<sup>10</sup>

The original renovations in 1882 notwithstanding, the church apparently saw little in the form of physical maintenance in the two decades following, until the eve of the fiftieth anniversary celebration in 1903. For that occasion, the Chinese raised \$750 for repairs, and the men and women of the church themselves participated in the work of "cleaning, frescoing and painting the auditorium, renovating the roof, and painting the exterior of the church."<sup>11</sup> Now some four-and-a-half decades beyond the acrimony between Speer and the Foreign Board, the latter, somewhat ironically, reported the following in its 1904 Annual Report:

In 1852 the inception of a plan for reaching the Chinese in California was undertaken by the Board in the sending out of Rev. Dr. William Speer. But it was not until the following year, 1853, that definite steps were taken by the erection of a mission building. The story of the early beginning, and of the workers "*who built better than they knew,*" has been told in an attractive pamphlet. [My italics.]<sup>12</sup>

Speer, who had last visited the San Francisco church in 1869 when he was the Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Education,<sup>13</sup> died on February 16, 1904 and would not have seen those words, which would have been published in May of that year.



The Neo-Gothic church building, circa 1860-1870.<sup>14</sup>

## 4: Institutionalizing a Community

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of  
him who called you out of the darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,

But now you are God's people;

once you had not received mercy,

but now you have received mercy.

- 1 Peter 2:9-10<sup>1</sup>

“Memory's holographic.... The holographic paradigm is the closest  
thing you've worked out to a representation of human memory....”

- Wintermute to Case

*Neuromancer*<sup>2</sup>

At the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, as at its sister institutions the world over, the affirmation is frequently heard that the church is not a building but a people. By this, the members at PCC are referring at once both to the Church Universal and to their own Presbyterian iteration of church in the middle of San Francisco's Chinatown. To be sure, the statement is a confession of faith, an expression of ecclesiology, which holds that the Church, as the figurative ‘body of Christ,’ is a living thing, responsive to the guidance of the Divine and to the needs of the world, and not simply a collection of brick and timber and stone, however well arranged. In reality, however, the church, as it is experienced by living, breathing persons, is, in fact, both: it is location and locale, and it is the people that animate these, lending a meaningful sense of place. More than it often is elsewhere, the reality of this dual aspect of its being is woven into the very fabric of PCC's institutional memory. Unlike some churches where a first physical home is secured by a body of believers already thriving as a community, PCC, as the previous chapter showed, was, at its inception, a temple in search of worshipers. The Rev. William Speer built the mission house, the first permanent home of the church, *in anticipation* of a community he himself was ultimately unable to shepherd into existence. The structure was built to house over 300 worshipers when the membership was only four, five by the time Speer bid farewell to the work.

While the English Ministry looks to Speer's legacy as a theological forebear to the present PCC, the contemporary church as a whole in many ways resembles more closely the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church that grew up under the direction of Speer's two immediate successors, the Rev. Augustus Loomis and the Rev. Ira M. Condit. The tenures in San Francisco of these two ministers overlapped, and over the span of the forty-some years during which they individually or together served, the church was institutionalized and its practices regularized, and the membership grew

dramatically. However they may have qualified the ‘peoplehood’ of the Chinese congregants racially, these two ministers certainly defined their own work as active participation in the emergence of “God’s people” among the immigrant community. And the church as a place also took on new meaning, precisely because there was now a community invested in the investment of meaning in the place. Whereas Speer’s vision and his actions were a defining moment in the history of Asian American religions, a primary significance of this period that followed is the activity of the Chinese themselves, through which they became ancestors to the current church community. Written records left by these early individuals are virtually non-existent, but nonetheless, through an interrogation of the missionary records, we are able to glean a sense of how these Chinese worshipers, through their daily practices of life, negotiated with the missionaries to determine the nature of the church they embraced.

Loomis’ and Condit’s ministries extended across the 1870s and 1880s, the high-water mark of anti-Chinese sentiment and violence in the United States, and I argue that the growth of the church during this period reflects a Chinese counter-narrative to these tremendous external forces. The immigrants attracted to the church had the concerns of immediate and longer-term survival on their minds, even while their missionary leaders were preoccupied with the evangelical agenda of the Presbyterian denomination, the agenda Speer had been accused of neglecting. Still, in today’s PCC, it is the missionary drive to ‘spread the Gospel’ that survives most readily as a cornerstone of memory from this period, claimed by the Mandarin and Cantonese Ministries as an originary impulse that the two language worshipping communities hold themselves to be following faithfully. In making this claim, the anchoring narrative of Speer’s ministry is bypassed in favor of an alternative genesis account, and collective memory shows itself to be something other than a linear or strictly chronological presentation of history. I will attempt to complicate the story by asking what narrative, apart from an evangelical one, these earliest of Chinese believers shaped through their association with the fledgling church. Beyond the salvific message the missionaries were eager to propound, what social meaning did the Chinese impart by their presence and participation in this place?

## **New Executors of a Denominational Agenda**

What the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions’ intentions for the San Francisco Mission were, immediately following Speer’s departure in 1857, is shrouded in some ambiguity. It was clear that the members of the Foreign Board had been uncomfortable with the independent attitude of their first missionary and with the direction in which he had taken the Mission, but now that life-threatening illness had necessitated his departure, what was less clear was the fate that awaited the Mission. As seen in the last chapter, the possibility of closing the Mission even while Speer was still in residence was public knowledge and a proposition resisted by allies of the ministry in California. Now that Speer had been required to leave so abruptly, denominational abandonment of the work seemed possible again, if not outright probable.



The Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel—an interdenominational group Speer had assembled in his effort to reach beyond Presbyterian resources in funding the construction of the mission house—seeing no signs of a resumption of work a year and a half after Speer’s departure, sent their own emissary, Colonel David S. Turner, himself a member of the group, to the Foreign Board’s offices in New York in early December 1858, bearing a letter from the collected Trustees. Beneath the veneer of courteous language in the letter, the impatience of the Californians can be clearly discerned, as can an apparent attempt to shame the Foreign Board into action. The Trustees reminded Walter Lowrie, the main Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions dealing with the California ministry to the Chinese and the designated recipient of the letter, that despite original financial support for the church coming from Christians of various denominations, the decision to place the Mission under the direction of the Presbyterians had been made because the Christian San Franciscans involved “felt that in the character of your Board we had a guarantee that the work you had formally and deliberately undertaken, would not be abandoned.” While there had been hope that Speer would recover sufficiently from his illness to return west, it was clear by this point in late 1858 that this would not happen, and the Trustees expressed in no uncertain terms that they held the Foreign Board responsible for finding a suitable replacement, suggesting considerable damage to the denomination’s reputation should it fail to do so:

...[A]nother appointment [of a missionary] must be made for the Mission, or it must be considered as at an end. This last conclusion is one which cannot be too deeply deprecated, not only for reasons already given or intimated, but we may add for the credit of your Board and of the Presbyterian Church. Should such be the result, it would be felt, that the very considerable sum of money contributed here [\$18,000] under the guarantee we may say of your Board has been thrown away, and it would greatly discourage any future attempts to accomplish anything in the way of Christian benevolence in connection with any organization of the East. Another consideration presents itself—If you should abandon the Mission, you would naturally wish to realize the money now standing secured by the mortgage on the Chapel [the Board had lent \$5,000 toward its construction]. This you can only do by foreclosure, and the building being adapted to the particular purpose for which it was erected, rather than any other, would probably not bring much, if any more than the mortgage and interest. And, this would place you legally in the position, of first inducing the investment of a large sum of money, in an enterprise of Christian benevolence and then acting the part of a hard creditor by sacrificing all, to secure the return of a small sum which you had invested yourselves. We state these aspects of the case, simply as showing what must for ought we can see, inevitably be the result of an abandonment of the mission.<sup>3</sup>

The Trustees were baldly suggesting that, not only was the next step the Foreign Board took under heavy public scrutiny on the West Coast, but that future cooperation with *any*

major East-Coast denomination—which meant virtually *all* the established Protestant denominations—was in jeopardy should that step be judged a misstep.

The Trustees' message was not lost on Lowrie, and his written reply, dated February 22, 1859, was both testy and defensive in tone. "...I would observe that there are some facts and considerations which do not appear to have occurred to you," he wrote, and later: "They [the members of the Foreign Board] never have established a mission under a pledge that it was to be continued without reference to circumstances that might arise in the Providence of God respecting it." In other words, Lowrie wanted, on the one hand, to make clear that no promises had been made, but on the other hand, he also chafed at the suggestion that the Foreign Board was standing idly by and attempted to make a case in its defense. Interestingly, in his presentation of the measures taken, there are notable discrepancies, which suggest the Foreign Board may not have been quite as diligent as he was representing to the Trustees of the Chinese Chapel. Here, two months into 1859, he wrote, "We were in hopes that one of our Missionaries there [in China], whose health could not stand the climate of China, would have supplied Mr. Speer's place. We had written to him on the subject and he was expected home two months ago, but he was delayed in getting a passage, and the vessel in which he at last embarked has arrived with the painful news that he died on the voyage."<sup>4</sup> The missionary to whom Lowrie was referring was the Rev. John B. French, and in the second sentence of that quote, Lowrie seems to suggest that the Foreign Board was still waiting to hear French's decision when the news of his death arrived. In fact, the Foreign Board itself had reported French's decision a full nine months before in its Twenty-First Annual Report: "The Rev. John B. French, returning from China because of ill health, declines to serve in CA, saying 'My own decided impression is, that it would be better for one of the home missionaries in San Francisco to devote a *portion* of his time to the Chinese there. He could operate through some of the native Christians who speak English, and assist in the distribution of Bibles and tracts. We could keep up the supply of books, and, in the course of time, might be able to send over a native assistant, who would be an efficient helper."<sup>5</sup> French had not only been unwilling to serve the Chinese in San Francisco himself, but had been essentially opposed to the work of the Board of Foreign Missions there, believing that the ministry ought to be left to an English-speaking representative of Home Missions, with tentative support from the Board of Foreign Missions in the form of supplies and perhaps a Chinese assistant at some unspecified future date. The Annual Report was published in May 1858, and usually these annual reports covered mission operations through December of the previous year. At the least, Lowrie had known for nine months by the time he replied to the San Francisco Trustees that he did not have a viable replacement candidate for Speer in French, and it was quite possible that he had known this for well over a year.

Whether the Foreign Board, during that year, had entertained the possibility of abandoning the California ministry to the Chinese is unclear, but, despite his protestations, the timing Lowrie recounts in his letter does suggest that little, if anything, was done before Turner appeared in New York with the Trustees' letter. The wording of Lowrie's account of the news of French's passing plainly puts its arrival *within* two months of the date of his own letter of February 22, 1859, which, in turn, puts it squarely

*after* Turner’s conveyance of the Trustees’ letter. Now, Lowrie wrote, “Having no one in Canton who can leave that field of labor, we have offered the appointment to a Missionary formerly at Ningpo, who has been some years in this country, on account of his health.”<sup>6</sup> This, of course, meant that the offer of appointment to which he was referring was made *after* Turner’s delivery of the letter. Lowrie’s explanations to the Trustees aside, the record does seem to show that, at the very least, the reactivation of the Chinese Mission had not been a priority for the Foreign Board. Beyond the initial enquiry as to French’s willingness to serve in San Francisco, the Foreign Board seems to have lapsed into sustained inactivity of perhaps up to a year or more. What intentions lay behind that inactivity is difficult to discern, but it is clear that the matter of a replacement appointment was engaged again only after the intervention of the Trustees.

The Foreign Board had previously not hesitated to criticize Speer publicly, including voicing its disapproval in its Annual Reports, and in his reply to the Trustees, Lowrie was no less vocal with his criticisms, this time of the physical home Speer had arranged for the Chinese Christians he anticipated:

In regard to the building of the Mission Chapel, and our connection with the Trustees, there are some facts, that should not be lost sight of. The Board had nothing to do with the arrangements for building the Mission Chapel. They were not even consulted as to its size or arrangement. As soon as they were informed of it by Mr. Speer, while they fully believed that he acted with the best intentions, they disapproved of the course pursued, and instructed him if it were in his power to return to the donors the sums they had paid, leaving it to them to make what donations they please, directly to the Board, in aid of providing accommodations for the Mission. These instructions however came too late, as one of the Trustees informed me by letter “a large amount of the funds has been already expended in the erection of the building.”<sup>7</sup>

The twin issues of denominational control of direction and of finances reappear here, and Lowrie clearly wishes to distance the Foreign Board from Speer’s decision to invest in physical infrastructure. Elsewhere in his response to the Trustees, he seems to concede an obligation of the Foreign Board to continue an effort in providing missionary personnel, but in this transitional time of some uncertainty, he also appears eager to minimize the Board’s perceived ‘ownership’ of the mission house structure. That latter further signals the Foreign Board’s ambivalence toward the future of the San Francisco Mission, but at the same time, the fact that this conversation about the building was being engaged at all conveys the importance of the mission house in securing at least this much perseverance from the Presbyterian denomination. Had the Foreign Board not been tied to the Trustees through the mortgage on the building, the Trustees would not have had the same stakes—or the same leverage—in raising the issue of the Mission’s survival with the Board now. Put differently, the Foreign Board unwittingly found itself tied to location and locale and was now being challenged on its willingness to make this connection meaningful through an investment in staffing. While the course of events

may not have transpired precisely as he imagined it would in these earliest years, nonetheless, Speer's investment in 'place' was proving to be tremendously significant in shaping the prospects of an emerging Chinese American Christianity.

The missionary who had served at Ningpo, to whom Lowrie had alluded in his letter, was Augustus Ward Loomis, and he ultimately was sent to succeed Speer. Loomis arrived in San Francisco with his wife on September 14, 1859 and served the Chinese Mission there until his death on July 26, 1891. Like Speer, Loomis had also previously been a missionary to China, serving from 1844 to 1850 in Macau, in Chusan (Zhoushan, in Zhejiang Province), and finally, in Ningpo (Ningbo). His association with that last station was the longest, and he spoke the Chinese of the region, a credit to him certainly, but his unfamiliarity with Cantonese would prove to be a handicap in San Francisco, where the overwhelming majority of the immigrants spoke the southern language, making a translator for him necessary for most of his ministry.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, the Foreign Board exhibited tremendous support for this second missionary, stating in its annual report after Loomis' first full year of service that, "The work of this mission, and the circumstances attending it, will be clearly understood from the report of Mr. Loomis, which is here presented without abridgement [a dramatic contrast to the heavy redaction of Speer's reports]. It gives the Committee pleasure to express their entire satisfaction with his labours; and they would ask for this mission a continued remembrance in the prayers of the churches."<sup>9</sup> Whether the Foreign Board's words were an extension of its rebuke of Speer, a show of involvement in the wake of the Trustees' criticisms, a display of support where the Board felt it was needed in the face of the challenges Loomis faced, or a combination of the above, is uncertain, but the deliberate nature of the compliment and the stark contrast in tone to the treatment of Speer's reports—or indeed those of any succeeding missionaries—make the intention of bolstering Loomis and his efforts indisputable.

Loomis, on his part, did not disappoint the Foreign Board in setting to work immediately to carry out its agenda for the Mission. Concurring with the Board that the Presbyterian denomination needed surer hold over the physical premises if it were to invest further in mission activities there, Loomis negotiated for the transfer in 1863 of the deed to the mission house from the Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.<sup>10</sup> More generally, Loomis' theological orientation was in greater keeping with the Foreign Board's conservative tilt than Speer's had been. In contrast to Speer's emphasis on social action and the relief of suffering as hallmarks of Christian witness, Loomis emphasized piety, faith, and purity as the route to a Christian kingdom among all Americans and the 'foreigners' in their midst. He served prominently on the Synod of the Pacific's Committee on Public Morals<sup>11</sup> and wrote of the report which the committee published in 1863 that, "It is plainly the duty of ministers and church sessions to labor to promote holy living in the members of the church. ... These remarks are made because your Committee believe that the grand means for procuring a better state of morals in the community generally, is by raising the standard of piety in the church. Let ministers preach, and Christians live as the Bible requires, and the morals of the people will improve; vice will hide its face."<sup>12</sup> Loomis goes on to observe that, "Intemperance, profanity, gaming, Sabbath-breaking, and impurity, prevail to a fearful

extent on all this Coast.” While he is ostensibly speaking about the public morals of all residents in the coastal states and does not single out the Chinese specifically, all the “vices” he names were ones widely associated with the Chinese by the white American public during this period, and it is no leap of the imagination to conclude that his remarks were intended to address the state of affairs among the immigrants as well.

This general concern for piety and morality among believers was reflective of the tenor of Victorian-era American Christianity, and that Loomis was inclined toward establishing such a ministry among the Chinese made him well suited to the needs of the Foreign Board, his linguistic difficulties notwithstanding. Well aware that the Board and the churches measured his progress most immediately by the number of conversions he facilitated, Loomis took pains to explain the lack of apparent progress in his first year’s report:

Perhaps there may be some who will ask, What have we to show as a return for the money expended on this field during the year? In answer, we may say, that he who sent us [God] does not require that we be able to report a given number of conversions: all he makes us responsible for is, for being instant in and out of season; for faithful preaching, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Some may ask, What fruit has been gathered from the three hundred and sixty-five days of sowing? We do not know yet, but we shall know when the final harvest of the earth has been reaped, and the redeemed are all gathered from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.<sup>13</sup>

The theological justifications obscuring an outright admission of a lack of converts to report is typical of Loomis’ writing style. The obstacles in the initial years of his ministry discouraging an expansion of church membership—a transient Chinese population, language difficulties, and limitations to the perceived benefits of conversion, especially when measured against perceived costs, etc.—were, in fact, not dissimilar to those faced by Speer, and the logic of Loomis’ defense in the quote above could most certainly have been applied to Speer’s situation as well. And yet, the Foreign Board seemed unusually ready to embrace Loomis’ efforts, declaring in its following year’s annual report—despite a continued drought in new converts—that, “The Committee are happy to report that this mission still enjoys our confidence as one well planned and well conducted.”<sup>14</sup>

The Foreign Board’s approval of Loomis as the executor of its intentions on the West Coast was perhaps due as much to what Loomis was unwilling to engage as it was to what he was eager to pursue. In stark contrast to Speer, who understood faith as inextricably entwined with the conditions of everyday life, Loomis seemed much more apt to draw limits to the responsibilities he believed the church and its ministers ought to assume. In particular, this meant a distancing from what he perceived as social and political advocacy, an area of service to the Chinese community in which he was well aware Speer had provided leadership. In a letter to Lowrie, dated January 3, 1860,

Loomis recounted a visit from representatives of six district associations (*huiguan* in Mandarin):

...[T]hey proceeded to say that in the days of their respected friend Mr. Speer he interested himself in all matters relating to the Chinamen, & now there were a few things in which they wd. like assistance. The Legislature is about to meet, they wd. like some laws altered, especially those excluding Chinamen fm. the privilege of testifying in the courts, except against their own countrymen, & that requiring Chinamen to pay a monthly tax of \$4.00 for the privilege of digging after gold. I assured them of my hearty sympathy & desire for their welfare in every respect & that they had friends here, & that all of Christ's disciples were their friends, that I wd. think on the subject, & confer with men of more experience & more knowledge of public business than myself, but in the meantime they might write out petitions on these two subjects, briefly & clearly & Ho Sun [Loomis' assistant] might translate & bring them to me, & we wd. have another conference by and by.<sup>15</sup>

The barring of Chinese testimony in the courts—rendered as a court decision in the *People v. Hall* California Supreme Court case and at this point not yet written into the state's statutes—was obviously a matter of continuing concern for the Chinese community, and the request for Loomis to support its reversal was a test of his willingness to continue the advocacy on that issue that Speer had begun. The request for him to advocate a rollback of the \$4-per-month Foreign Miners' Tax was, however, a test of a different sort. Speer himself had opposed *an increase* of the tax above \$4 but had maintained that, at \$4, the tax was fair. What the Chinese leaders wanted to know with this second request was whether Loomis might be persuaded on some issues to go beyond what Speer had been willing to advocate. On both issues, however, it turned out that the Chinese leaders need not have bothered. If the last sentence describing his own tactics at deflection and delay did not sufficiently lay bare his intentions, Loomis' next sentences to Lowrie left no doubt as to his intended position toward political advocacy generally: "I do not intend to get mixed up in any political matters (unless I slip in by accident) but will converse with some good & wise men. If they sd. get a good man to lobby for them, & if all good people wd. exert themselves to circulate petitions in their behalf there might be some prospect of their being relieved but as the case now stands I fear they have a dim prospect."<sup>16</sup> Loomis may well have wished good upon the Chinese, but he saw his own responsibilities and that of the church as being confined to the spiritual realm: he was willing to help find others to provide assistance on worldly matters, but the eventual outcomes of those efforts, however regrettable, he saw as being beyond the purview of the church. The Foreign Board, eager to see their representative focus on the work of building a church community, was no doubt gratified to hear that within a month—as reported in a second letter dated January 30—Loomis had indeed found someone he considered a suitable advocate for the Chinese in the person of a lawyer and former municipal judge, who was also an elder at the First Presbyterian Church,<sup>17</sup> thereby slipping those particular bonds of obligation himself.

Throughout his tenure at the Presbyterian Chinese Mission, Loomis hewed to this approach of maintaining a narrow focus to the definition of ‘church’ and his ministerial role with regard to it. He saw himself most readily as a pastor, shepherding his flock over the pastureland available to it, but influencing the conditions of the flock’s environment did not seem to register as a priority for him. From November 1868 to January 1869, *The Occident* published a ten-part series<sup>18</sup> entitled “The Heathen Among Us,” credited to a correspondent identified only by the initial “C,” and in the third installment of the series, subtitled, “Why So Little Has Been Done,” the author declared bluntly that, “Aside from the difficulties necessarily encountered, the partial failure, or rather, the imperfect success, of the mission work among the Chinese, for the sixteen years it has been established in California, must be ascribed to the manner in which it has been conducted—as a sort of private affair, interesting only to a religious corporation in the Eastern States.” The article went on to say:

One missionary, or even two or three, can no more convert the 65,000 Chinese on our coast, than one minister can suffice for the entire population of our State. Nor can one missionary do all the necessary work of organizing and maintaining a vigorous and effective crusade against the heathenism in our midst any more than one superintendent, however zealous or able, can establish, organize, take full charge of, and teach all the Sunday Schools in our State. I know that this seems to be a sweeping statement, nevertheless, if the reader will think, he will find that it is true. One cause of failure then is utter inadequacy of labor.<sup>19</sup>

While C’s intent for that article and for the series as a whole was to suggest that Christian San Franciscans ought to do more to attend to the Chinese in their midst because the “heathen” in this place were *their* responsibility, James Eells, the editor of *The Occident* was fearful that his correspondent’s comments might be misconstrued as assigning blame primarily to the Presbyterian denomination and its missionary. He accordingly published his own editorial response in the next issue of the paper a week later, attempting, on the one hand, to support the thrust of C’s argument that local Christians had not done enough, while, on the other hand, attempting to minimize the perception that the paper was laying blame. Eells, however, did seem to share at least some of C’s judgment of Loomis’ approach, and that criticism crept into what was intended as clarification: “If blame is to be placed on any, it should come in large measure on the Christians here, that our Mission has not made such progress as all should desire. Hence, we regret that the correspondent to whom we have referred, should seem to cast any censure upon the beloved brother who has for years had charge of the Mission, nor do we think that he has failed to employ those means which his long experience has taught him are most likely to be successful in leading the Chinese to a knowledge of the truth, and to the Savior, while we would be glad, if he were disposed to make more frequent and urgent appeals for assistance, through the papers, and by other means, and to force upon the notice of Christians a duty they seem so willing to neglect.”<sup>20</sup>

Rather than being placated by Eells' follow-up, Loomis was that much more provoked by it and wrote his own lengthy response, which Eells published the following week. In part, it read:

The brother [Loomis, himself] begs to say that formerly he did more in the direction indicated [appealing for assistance, as Eells had suggested] than he has been doing recently, while he confesses to a constitutional aversion to appear before the public in such a manner as might seem like throwing himself and his humble labors into notice. Nevertheless, we have always been, and still are, ready to speak for our Mission at Monthly Concerts and Missionary Meetings when opportunity has been afforded, and we will still be glad to do so; also, if desired, we are ready to present the subject in any church on the Sabbath and to receive the collection, providing that such an arrangement would not interfere with previous engagements, and involve the necessity of being in two places at the same time.

...Foreign missions were called into being by the churches; churches are the parties especially concerned in sustaining them; while the missionaries are only the servants of the churches, receiving their instructions, doing their work, and coming home when the Church seems not to desire their services longer, and so withholds their supplies.

It was enough for our soldiers in the time of the war to do their duty in the field; the quartermaster's department and the recruiting service were entrusted to other hands; while brief reports from those in the active army were all that was necessary to sustain the enthusiasm of the people, and to keep their purse-strings loose. We have not withheld such reports.

...But we will not take up time in defenses or excuses, and will say that, instead of being displeased, we are glad to be thus asked to appeal personally to the people of this coast to come forward now and help; and we do now appeal the more boldly because we have not troubled them much before; and here we say—this is our appeal—we say: begin at once to do what you can for the Chinamen who are in this country. Those within reach, gather into your Sabbath Schools; take them to church with you; teach them in your families; ask them to come in when the family is gathered for morning and evening worship. Teach them to read in English; let your children teach them....<sup>21</sup>

The first paragraph of the quote is notable for its defensive tone of exaggerated humility and mocking retort (“...the necessity of being in two places at the same time”), which, ironically, drew more attention than otherwise to the unintended admission of a “constitutional aversion to appear before the public” at which C and Eells had hinted.



The second and third paragraphs, again painted over with exaggerated humility, declare Loomis' belief that his responsibilities extended only to pastoral work and that finding adequate financial support for the Mission was clearly the responsibility of the denomination and its white American churches, which had indicated the desire for foreign missions work among the Chinese. The final paragraph—written as if in a fit of pique and passive-aggressiveness—seems more about assigning blame than about enlisting help.

That very public exchange hardly presented Loomis to advantage, but the continued strong support of the Foreign Board is perhaps more understandable in light of how he went on to frame his prescription for action from his fellow San Franciscans and Californians. He first quoted from a report from the Board's own treasurer, dated October 10, 1868, two months prior: "The receipts of the Foreign Board, as compared with last year, are as follows: Total receipts to October, 1867, \$73,711; total receipts to October 1, 1868, \$41,707. To meet this deficiency, we have been obliged to borrow \$30,000. Our average monthly payments thus far have been \$26,000, and our average receipts about one-third of this. It is evident that neither the treasury nor its treasurer can stand such a pressure long."<sup>22</sup> While the treasurer was referring to the overall financial shortfall confronting the sum total of its operations all around the world, Loomis—provoked by what he perceived as criticism of him personally—did not hesitate to translate that wider need into justification for a three-point plan for San Francisco churches: 1) replace the East Coast congregations in the role of primary supporters for the California Chinese Mission; 2) not only assume support of the Mission but repay the East Coast churches (ostensibly so that "they will be better able to carry forward missionary operations in heathen lands"); and 3) "We have recently enlarged the operations of our mission to the Chinese in California, and our expenses are proportionately increased. This is an additional reason why the churches here should do at once what *The Occident* urges upon them, viz: prove that this is *their* mission. It [*The Occident*] says: 'We must prove that it is *our* mission, as it really is, by giving prayer, and toil, and interest in its behalf. [Loomis' italics.]' How we thank *The Occident* for these warm words! How glad we are to be thus owned as a member of the family."<sup>23</sup> By any measure, the leap from an apparent neglect of fundraising to a public call to simultaneously assume full support of the Mission, repay funds, and increase contributions was a wildly disproportionate response to the editor's comment that more frequent appeals to the local churches would be desirable. Factoring in the barefaced suggestion that *The Occident's* writers were the provocateurs behind the clearly unreasonable three-point appeal, and the unconcealed sarcasm of the final sentences of the quote above, it is perhaps no surprise that the remaining installments of the series by C avoided direct comment on the Presbyterian Mission and, in comparison to the early installments, were veritably bland in tone.

The Foreign Board, by contrast, stood to benefit from Loomis' provocation. It had discouraged the extensiveness of Speer's fundraising activities, because monetary contributions by non-Presbyterians toward the construction of the mission house diluted the Foreign Board's ownership. But, because Loomis had earlier engineered the transfer of the deed of property to the Board and seen the Mission put definitively under

Presbyterian control, his challenge now to local churches of all denominations was a welcome development if it spurred others to support the Presbyterian project. However sensitive to criticism he presented himself to be in his long article in the paper, Loomis also publicly reaffirmed his willingness to defend the Foreign Board, its needs, and its agenda.

Whether the criticism in *The Occident* of the denomination's handling of its mission to the Chinese on the West Coast reached the offices of the Foreign Board in New York is uncertain, but it is not unreasonable to suppose it did, given that, at this point in late 1868/early 1869, the Presbyterians were still the only denomination operating a mission of this sort anywhere in the country and thus, commanded unrivaled attention. In fact, though it laid the bulk of the responsibility at the feet of indifferent Californian Christians, openly hostile non-Christians, and the Chinese themselves, nonetheless, New York's own *Independent* also took up the refrain that the San Francisco Mission was less than successful. Its February 29, 1869 edition reported that, "For some years the Old School Presbyterians have supported a single missionary in California, who has labored with considerable zeal but little success."<sup>24</sup> Remaining records do not indicate if this growing chorus of criticism directly spurred the Foreign Board to increase its personnel at the Mission, but a year later, in 1870, the Rev. Ira Miller Condit was sent to join Loomis in San Francisco. It is otherwise curious that the Foreign Board would incur the expense to do so at this particular time, when it had so recently complained of a significant funding shortfall in the treasurer's report from which Loomis quoted.

Condit, who had served in Canton from 1860 to 1865, was actually not new to the Mission, having spent a number of months there in 1866, assuming responsibility for its ministries while Loomis returned to the East Coast with his ailing wife. Coincidentally, however, Condit's own wife, Laura Emily Carpenter, also fell ill, forcing the couple to follow the Loomises east within months of their arrival. Sadly, both women died that December. After returning in 1870, Condit served at the San Francisco mission until 1876, but the working relationship between the two men, and eventually between the two couples—Condit was remarried in 1872 to Samantha Davis Knox, and Loomis was remarried a year later—was tense. Surviving correspondence from June 1875 from Loomis, who was on leave in Cazenovia, NY at the time, to John C. Lowrie, who was working alongside his father, Walter Lowrie, as another of the Foreign Board's Corresponding Secretaries, indicates considerable strain from competition between the two couples and the suggestion that Loomis was lobbying for a change in the administrative structure at the Mission.<sup>25</sup> Tension continued to build into the following year,<sup>26</sup> until Loomis was again given sole charge of the San Francisco mission, and Condit was reassigned to Los Angeles to found a new church for the Chinese there. For the next decade and a half, the Condits alternated assignments between the Chinese churches in Los Angeles and in Oakland, returning to San Francisco only after Loomis' death in 1891. Based out of the San Francisco church, Condit was then given charge of the entire Bay Area, serving in that expanded capacity until 1904, when at the age of 71, he was transferred back to the Oakland pastorate, where he served until his death in 1915.

The personal difficulties between Loomis and Condit aside, the two ministers—and their wives, where these were involved—shared similar priorities with regard to their work among the Chinese on the West Coast. Unlike Speer, who pursued a more expansive vision of missions, his two successors pursued a ministry modeled closely on the missions with which they had been involved in China: a ministry built around a church, schools, fellowships and Bible-study groups, and support for other mission churches to the Chinese, both in the United States and in China. Visitation and book- and tract-distribution were resumed soon after Loomis' arrival in San Francisco, and worship services followed shortly afterwards.<sup>27</sup> A decade later, in his annual report to the Foreign Board on operations for 1869, Loomis, recounting some earlier history, wrote that, "The mission... was not abandoned [after Speer's departure]; some of its departments were still sustained, until, in September 1859, another missionary [Loomis here referring to himself] was sent to resume the work, which from that time to the present has been continued, without the interruption of a day."<sup>28</sup> While this account of affairs conveniently reinforces a narrative of continuity, other records, including the Trustees' missive to Walter Lowrie, seem to suggest that the work of the mission had not been maintained in the absence of a missionary at its helm. What is known for certain is that, of the five members of the church from Speer's tenure, only two remained in San Francisco at the time of Loomis' arrival, and of those two, one had formally moved his membership to the First Presbyterian Church.<sup>29</sup> As had been the case for Speer, attracting curious Chinese to the Sunday services was not difficult for Loomis, but translating attendance into membership was a far greater challenge. It required half a dozen years of outreach before there was a core community of sufficient size to petition the Presbytery of California for an official reorganization of the church. Twelve Chinese Christian men signed the petition presented at the March 15, 1866 Presbytery meeting, but two were physically absent from the city straightaway, one having left for Nevada Territory and the other, for Hong Kong.<sup>30</sup> Loomis tended to the growth of the church carefully, as did Condit after him, and by the time the latter left the San Francisco pastorate his final time in 1904, the enrolled membership was 230, with 139 of those in residence in the city.<sup>31</sup>

Along with the worship services, Loomis re-established the Sabbath (Sunday) Schools, once in the morning and once in the evening on Sundays, with "a school in all respects like those of the Sabbath" also preceding Wednesday evening services. These schools met for one-and-a-half to two hours on each occasion, and while the intention was ultimately to impart some religious lesson, Loomis was well aware that many came primarily to learn to read in English.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, the imparting of knowledge, in and of itself, regardless of direct religious effect, was accepted as a legitimate auxiliary function of missions, and the Mission had had its own less-religiously-oriented Evening School, or "Chinese Mission School," during the Speer years. This latter school was not, however, resumed under the direction of the Mission until a decade after Loomis' arrival. With the suspension of virtually all operations after Speer's departure, the Mission had no schools of its own running at the time of Loomis' appointment to the San Francisco post, but the city's Board of Education had wrestled with the issue of public education for the Chinese during the hiatus at the Mission. When thirty Chinese parents petitioned the Board of Education on August 23, 1859 for a primary school for their children, its response was more conciliatory than it had been two years earlier. Driven to action in

part by Speer's previous offer of a large room at the Mission, free of charge, the Board of Education opened "the Chinese School," the very first public school in the United States for the Chinese, at the mission house on September 12, 1859, a mere two days before Loomis arrived in the city.<sup>33</sup> This public school was located at the mission house for the next ten years, until 1869, when it was moved to a new location on Powell Street, between Jackson and Washington Streets.<sup>34</sup>

With the public school's departure in 1869, the absence of a school at the mission house—perhaps more significantly understood as the absence of a school from the ministry—prompted Loomis to re-open the Mission's own evening school.<sup>35</sup> A half dozen years later, Sylvester Woodbridge, editor of *The Occident*, wrote a piece for the paper in which he celebrated the twenty-second anniversary of the Chinese Mission School, effectively tracing its lineage continuously back to Speer's establishment of the first Evening School in 1853.<sup>36</sup> Like Loomis' account of unbroken operations at the Mission, this one also emphasized continuity, but here, too, the narrative was perhaps not entirely accurate in its representation: while the Mission did host a school for twenty of the twenty-two years it had actively operated up until that point, the city had, in fact, run the school for half of that time. Still, when the church re-assumed direction of the school, it did so with deliberateness and lifted up the achievements of its students as a sign of the Mission's success, holding annual public examinations and exhibitions to showcase the students' academic progress. In the Foreign Board's Annual Report for the 1872 operational year, an account of Fung Noy [Fong Noy], probably the greatest success story to emerge from among the alumni of the Chinese Mission School, was related with pride:

Fung Noy, who a few years ago began his alphabet with us, returned to China on the last steamer. He was prepared to pass a creditable examination in geography, arithmetic, grammar, astronomy, and philosophy. He had begun the study of physiology, and had advanced half-way through Robinson's Algebra, and this only by improving in the early hours of morning and his evenings—the day-time being devoted to labor. He now holds a permission from Prince Kung, through Dr. Martin, to enter the imperial college at Peking. He will probably avail himself of the opportunity.<sup>37</sup>

As Fung Noy's story shows, in addition to educating younger students, the Evening School/Night School/Chinese Mission School also served students of working age—as had the city-run Chinese School—and consequently, the schools mostly operated in the evening hours to accommodate those who had workplace responsibilities during the day. In the early 1870s, however, there were additionally two new schools started with the church's involvement, which were day schools primarily for children. The first of these, originally known as the Globe Hotel School, named after its location in the Globe Hotel on the northwest corner of Jackson and Dupont (Grant Ave.) Streets, was started as a school for girls but, by the beginning of 1874, also included boys as well.<sup>38</sup> Loomis was a strong supporter of the school, and after his death in 1891, it was renamed the Loomis Memorial Presbyterian Mission School, or Loomis School for short, in his honor. By then, there were seventy-one students enrolled, thirteen of them girls, and

three-quarters of them members of the church's Sunday School.<sup>39</sup> In July 1878, the Occidental Board, which had founded the Chinese Mission Home (Cameron House) four years earlier, opened the Occidental School, a day-school for children of both sexes, "in the basement of the residence of a Chinese Christian, an employee in the California bank." According to John Hood Laughlin, Condit's successor, this unnamed patron "through Dr. Condit's influence secured \$200 for the school and persuaded the merchants to send their children, boys and girls."<sup>40</sup> After the church moved in 1882 to larger quarters in the former home of the First Presbyterian Church, it hosted the Occidental School in the building, but the Occidental School and the Loomis/Globe Hotel School were kept separate entities, the former under the direction of the Occidental Board and the latter, under the direction of the church.

The schools were critical to the Mission for a number of different reasons: they provided a setting for teaching the English language; they were a systematized vehicle for imparting "civilizing" and "Americanizing" knowledge; and where the students were children, they allowed inroads into the Chinese community where suspicion and resistance were minimal. While each of these rationale might have been an end in and of itself, the schools were all along viewed as an auxiliary effort, so each of these advantages they conferred were, in addition, understood as setting the scene for more effective evangelism. Religious instruction was woven in with the secular aspects of the curricula and done so entirely self-consciously. At various points, the Foreign Board seemed to feel the need to highlight its efforts on this front as justification to the rank-and-file of the denomination for the schools it operated. The Foreign Board's Annual Report in 1883, for example, noted that, "The night-schools held during the week are invariably followed by religious services, and throughout the exercises of the school, scriptural lessons, hymns, etc., are interspersed. In all respects the character of this and all the other schools connected with the mission in California is thoroughly religious."<sup>41</sup> Through these 'regular' schools, themselves already infused with religious instruction, the students were further recruited to join the Sunday Schools and the worship services.<sup>42</sup>

These latter two types of gatherings were, in turn, specifically geared to the spread of the Gospel, but while their roles were central, their large-group formats were also seen to require supplementation with more directed relationship-building, regarded as necessary to the proper nurture both of potential believers and new believers. For more personalized instruction and more personalized support, the church under Loomis and Condit regularized Bible study groups and fellowships. Loomis and Condit both led study groups themselves at the church and at the Mission Home, and their wives did as well, especially among Chinese women. As much as direct outreach by the missionaries was regarded as significantly influential in many individual cases, it was also understood that the requirement of their personal leadership in these intimate settings would not make for the most efficiently scalable model for evangelism and that it was a model which did not maximize the opportunities for witness by converted co-ethnics. As a result, larger fellowship groups, under the direction of the ministers, their spouses, and Chinese assistants were encouraged during the tenures of both Loomis and Condit to magnify the scale of outreach, while still promoting a high degree of relationship-building.

Of these fellowships, the most prominent among the men was the Chinese YMCA; among the youth, the Christian Endeavor Society; and among the women, the Whatsoever Circle of the King's Daughters. The Chinese YMCA, despite its name, was institutionally separate from the Young Men's Christian Association movement founded by George Williams in London in 1844. Known in Chinese as the Youxue Zhengdaohui, the former organization originated among the Chinese in San Francisco in 1870, originally as an interdenominational association, but by 1875, it had splintered into parallel groups associated with the Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, and Methodist missions. By the early 1900s, the movement had a thousand members and had expanded to thirty branches in twelve different states.<sup>43</sup> The Chinese YMCA provided a meeting space for those interested in Christianity, and newcomers could come to converse, study, and worship with other Chinese men who had already joined the church. Loomis and Condit hosted a branch at the Presbyterian Church, and it served both as a gateway to the Mission and as a means of sustaining personal support for the growing numbers of adult male believers.

By contrast, the Christian Endeavor Society, first formed at the church in 1892, was not originally a Chinese organization but a local and racial/ethnic expression of a national—and eventually, international—movement.<sup>44</sup> Founded in Portland, Maine in 1881 by Francis Biddle Clark, the Christian Endeavor Society was the first national church youth organization in the United States. Interdenominational and evangelical in orientation, the movement aimed to encourage young people to lives in Christian service. Its growth peaked in the 1890s, and its philosophies and models for activities and mentoring greatly influenced the denominational youth fellowships that developed in its wake. In its inaugural year at the Chinese Presbyterian Church, the group had twenty-five members,<sup>45</sup> but by the early 1900s, membership had grown large enough to warrant six societies.<sup>46</sup> Initially, at least, the membership seemed to comprise mostly boys, and many of these acted as guides to Chinatown when the national Christian Endeavor Convention was brought to San Francisco in 1897.<sup>47</sup>

The King's Daughters was likewise not originally a Chinese organization but, instead, a small interdenominational gathering of white Christian women in New York City, who in 1886 organized to help the poor in the city's slums. As the group became a movement and spread across the country and northward into Canada, each new chapter that was added was called a "circle," and the "Whatsoever Circle" was the name chosen for the one organized at the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church on October 9, 1893.<sup>48</sup> While the philanthropic heritage of the King's Daughter's was evident in the activities of the Whatsoever Circle—for example, in 1902, it formed an auxiliary called the "Helping Hand Circle" to teach young girls to sew and make clothing for the poorer children of Chinatown<sup>49</sup>—many of its activities seemed more oriented toward evangelism. Within a decade of its founding, the bi-monthly meetings usually had over a hundred guests, women and children, who were taught Bible lessons, served refreshments, and over tea and cake, invited to church, prayer meetings, and seasonal celebrations, such as the Christmas exercises in 1899, where the Whatsoever Circle "gave a Christmas tree for their heathen sisters from Chinatown."<sup>50</sup>

Beyond these mission objectives of evangelism and service within Chinatown, the Chinese affiliated with the church under Loomis and Condit were active with “foreign” missions work in China, that very same core concern of the Presbyterian denomination that had brought San Francisco’s Chinese community under the influence of the missionary establishment in the very first place. In 1903, the Foreign Board reported that the Whatsoever Circle had been supporting a Bible woman in Sun Neng (Xinning), China for two years, at the end of which the Bible woman reported that “she was the means ‘under the Holy Spirit’ of bringing thirteen persons, whom she visited, to Christ.”<sup>51</sup> The men in the church, in the meanwhile, established dedicated missionary societies to support the work of preachers and colporteurs and to build churches and schools in their hometowns in China. Because these were Chinese supporting Christian work in China, the Foreign Board often referred to the activities not as “foreign missions” but as “reflex influences upon China,” citing them as further evidence of the wisdom of investing in the ministry to the Chinese on the West Coast. In 1933, when the history of these missionary activities was recounted at the celebration of the eightieth anniversary of the church, the various groups had been consolidated into a single Missionary Society, which comprised both female and male members and included the churches in Oakland and Alameda as well as the church in San Francisco. Over its lifetime up until that point, the missionary effort among the Chinese Presbyterians in the Bay Area had built twenty-eight churches in southern China, which in 1933 had a combined membership of 4,469 and a total budget of \$40,000 a year. The same missionary effort had also established seventeen schools in China, with a combined enrollment of 3,700 students. “This one piece of work alone,” the Foreign Board concluded, “is worth all the mission money that has ever been spent for the Orientals in this country [the United States].”<sup>52</sup>

That final statement says much about the values of the Presbyterian denomination and illustrates how a monetary measure of results continued to be a yardstick for success eighty years after the tentative decision to invest financially in the project of evangelizing the Chinese in California. As the second and third executors of the denomination’s missions agenda among the Chinese in San Francisco, Loomis and Condit may have been at odds with one another at a personal level, but they shared a vision for the Chinese American church that dovetailed with the traditional model of evangelical missionary activity championed by the Board of Foreign Missions. The two ministers expanded the Mission steadily over time, but the scope of its activities—whether church, schools, fellowships, or missions—always hewed closely to the objectives of conversions to Christianity and church growth. The regularization of these efforts under Loomis and Condit continued beyond their tenures to define the church through the World War II period, and the conservative tilt of this work resonates still today with the immigrant-generation Mandarin and Cantonese worshiping communities. For these relative newcomers orienting themselves to a set of shared memories about the church to which they can connect, this is how PCC was from the very beginning.

## A Holographic Memory Matrix

How the three language ministries view themselves differently is apparent in their articulations of PCC's mission in the most recent of their respective Church Information Forms (CIF). As noted in the previous chapter, the English Ministry highlights how the church has for a century and a half "advocated for justice," connecting the start of that progressive tradition directly to the Speer years.<sup>53</sup> The Mandarin Ministry's most recent CIF, by contrast, states that the church's "historic mission is Evangelism and Service,"<sup>54</sup> and similarly, the Cantonese Ministry affirms that "The history and legacy of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown has been one of evangelism, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and leading people to Christ and membership in the church family."<sup>55</sup> However much the three earliest ministers and the three different language ministries today may in different moments try to verbally bridge the distance between social justice advocacy and evangelism—rendering the former, for example, a function of the latter—the fact remains that the difference in terminology genuinely reflects very real differences in the orientation of the (different parts of the) church, both in the late nineteenth century and today: the contemporary English Ministry sees itself and acts more like the church under Speer, and the Mandarin and Cantonese Ministries see themselves and act more like the church under Loomis and Condit.

The claim by each of the three language communities that its own understanding of the church's primary emphasis is the one that has obtained from the very beginning can, in fact, be argued to be supported by events of the past. While the history of PCC is generally regarded as unbroken, the year-and-a-half gap between Speer's tenure and Loomis' can reasonably be re-read as leading to a restarting of the church. Certainly, the Presbytery of California had to be petitioned in 1866 to formally recognize the Chinese Mission Church once again as an active congregation within its jurisdiction, and more importantly, both Loomis and the Foreign Board saw themselves as intentionally setting out to shape an institution in many ways decidedly different from the one Speer had had in mind. Where Speer had felt strongly that the vocation of the church was to encourage a more just, more godly world, his successors saw the church's vocation not so much as altering the world but, rather, as accepting its realities and caring for God's flock within that world as best the church could. The period with Loomis and Condit in the San Francisco pastorate can, therefore, be logically viewed as an alternative genesis account.

In Chapter 3, I described the record of Speer's tenure as an orienting guidepost in the church's memory matrix, and the proposition here that the Loomis/Condit years can be regarded as an alternative genesis suggests that there is simultaneously a second major set of institutional memories staking out the matrix and orienting the church's sense of self. Intramural disputes at the church today about direction and mission sometimes reflect seemingly competitive needs to argue that the institution has always been just one way or another, but the proposition of two equally valid genesis accounts confers greater explanatory power by better accounting for how institutional memory at the church has the range of internal variation that it does. In my continuing analogy of Gibsonian cyberspace as collective memory, the accounts of Loomis' and Condit's institutionalizing efforts serve as a second orienting node within the matrix, from which a user can connect



to other nodes/groupings of memories. A more contemporary analogy—one unavailable to Gibson at the time he was writing *Neuromancer*—is the analogy of home pages on the World Wide Web: the Speer stories or the Loomis/Condit stories might productively be compared to the different home pages that individuals surfing the Web today can choose as their default home pages when they open their browser windows the first time during a session. They appear to the users to orient them within the World Wide Web—literally one version of the *real* cyberspace Gibson was trying to imagine—and via hyperlinks, the user can then connect to other pages within the site or to other sites on the Web.

The Matrix was Gibson’s attempt at verbally describing this connectivity. It was a visualization of an intangible reality, a conferring of a relatable aesthetic on an invisible world. Whereas I have previously compared the Speer-related origin stories to an anchoring guidepost of PCC’s institutional memory, the proposition in this chapter of an alternate set of origin stories places our focus on the multi-nodal character of the memory matrix itself; that is, if we visualize the church’s collective memory as a matrix with multiple nodes of related memories—the Speer grouping and the Loomis/Condit grouping being but two of these—the multiplication of these nodes in three-dimensional space mirrors Gibson’s concept of place literally defined by accumulations of data. While Gibson’s neon-inflected futuristic take was pioneering as a vision of digital life, the underlying fundamental idea that memories can be located in three-dimensional physical space predates him by millennia. The ancient Greeks and Romans employed a mnemonic technique called “the method of loci” to organize information for efficient recall by imagining discreet memories being housed in discreet physical spaces. More poetically known as “memory palaces,” these three-dimensional constructs in the mind allowed rooms and alcoves and hallways and other spaces and pathways to be associated with particular pieces of information, so that entering these information-invested places of the mind helped with the recollection of the memories stored there.

In a 1950s physical variant of the same idea, Italian American artist Marino Auriti patented (U.S. patent no. 179,277) and built an eleven-foot-tall 1:200-scale model of a 136-story building he called *Il Enciclopedico Palazzo del Mondo* (*The Encyclopedic Palace of the World*). This utopian concept imagined a physical structure—which, if actually built, would have risen 2,322 feet and been the tallest building in the world at the time, with a footprint covering sixteen city blocks—that would have housed examples of the full range of human achievement, “from the wheel to the satellite.” Interestingly, the 2013 Venice Biennale, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, took “The Encyclopedic Palace” for the theme of its main show, transporting Auriti’s *Palace* from the American Folk Art Museum in Manhattan to Venice’s repurposed shipyards, the Arsenale, and surrounding it with the works of the 150-plus invited artists of the main exhibition and, beyond that, the national pavilions that lend structure to the international biennial.<sup>56</sup> For the six months from June through November while the Biennale was occurring, the notion of “The Encyclopedic Palace” inscribed upon Venice a new sense of place, a matrix of possible pathways linking the nodes of artwork scattered across multiple sites in the city.

The example of the Biennale is instructive, because the ephemeral nature of the exhibition underlines the simultaneous reality and intangibility of a new sense of place:

its absence afterwards confirms that, in fact, something definite that reimagines the relationships of the canals and palazzos and plazas had been there and no longer is. And art, by its very nature of intentional intellectual and emotional provocation, reinforces the notion of the ideational in place-making. The two main sites of the biennial, the Arsenale and the Central Pavilion at the Giardini, might be compared to the Speer and the Loomis/Condit orienting nodes of collective memory for PCC. Visitors to the exhibition could orient themselves effectively by beginning at either place—or at some other location which may not have been as rich in possibility for directing next steps (read: maps and brochures and reference staff, etc.) but yet, were no less related to the exhibition—and then choose an infinite number of routes to succeeding destinations. The Arsenale and the Giardini did not ‘compete’ for validity but instead offered alternative references for accessing the full expanse of the biennial. In similar fashion, the notion of the Speer and the Loomis/Condit narratives as different nodes in a memory matrix disrupts the notion of memory that is either only correctly or incorrectly mapped over a linear presentation of history. The way that historical resources are utilized by the members of the contemporary church in forming institutional senses of self is more fruitfully described by this notion of an infinite number of portals by which individuals might enter the memory matrix.

Memory, in this regard, is holographic, as the quote from Gibson in this chapter’s epigraph describes. In the accompanying narrative, Wintermute points out to Case that, “Minds aren’t *read*. ...[Y]ou’ve still got the paradigms print gave you...”<sup>57</sup> Unlike print, which requires a linearity of progression to unlock grammatical structure, and unlike photography, which records a scattering of light from a *single* direction, holography records disruption of an entire light *field*, enabling a three-dimensionality in the recorded image that is ‘legible’ from an infinite number of directions. Understanding collective memory similarly as a field—or in Gibsonian terms, as a place—provides a framework for explaining how institutional memory can be simultaneously collective and display such variation from individual to individual. The analogies might be: coming to the same place from different directions (and thus, experiencing different physical approaches) or viewing the same hologram from different angles (and thus, experiencing a different view of the same three-dimensional image). There are simultaneously the elements of shared ideational experience and variegated ideational experience, without the need for negating selected perspectives as misreadings.

## **Missionary and Chinese Heterotopias**

Returning to the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church, the physical site at the center of the memory process we are discussing, it bears noting that the cast of actors shaping the adherent memories was significantly different between the Speer years and the Loomis/Condit ones. Our working definition of place-making being “the investment of physical space with shared meaning,” the assumption is that there are identifiable parties involved doing the “investing.” This activity is engaged at at least two points in time. In the shaping of contemporary institutional memory, the members of PCC today select, order, and edit collected memories—i.e. choose their routes through the memory

matrix—but at the front end of the process there are also those involved with the very episodes that are remembered, whose perspectives the current community claims as its inheritance. In other words, activity occurs historically, but not every actor involved is claimed by the church today as equally important in shaping its memories of the past. Racist white Christians in San Francisco who were opposed to the work of the mission, for example, may have their existence acknowledged by the contemporary church, but the bigoted perspective of these individuals does not survive in the institutional memory as any of the accepted variations on understanding the church's past.

The actors in PCC's early history that the church acknowledges most readily have tended to be the missionaries sent by the Presbyterian denomination to oversee the San Francisco mission. The paucity of records overall and the missionary establishment's authorship of what primary records there are shapes this bias to a great extent, but in revisiting Speer's tenure in the last chapter, we were also introduced to an additional rationale for the primacy of this perspective relative to those first few years. Speer, with very limited support, was struggling against his own denominational superiors to keep the mission open, and no less significantly, while the church often drew the passing interest of Chinese in the city, it made virtually no headway recruiting members. Put differently, Speer was relatively isolated in his lonely role as the founding visionary at the center of the mission, and the Chinese were not involved in the "investment of shared meaning," because no regular group of Chinese individuals was consistently involved with the church at all. Part of the institutionalizing work in which Loomis and Condit were engaged was the building up of a consistent membership. Ritual and routine had meaning only because there came to be those present to practice them and to do so with regularity. And yet, for the church today, and for any other interested contemporary parties, the perspectives of the Chinese are not readily apparent in the missionary record. These historical transcripts are "hidden," as we discussed in the Introduction, and revealing them requires a different sort of interrogation of the existing record.

The Presbyterian denomination was well aware that the mounting hostility against the Chinese was a hindrance to its own evangelical objectives. While Speer, during his years in San Francisco, was already struggling to modify the social environment he saw as giving sanction to increasing incidents of individual physical violence, the legislation and judicial decisions against which he fought were only the beginnings of an anti-Chinese sentiment that was coalescing into a threat much more organized, systematic, and sophisticated. That tendency away from random violence toward more coordinated opposition was already on vivid display by the beginning of Loomis' ministry, and his correspondence with the Foreign Board a mere four months after his arrival at the end of 1859 includes the following mention:

There is strong prejudice against the Chinese: representatives fm. the mining districts came with instructions to secure the enactment of laws to expel them fm. the mines altogether. & today petitions have gone up from this city asking for laws to expel them altogether from the country. I send a scrap of a newspaper.... [The newspaper is not identified, but the clipping, entitled, "A Monster Anti-Coolie Petition,"

speaks of a petition 240 feet long, said to contain 10,000 names, demanding a constitutional law to expel “the Coolies who are now in our midst, and prevent those who are now in Asia from seeking our shores.”<sup>58</sup>

This hostility only continued to grow in the decades following, and twenty years later, the Foreign Board’s Annual Report would succinctly summarize thus the denomination’s self-interested concern amidst a steadily worsening situation: “The mission in California has been pursued under extraordinary difficulties growing out of the social antipathy to the Chinese population.”<sup>59</sup> Joshua Paddison argues that formations of race and citizenship in the post-Civil War United States relied heavily on notions of religious identity, achieved or ascribed, and that the ending of Reconstruction might be productively read as marked by the knitting together of a national identity centered on a newly revitalized white Protestantism. He cites, in particular, Native Americans, Catholics, and the (“heathen”) Chinese as oppositional poles against which this emergent national identity was drawn.<sup>60</sup> Paddison’s thesis incorporates religion into the argument that antagonism against the Chinese was motivated as much by a collective need—the need for an oppositional process of collective self-definition among the various groups that were not yet firmly bound together by the idea of a white Protestant majority—as by the notion that the Chinese were perceived as a social and economic threat to various segments of American society uncertain of their own footing in an evolving racial hierarchy.

This mounting hostility notwithstanding, the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church under Loomis and Condit grew steadily as we have seen. And this growth did not cease with the Chinese-related marker Paddison regards as one notable indicator of the end of Reconstruction’s “multiracial and multiregional process of national reimagining”<sup>61</sup>: the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In a survey he conducted in 1916 of the church’s history, Laughlin, Condit’s successor at the mission, instead concluded that:

The surprise of the survey lies in the discovery that the greatest prosperity of the mission has come in the years of the exclusion-law handicap [which, in fact, was not yet over and would not be until 1943, with lingering effects for decades after that]. “A decadent work” was what it was described to be to me when I undertook the superintendency of it, because the exclusion laws were keeping out the laboring class, and not enough of the exempt classes were coming to make up the deficit. While this is true, it is equally true now, that more than half of our total converts have been gathered in the last 21 years [1895-1916] (two of these were earthquake years, which produced only two new members), and the net active membership, excluding those who have removed to distant places has been more than doubled in the last 19 years [1897-1916].<sup>62</sup>

It is little wonder that Laughlin was surprised by this outcome, given that Loomis himself, while in the midst of the persecutions against the immigrants, reported

the following on the negative impact of the aggregated anti-Chinese efforts on evangelical outreach:

All these political convulsions, the daily and nightly assemblages with blasphemous and incendiary speeches, the street-parades with yells, and with insulting mottoes and devices upon their banners, together with the many murderous assaults upon this people by ruffians and the almost daily introduction of new bills into the Legislature having no end in view but the persecution of the Chinese—all these things have necessarily operated unfavorably upon the benevolent and evangelical efforts among them.<sup>63</sup>

On the one hand, this widespread antipathy being exhibited in the streets, in the courts, and in the legislative chambers was recognizably a poor witness to the power Christianity had to engender compassion and kindness in American society, which nonetheless claimed the religion as a pillar of its identity, and on the other hand, the immigrant community exacted its own price for conversion and alignment with the Christian faith. The Foreign Board's Annual Report in 1895 included the following account:

She [Jessie Wisner, who was then in charge of the Loomis School] has the confidence of heathen parents and the affection of her pupils; three of these were baptized and received into the church at the last communion; one, a lad of fourteen years, was bitterly opposed in his desire to lead a new life by this father, who declared that it would make him ungrateful to his parents, that he would not worship idols, and, worst of all, he would not worship his father after death. He finally threatened to "cut him in pieces" if he dared to be baptized but with a courage rarely seen in one so young the boy decided to take the step. The report [from Condit] says he met the session and gave satisfactory evidence of conversion, and then with pale face and much trepidation, but a determined manner, stood up and was received into the church.<sup>64</sup>

The Foreign Board hardly attempted to conceal its triumph at the boy's journey from his "heathen" past to his Christian present, the strategic use of such words as "idols" and "courage" signaling approval of this transformation for which the Foreign Board was claiming significant responsibility. At the same time, however, the narrative lays bare the recognition of undeniable social costs accompanying religious conversion. Those who converted suffered the censure of the Chinese community, a high price to pay, given that the immigration dynamics of the day, which heavily favored single male labor, had already undermined the family structure for arriving Chinese and, with it, many of the foundations of social support for individuals. Jiwu Wang, exploring the parallel history of Protestant missions to the Chinese in Canada, notes that the more entrenched segments of the immigrant community—meaning businessmen, educators, newspaper editors, and others with significant interests within the established order—further objected to religious

conversion, because they viewed it as undermining racial/ethnic identity and, consequently, as loosening the grip of the local Chinese elite. With their control over the community at stake, the Chinese leadership, though supportive of many of the resources the missionaries provided, was nonetheless apt to be discouraging of conversions and the subsequent sustained interdependence between community members and the interloping white missionaries.<sup>65</sup>

Looking through the eyes of faith, Loomis, Condit, and their missionary peers regarded the decisions to convert as evidence of the Holy Spirit at work and the efficacy of the mission vehicle. Taking into consideration the widespread Chinese acceptance of a pantheon of gods, however, Wang argues to the contrary that, "...[W]hile Protestant missionaries attempted to fill the Chinese mind with the truths of revelation, the Chinese saw the Christian God as no more than a deity [among many] who might protect them from secular hardships just as they had seen the other [Taoist, Buddhist, and Chinese folk] deities. They did not think seriously about such terms as the *salvation of the soul*, *sin*, and *grace*. The missionaries thus encountered the Chinese with many chasms of misunderstanding in the late nineteenth century. [Wang's italics.]"<sup>66</sup> According to Wang's line of argument, the Chinese took to Christianity more for practical, everyday reasons than for abstract theological ones, meaning that they found the benefits offered by the church, including but not limited to the protections of the Christian god, to outweigh the social censure of their co-ethnics. My concern here is less with the reasons why church membership grew during these trying years than it is to ask what the growth of that Chinese membership 'performed,' when compared to the meanings this growth was given by the missionaries. As the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church became institutionalized, with regularized rituals and a consistent body of worshipers, new meanings were inscribed into its presence and practices. By "new" here, I am referring to the transition from Speer's vision/expectation of a church to the actually viable church populated by Chinese worshipers. I argue that both sets of meanings—that given by the missionaries and that performed by the Chinese—can be productively examined within the context of place-making through Foucault's notions of "heterotopia" and "utopia."<sup>67</sup>

The former, as premised by Foucault, are "counter-sites" in society that gesture to real sites within the culture, all the while simultaneously representing, contesting, and inverting them. In the mission church they built, Loomis and Condit intended a heterotopia—literally, a "different place"—that contested and inverted everyday reality by 'being in the world but not of it,'<sup>68</sup> pointing instead to a heavenly Kingdom accessible through faith in Christ. This orientation toward the relationship between the divine world and the mundane one, much in keeping with the ecclesiology of Christendom through the ages, was clearly inscribed into the structure of the Chinese church's second permanent home. Whereas the brick walls of Speer's mission house had already signaled the extraordinary—namely, a heretofore nonexistent commitment to a sustained presence of the Church among the Chinese in the United States—the Neo-Gothic building purchased from the First Presbyterian Church in 1882 reflected an even more unmistakable dedication to having the building stand out from its surroundings. The architectural style, so out of place in the Frontier West, was intended to remind white American visitors of the grand churches of the East Coast and the cathedrals of Europe. And even to the

Chinese unfamiliar with this structural vernacular, it would have been obvious that the bell tower, the arched windows and doorways, and the ironwork fencing set off a place vastly different from the Chinatown in which it was embedded. Sociologist Peter L. Berger explains that, “The sacred is apprehended as ‘sticking out’ from the normal routines of everyday life, as something extraordinary and potentially dangerous, though its dangers can be domesticated and its potency harnessed to the needs of everyday life.”<sup>69</sup> And indeed, this was the feeling the Mission’s new home was designed to convey: that in this sacred space the human, everyday world—in 1882, Chinatown specifically—met the divine world and did so with awe and reverence. Never mind that this message was originally intended to set apart the white congregation at the First Presbyterian Church: with minimal amendment to either the message or the medium, the concept was easily adapted to apply to the immigrant faith community.

Several principles from Foucault’s concept of heterotopia are helpful here in elucidating how the church building both reflected and performed what Loomis and Condit intended to communicate with their ministries. The first is the way in which the church had a “system of opening and closing” that both isolated it and made it penetrable.<sup>70</sup> Not only was the church structure separated from its Chinatown surroundings, but it also circumscribed the life of the congregants within. Access was contingent both upon religious faith—which excluded the majority of the Chinese population of the city—and upon race—which excluded the non-Chinese population. At the heart of the Mission was a Presbyterian church, but it was not a Presbyterian church entirely like every other: it was a Presbyterian church specifically for *Chinese* Christians. The cumulative effect of the physical layout—the sum total of the place’s obstructions and openings; its ‘exotic’ architecture and its doorways and staircases and fencing—served this intention by visually and experientially divorcing the church space from the Chinatown spaces around it. This physical and symbolic separation from things and people both “heathen” and Chinese was both consistent with and conducive to the attempts of the missionaries to Christianize and Americanize their immigrant charges.

While some degree of separation was viewed by Loomis and Condit as both necessary for the work of conversion and, concomitantly, indicative of the fact that true conversion had indeed occurred, a further aspect of the separation might alternatively be read as emblematic of what Foucault calls a “heterotopia of deviation.”<sup>71</sup> In this variant, the heterotopia is a place for those “individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm.”<sup>72</sup> Rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, and prisons are among the examples Foucault offers of the types of places which might be considered within this category. While not named specifically, churches in general, as places where the reality of sin is confronted, would be a thoroughly appropriate addition to this list: the concept of sin constructs and structures a particular articulation of deviance, and churches can subsequently be effectively read as places for the gathering of admitted deviants defined according to these standards.

In the case of the nineteenth-century Chinese, deviance was not simply a moral/religious category but also a social one. Prior to the Exclusion Act of 1882, passed a mere half year before the Chinese Mission moved to its new building, the only groups of

people categorically barred from the United States were the mentally ill, convicted criminals, prostitutes, and lepers. The addition of the Chinese to this list established them as social deviants of a new type—a racial type—a legally codified expression of the ways in which the immigrants were already representationally depicted as freakish, rat-eating, plague-bearing, unassimilable, and perpetually alien (see Chapter 2). Within this context, the most sympathetic of Protestant missionaries—a lineage within which Loomis and Condit proudly figured—typically assumed a more accepting attitude, but, as we have seen, the records they left behind clearly indicate that even they did not regard the Chinese as equals to white Americans. This patronizing attitude was in some ways just a more moderate position along the same scale of racist notions of deviance from an accepted white norm of what it meant to be American.

The San Francisco church, then, was a place where Christianization and Americanization were offered as correctives to a problem defined by white American society at large. This reproduction within white Christianity of the conception of the Chinese as a problem to solve—however mild or severe—constructed the church as a particular place for dealing with otherness defined no longer simply in religious terms (i.e. sin) but in racial terms in addition. Within the bounded space of the church, those who were admitted were subject to new rules of moral and social accountability. American cultural values of hygiene and productivity and punctuality were combined with Judeo-Christian precepts for morality to discipline Chinese believers and would-be believers held to be otherwise given to practices of everyday life objectionable to the missionaries, however rational those behaviors might seem to us today, contextually considered (e.g. ancestor worship as a connection to a broader sense of family, especially with family so often absent; visits to prostitutes as a reaction to the lack of women resulting from draconian immigration restrictions; the use of opium as an analgesic for physical and mental anguish, etc.). In this way, Foucault's principle of a heterotopia's capacity for "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible"<sup>73</sup> also operated at the Chinese church. Within its walls and through a theological posture heavily informed by white American culture, Chinatown and China were together brought into the presence of a salvific white America and the (idealized) biblical lands of Southwest Asia.

Finally, within the missionaries' version of heterotopic church space, a break with a traditional sense of time—a principle Foucault called "heterochrony"<sup>74</sup>—also served as a tool for disciplining the Chinese converts. Here again, the religious nature of the church was key: Christian theology reinforced the temporal concept of eternity, which, though perhaps not entirely unfamiliar to immigrants accustomed to Buddhism, Taoism, and/or variations of Chinese folk religion, here served the new function of laying a foundational context for the Christian concept of divine judgment.<sup>75</sup> Time in this place was a continuation of an eternal teleology, which, in turn, fit within a larger framework of judgment-oriented accountability. The church became a focal point where the everyday and the eternal came together, and the missionaries preached new responsibilities in both.

Meanwhile, the heaven to which this church space gestured was, in Foucault's language, a "utopia": "Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a



general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.”<sup>76</sup> Loomis and Condit might have objected to the term “utopia” itself, whose Greek roots literally mean “no place,” and argued that heaven was indeed real—though perhaps on a different order of reality—but they would otherwise have likely recognized the object of their faith both in Foucault’s characterization of a utopia as a site that presents society in a perfected form and in his characterization of it as one which turns society upside down. For the missionaries, the church as a place was rich with the meaning that the Church as the “body of Christ” had had virtually always and everywhere: it was the “ark of salvation,” pointing beyond this world to a heavenly one where Christ reigns, and love and justice are perfect. To them, this was the great benefit awaiting the Chinese, toward which all benevolent activity at the church was intended to point.

Whether the first Chinese believers understood heaven in the same utopian terms or whether they met this notion, too, across one of the “many chasms of misunderstanding” to which Wang refers is difficult to know with certainty. What is clearer is that they, also, experienced the church as heterotopic, simultaneously reflecting and inverting the wider world around themselves, but yet in a manner different from how Loomis and Condit understood the heterotopic church to operate. While the missionaries imagined that the church offered the immigrants a new type of agency in the form of liberty from “heathenism” and the bounds of Chinese tradition—the kind of liberation that the Church over the centuries has more broadly rendered as “freedom in Christ”—I argue that the Chinese did indeed experience a new sense of agency through the church, *but* one that contested the moral and social order—the *nomos*, as Berger terms it<sup>77</sup>—that the missionaries labored to impose. In other words, rather than this missionary-defined *nomos* being totalizing for the Chinese, it was being actively challenged via the heterotopia in which the new Christians were consciously participating. Through this “different place,” the new believers were ‘talking back’: to their missionary leaders, to the Chinatown community, and to the wider white American society.

These instances of contestation were subtle, sufficiently so that they did not draw reprisals or direct disciplinary action from the church establishment. They were part of everyday routine and could, thus, be easily relegated to the background by those uninvested in seeing contestation within the church. In referring to this type of subtle subversive behavior at the larger scale of the city, social scientist and cultural critic Michel de Certeau writes:

Rather than remaining within the field of a discourse that upholds its privilege by inverting its content (speaking of catastrophe and no longer of progress), one can try another path: one can analyze the microbe-like singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress, but which have outlived its decay; one can follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, have reinforced themselves in a proliferating illegitimacy, developed

and insinuated themselves into the networks of surveillance, and combined in accord with unreadable but stable tactics to the point of constituting everyday regulations and surreptitious creativities that are merely concealed by the frantic mechanisms and discourse of the observational organization.

This pathway could be inscribed as a consequence, but also as the reciprocal, of Foucault's analysis of the structures of power....<sup>78</sup>

In this unabashed critique of Foucault, de Certeau offers a perspective on power that speaks to the position of the dispossessed, one readily applicable to the social station of the nineteenth-century Chinese. Rather than arguing that the oppressed are powerless and inevitably crushed beneath the admittedly formidable forces and structures ("strategies") that maintain the powerful in power, he argues, instead, that in their everyday life practices, the oppressed constantly enact resistance and opposition ("tactics") that escape the regulation of "panoptic administration." De Certeau's position is significant to the project of 'writing history from below,' because it offers agency to the oppressed in a way that challenges the singularity of historical narrative written only by the dominant classes, in our case, denominational records penned by the missionaries. And yet, at the same time, while de Certeau offers a counterpoint to Foucault's conception of hierarchical power, his proposition of these "surreptitious creativities" do not run counter to Foucault's notion of heterotopia. Rather, it proposes an alternative heterotopic vision, one that runs beneath and through that of the missionaries' version, competing and challenging, while seeming to do neither.

At the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church, the very presence of a Chinese congregation was one sign of such oppositional behavior. While critics of religion sometimes read conversion to Christianity as capitulation to assimilative forces, the place-making occupation of the visually commanding Neo-Gothic-style church, home to a white congregation for two dozen years,<sup>79</sup> could alternatively be read as both a claim on space and a claim on religion by the immigrant Chinese. Whereas Speer's efforts had opened a possible space for the Chinese in American Christianity, the developing congregation under Loomis and Condit was a fulfillment of that possibility. Seen in this light, the First Presbyterian Church's sale of the building and the move to its subsequent location on the corner of Van Ness Avenue and Sacramento Street might be understood as a retreat from or an accommodation to the Chinese Christians' act of place-making, rather than simply a response to the changing location of First Presbyterian's 'target audience,' a narrative which might otherwise be rendered as completely independent of the actions of the Chinese.

These actions of the Chinese were, of course, not quite as simple as merely the occupation of a piece of real estate. Their presence in the church building—this building constructed to house the aspirations of an influential white congregation—announced in a visceral manner the reality of race in American Christianity. Not that race had never been an issue before: the presence African American Christians, in particular, challenged the white church on its moral obligations, but for two and a half centuries, the African

American church had largely been a slave church and was dismissed by those who chose to do so as a separate institution, a consequence of political considerations beyond the reach of religion. But by 1882, in the wake of the Civil War, the issue of race in the church had taken on a different significance, and in the shadow of new ambivalences over the character of Christianity, here were the Chinese physically occupying what had previously been an indisputably white space. To be who they were and to be in this place was itself an act of contestation.

Taber, in a section of his history of Old First Presbyterian Church<sup>80</sup> tellingly entitled “Stagnation on Stockton Street—1870-1884,” skirts the issue of race when he writes, “This period [the last three decades of the nineteenth century] appears to have been a turbulent one for Old First, during which it attempted to establish stability in a changing city, ultimately resulting in its following the population shift by relocating to the corner of Sacramento Street and Van Ness Avenue.”<sup>81</sup> In fact, it was hardly that the entire population of San Francisco had moved the three quarters of a mile to the west but rather, only that segment of the white population which the First Presbyterian Church defined as its constituency. When Speer established the original mission house at the corner of Stockton and Sacramento Streets, it was just a block and a half away from the First Presbyterian Church building it would eventually occupy: Chinatown, at that point in 1852, was virtually already at the First Presbyterian Church’s doorstep. In 1850, “core Chinatown” encompassed a five-block area to the north, south, and west of Portsmouth Square—Stockton Street being its western border—and a decade later it had expanded to ten blocks, growing mainly to the north and south.<sup>82</sup> Although this growth was hardly rapid, the nature of Chinatown itself was also changing, balkanizing as anti-Chinese sentiment beyond its borders escalated. These changes in the neighborhood and changes in the attitudes of white Americans at large combined to make the area sufficiently unattractive to the white San Franciscans from among whom First Presbyterian drew its membership that the church was willing to sell its building at a \$17,500 loss to the Foreign Board, to be used as a new home for the Chinese Mission.<sup>83</sup>

Nor was First Presbyterian the only church in the area to assess the changing demographics from this racialized perspective. In the same year of First Presbyterian’s sale, the First Baptist Church was sold to Chinese businessmen who converted the building to tenement housing, and the Roman Catholic Church’s Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany had two years earlier conceived of a plan to relocate the city’s cathedral, the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception (now Old St. Mary’s Church), “from its present objectionable location [the corner of California and DuPont (Grant Avenue) Streets] to some more respectable and more suitable part of the city.”<sup>84</sup> Paddison notes that:

The *Daily Alta California* explained that a new cathedral had become necessary because “unsightly and obtrusive immorality...flaunts itself right at the very doors” of St. Mary’s, such that “respectable people can scarcely overcome their repugnance at visiting the place.” The move demonstrated Catholic leaders’ eagerness to associate their

church with white Christian respectability, further physically segregating the Chinese while marking them as hopelessly deprived.<sup>85</sup>

At this moment, when the various branches of white Christianity were retreating from Chinatown, the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church's assumption of First Presbyterian's former home was a symbolically assertive move. It echoed (and answered) Speer's grand gesture of building the mission house, in that, whereas the former act had signaled Protestant Christianity's intention to have an enduring presence among the Chinese in the United States, this latter act signaled the settling of the Chinese into the previously predominantly white geography of American Christianity.

Into this new geography, the immigrants brought a notion of the performance of socioeconomic class different from what had prevailed when the building had been occupied by the First Presbyterian Church. Under the previous arrangement, the pews in the church were sold, each numbered pew assigned an attendant "price" and "tax." To secure a chosen pew, a church member paid a purchase price—falling, in this case between \$50 to \$600—and, in addition, paid a regularly assessed "tax," or "pew rent," of an amount ranging from \$25 to \$120, depending upon the desirability of the pew's location.<sup>86</sup> In his volume on Old First, Taber includes a newspaper notice from 1860, which, in part, reads:

SALE OF PEWS. The pews in the First Presbyterian Church on Stockton Street (the Rev. Dr. Anderson's) will be sold on Monday evening. The church will be open during to-day and Monday for inspection, and those wishing to secure pews will have an opportunity of choosing such as they desire. The church is the finest in the city, and *the congregation composed of the best class of society*, and rapidly increasing....<sup>87</sup> [My italics.]

The congregation at the First Presbyterian Church obviously did not see a contradiction between their classist views of society and their faith, but elsewhere in San Francisco, a debate was brewing about whether such an exclusionist vision of ecclesiology was compatible with basic Christian tenets. In 1872, the Central Presbyterian Church issued a call to build a "Tabernacle" with a "free pew system" and, in the circular it published to aid in fundraising, it argued that:

The Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ embraces within its scope those of all classes. ... The larger portion of our population is so circumstanced that heads of families are unable to do more than provide the common necessities of life for themselves and their children or other dependents. The earnings of our mechanics, clerks, and other laborers, afford but little either religious or intellectual culture. ... These classes are, in a great measure, left without the opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached. ... The main object of erecting this Tabernacle is to afford an opportunity, to all alike, to unite in offering prayer and praise to our common heavenly Father, the creator of all things, who so orders it in His providence that some shall be rich and some poor, and permits distinctions and classes in society in

this world. Yet it will be admitted that in His Sanctuary all are alike, as in the presence of Him who is no respecter of persons.<sup>88</sup>

The theological underpinnings of the circular were less than revolutionary, the second-to-the-last sentence clearly indicating that the authors believed that God permits—if not outright ordains—socioeconomic difference. Nevertheless, this call by the Central Presbyterian Church illustrates how the division and assignment of space within the church sanctuary was, by the early 1870s, a contested issue and a growing problem that reflected the challenges of social stratification in broader San Francisco society.

It is doubtful that the authors had the Chinese in mind when they wrote about their “mechanics, clerks, and other laborers,” but the Chinese clearly had financial limitations that rivaled or exceeded the restrictions facing any of these. Noting that demographic data is scanty, Woo hesitates to paint a profile of the Chinese Christian community as “much different from the overall Chinese population with regards to economic class, district of origin, or male-female ratio,” and he goes on to argue that, “There were rich and poor, businessmen, tradesmen, and laborers.”<sup>89</sup> The contention that there were enough wealthy Chinese Christians at this point in the late-nineteenth-century United States to warrant the broader argument that the Chinese Christian community mostly mirrored the Chinese population at large in economic terms seems to me highly suspect, however. I have discussed above the relative hostility the Chinese community held toward what they saw as a foreign religion linked to imperialism in China and the loss of social capital which would have attended the close association of any established Chinese person with such a faith. Indeed, Woo himself notes that the total number of Chinese in the United States converted to Christianity between 1850 to 1910 is estimated to be about only 6,500.<sup>90</sup> This figure equates to between one and two percent of the overall population of Chinese in the country during this period and illustrates how the Chinese community generally kept its distance from Christianity. It seems more likely that the church would have drawn its membership in these early decades from the lower rungs of the economic hierarchy, the representatives of which had less to lose, because their social capital was limited to begin with.

The Foreign Board’s Annual Report in 1880 commends the contributions of the Chinese at the church as “present[ing] a very laudable exhibit,” but even then, the total for the previous year came to only \$572.40.<sup>91</sup> There is no indication from the records of that year or any other that the system of pew sales that had previously taken place at the site were replicated. Quite to the contrary, the intended uses of the monies received were overwhelmingly slanted toward benevolence—\$55.75 for Home Missions to Chinese elsewhere in California; \$109.00 for Foreign Missions in China; \$100.00 for a special missionary fund in China; \$103.00 for a poor fund; and \$72.20 for the Chinese Cemetery—with an additional \$132.45 received for tuition, and no funds contributed indicated as having been earmarked for pews or pew taxes. While I am not attempting an argument here for intentional economic egalitarianism—say, of the sort associated with the early Christian church in Israel/Palestine—it is nevertheless safe to conclude that there was likely a vast reduction in class-based stratification when the immigrants made the church a place of their own. Disparities in socioeconomic standing between the

members of the earliest cohorts at the church were likely muted, so the basis for stratification along those lines would accordingly have been limited. The fact that the resulting increase in egalitarianism was born more of necessity than of intention, however, does not make it any less of a critique against the classism that had formerly obtained in that space.

But it was not only the white church that was economically stratified, Chinatown society was as well, a distinct divide existing between the relatively few wealthy, real-property-owning merchants, and the far larger number of laborers and self-employed small-businessmen who comprised the majority of the quarter's population. The Chinese church, connected in different degrees to both the white Christian world and the Chinatown world, offered a heterotopic vision overlapping both, of an egalitarianism in which its members could participate equally in the here-and-now, without having to wait for either Chinatown's economic restructuring or the missionaries' heaven.

Oppositional in perhaps an even more significant way was the role of the church as a place which nurtured the reproduction of the Chinese community. Gender figures heavily into this narrative, because the particular targeting of women for exclusion so badly skewed the gender ratio of Chinese American society for so long. The Page Act enacted in 1875 forbade the immigration of Chinese prostitutes, but in practice, it became one of a number of tools used to exclude Chinese women in general. Historian Erika Lee writes that "When pressed to explain what documents Chinese women would need to land, Wise [John H. Wise, the collector of customs and chief of the Chinese Bureau in San Francisco in the latter half of the nineteenth century] made it clear that *all* Chinese women would be considered prostitutes until they could prove they were not."<sup>92</sup> The gender ratio, in fact, did not reach parity until 1990, and the relative absence of women in the early period of immigration had lasting effects on the development of Chinese American communities.<sup>93</sup>

Until the 1920s and 1930s, when a second generation came of age, marriages were relatively few due to this shortage of women, but because the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church was a religious institution, one of whose functions was to sanctify marriage, it saw a disproportionate number of weddings within its walls.<sup>94</sup> As a place, then—and specifically a religious place—the church had a particularly pronounced connection to the reproduction of the community, which, given the prevailing impulse towards Exclusion in the wider society, was itself a radical act of contestation. Not surprisingly, though, the missionary establishment, while it also celebrated the emergence of these new families, tended to read the development in religious terms rather than racial ones. It kept careful count of marriages among the Christian Chinese, and the Foreign Board's Annual Report in 1885 noted the significance that the missionaries found in these unions: "In several instances Christian girls from this institution [the Mission Home (Cameron House)] have been married to Christian young men, and the fact that seventeen Chinese households, based on the teachings of the New Testament, are presenting their silent testimony in San Francisco and elsewhere in California to the transforming power of the Gospel is significant."<sup>95</sup> Two decades later, the 1904 report declared with satisfaction the multiplication of this effect: "Ten marriages have taken

place in the Mission [Home] this year, and there is every reason to believe that ten good Christian homes have been founded to mould future lives of native-born Chinese in America. Several hundred such homes dot the Coast from north to south, and shine out like stars in the Chinese work.”<sup>96</sup> From the language of these descriptions, it is clear that marriages and the formation of families was viewed by the missionaries as yet another extension of evangelical work: it was the Kingdom of God growing among the “heathen,” bearing witness to the power of the Gospel. But for the Chinese, it meant much more on an everyday, practical level. By marrying and producing children, not only were the immigrants challenging the restrictions against their being in the country, they were laying claim to a right to grow in numbers, and, because their children were American citizens by birth, they were also laying claim to the right to own property and to a whole host of other rights of citizenship they would consequently be able to exercise through their offspring.

The relationship between the church and the Mission Home deserves some greater clarification and attention here. While the Board of Foreign Missions laid an implicit early claim on the work of the Mission Home, reporting on its achievements in the Board’s own Annual Reports from the moment of the Home’s founding, the Mission Home was, in fact, not founded under the aegis of the Board, and, while the relationship between the Mission Home and the Chinatown church has been intimate during certain periods, the leadership of the Mission Home has enjoyed significant autonomy for most of its existence. Established in 1874 as a refuge for Chinese prostitutes, the Mission Home was organized by the California Branch of the Philadelphia Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society,<sup>97</sup> which had turned its attention to the issue of immigrant Chinese prostitution after an earlier plan for an orphanage in Shanghai—the plan that had called the mission society of initially eight Philadelphia women into existence—had foundered for a lack of funding.<sup>98</sup> While a collegial relationship between the church and the Mission Home was recognized from the very beginning, due to both institutions being nominally Presbyterian, it was a full four years after the latter began operations before Margaret Culbertson, the matron then in charge of the Mission Home, was appointed a missionary of the Foreign Board.<sup>99</sup>

The finer points of institutional relationship and funding aside, the church and the Mission Home were also kept distinct from one another by the prevailing attitudes toward gender in the late-nineteenth-century United States. Historian Peggy Pascoe writes about the Victorian-era “cult of true womanhood,” which elevated the supposedly womanly virtues of purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness and which, in the 1830s and 1840s, channeled women’s benevolent impulses toward social reform and anti-slavery movements. In the wake of the successes of expanded efforts during the Civil War, Protestant women formed so many organizations in the 1870s that the period was later labeled by a commentator as “the church women’s decade.”<sup>100</sup> Pascoe goes on to note that:

Before long, they invested the phrase *home mission* with ideological significance. Home mission women interpreted the “home” as the ideal Christian home of Victorian rhetoric. They believed that, since

unrestrained sexuality threatened women's moral purity, women had a special "mission" to sustain Protestant moral values by "rescuing" female victims and teaching them to emulate the family and gender roles of white, middle-class Victorian culture.<sup>101</sup>

The notion of "home missions," in other words, was appropriated by this generation of church women and recast as more than simply missions on American soil: "home missions," among this particular population, came to signify the intersection of domesticity and evangelical benevolence and, as such, was claimed as the special purview of women in the church. Easily adapting this emergent ideology to address the situation of Chinese women in California, successive matrons of the Mission Home, with the cooperation of the local police, led "rescues" to physically liberate "captive" Chinese women—some truly trafficked and others in marital situations they found oppressive—then sheltered them at the Mission Home, saw them through court proceedings, and offered them the option to stay on at the Home if they chose not to return to China. If they chose to stay, the women were taught English, Chinese, and homemaking skills, and were encouraged to adopt Christianity, although that last was not a requirement for being allowed to stay.

This perception that home missions women promoted of their Chinese sisters as requiring rescue has been critiqued as racially biased and generative of a debasing narrative about Chinese society more broadly. It encouraged an already widespread belief that Chinese culture was one in which women were routinely held to be of minimal value, and so at the same time that it validated and gave purpose to the efforts of white female home missions advocates, it also reinforced more generally the belief in the moral superiority of American society overall, encouraging in the process its imperial export. Apart from hypocrisy and a regular lack of a parallel narrative of white male participation in the sex trade—the Chinese American sex trade in particular—the considerations behind the missionary drive to liberate Chinese prostitutes also tended to neglect the role of restrictive immigration policies, gender-biased labor recruitment, and anti-miscegenation laws in its accounting for the numbers of Chinese prostitutes. The estimates of these as a percentage of the Chinese female population in San Francisco was notably high for much of the latter half of the nineteenth century—85 to 97 percent in 1860, 63 to 72 percent in 1870, and 18 to 50 percent in 1880<sup>102</sup>—and this reality conveniently fanned the flames of missionary zeal.

The Presbyterian newspaper *The Occident* reproduced in April 1869 an article from *The Overland Monthly*, the original piece bearing the indiscriminately broad title of "Chinese Women in California":

The condition of these unhappy slaves is particularly calculated to move our compassion. Owing to the conditions of their birth, or to subsequent misfortunes, they have been sold by their parents or captors to unprincipled traders, and are sent to California or elsewhere for the most abominable purposes. Here their brightest, and indeed, only, hope is that of being purchased by some Chinaman as his



secondary wife. Deplorably ignorant, enslaved to oppressive customs stronger than all statutory laws, they know nothing but obedience to the tyrants who control and often abuse them.<sup>103</sup>

Pejorative judgment here falls clearly not only on Chinese women but on Chinese culture as a whole, at the same time that broad justification is offered for the salvation of the Chinese by white Americans championing Christian values. The author goes on to claim that, “No man—Missionary or Sunday School teacher—can reach these unhappy victims. Chinese custom debars him.” Loomis, in more subtle language, concurred with both the assessment of the “character and condition” of the Chinese women in San Francisco and of the limitations of outreach toward them:

During some part of the year [1860] Mrs. Loomis has taught a few girls who have come to our house for this purpose at an appointed hour of the day. She has also, to some extent, visited the women at their houses. But, from the character and condition of most of the women who are brought to this country, our work lacks that feature which affords most ground for hope in all other missionary fields, viz.: that portion of the work which is concerned with boarding and day schools—which has to do with rearing the plants, and seeing youthful disciples grow up, and by and by enter into the work as teachers and assistants—that portion of the work which has to do with visiting in families, and in noticing the happy influence of believing children upon heathen parents, and in seeing converted parents begin to command their children and household after them.<sup>104</sup>

Loomis was lamenting the difficulties of reaching the Chinese women in the city and the related disappointment of a lack of children and families, laying the cause of both at the doorstep of Chinese women themselves and the fact that so many were seemingly prostitutes, that to which “character and condition” in his roundabout language refers. His views, echoed by the matrons at the Mission Home and by Condit, supported key aspects of the emerging gender ideology in the white American church, namely, the belief that certain categories of women, the Chinese being one of these, were reachable only by other women, and therefore, the evangelization of Chinese women and children consequently described a distinct and separate sphere of ministry, one guided by the notion that the fullest realization of these women’s roles in God’s plan was the production and nurture of Christian families. The Mission Home, as a result, had clear goals to achieve, and the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church, headed by male leadership, stepped aside and relinquished this aspect of evangelism to the home missions women. Outreach to Chinese females and Chinese minors not clearly belonging to Christian families became the domain of the Mission Home, ‘jurisdiction’ shifting to the church only after the women (re)married Christian men and the families, understood under a Victorian-era gender hierarchy to be headed by these men, became part of the church. Structurally, with Culbertson’s receipt of formal missionary status, the Mission Home became part of the Presbyterian denomination’s California Mission to the Chinese, though the Foreign Board had implicitly claimed it as part of its broader work well before

then. Throughout, though, the Mission Home had its own sphere of influence, and, operationally, it was largely independent of the church just a few city blocks away.

In 1890, the Mission Home reported 261 women rescued, sheltered, or protected since it began work in 1874.<sup>105</sup> On Sundays these women were brought to the church to attend the worship service, the 1881 *Report of the Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese in California* noting that, “In the morning [worship service] we have the inmates of the Chinese Women’s Home, numbering from 16 to 20; also other Chinese women, numbering from five to a dozen.”<sup>106</sup> It is difficult to know how many women and men met their eventual spouses at the church, but it is well documented that the matrons of the Mission Home were often called upon to interview suitors and to help decide upon potential husbands.<sup>107</sup> The missionaries effectively increased the supply of marriageable women in the Chinese community by freeing them from their ‘captors’ and, in complementary action where necessary, transforming their social status through association with the Christian religion. Whereas some of these women had been prostitutes before, and socially marginal as a result, their religious conversion and/or association with the church subsequently changed their social status to that of acceptable potential mates. Rather than remaining tainted by their former occupation, the women were transformed by being recast within a different context for moral evaluation: whether or not they took up Christianity, they were now regarded at least by this small Chinese church community as individuals liberated by the transforming power of Jesus Christ. This narrative was underscored in the many instances when the missionaries orchestrated matches between the women and Christian Chinese men they had gone to great lengths to nurture.

It is important to note that the change in evaluative context did not affect the women alone. Instead, it broadened the life possibilities for Christian Chinese men by making these potential spouses available and by making the marriages legible as morally acceptable unions. The latter was consistent with the missionary concept of the church as a heterotopia, gesturing, if only imperfectly, toward a Kingdom of God marked by spiritual and moral transformation. For the Chinese, in the meanwhile, the former reality of more marriageable women being available was the point of greater immediate impact. Some of the men who married women sheltered by the church were themselves not Christians—although they were generally vetted and determined to be at least morally upstanding members of the community before the missionaries gave their support—and these marriages, in particular, contested the missionary notion of a consistent expansion of the Kingdom of God by placing the emphasis elsewhere. At a more basic level, the marriages were significant to the Chinese as a tangible sign that, institutionally, the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church was contributing to the reproduction of the Chinese community when, otherwise, American society was so focused on its isolation and exclusion. In the Chinese vision of the church as a heterotopic space, missionary notions of moral transformation and the increase of Christian families were subordinated to the notions of community survival and individual fulfillment as householders.

A final mode of heterotopic contestation at the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church is reflected in the way in which the immigrants flocked to the church for

education. As we discussed above, schools were viewed by the missionary establishment as auxiliaries in the work of evangelism. And though Loomis and Condit saw conversion to Christianity as the key pillar of their work among the Chinese, their reports indicate they were well aware that many came for nothing more than the educational opportunities the church offered. Chief among these, as Loomis acknowledged, was the opportunity to learn English. The language skills allowed the Chinese to conduct business and other social transactions with non-Chinese and were critical to individuals' abilities to reach beyond their Chinatown abode: to find work elsewhere, to buy and sell with other communities, to navigate the legal world and other aspects of the dominant society. English, however, was not the only subject taught. Others included history, philosophy, physiology, civil government, arithmetic, and astronomy. Interestingly, it was reported in 1881 that one of the best subscribed classes was geography: "The geography class is exclusively taught by Mr. Fong Doon, and a very popular teacher he must be, judging from the size and punctuality of his class."<sup>108</sup> M. M. Baskin, who taught at the Occidental School, elaborated on the attractions of the subject by noting the following:

Our one class in Geography has afforded us a pleasant recreation from the monotony of the ordinary lessons. As we have, in imagination, traveled with them around the globe, visiting the most notable places, giving them some interesting facts connected with them, and then returning on the same ship to our starting point, their wonder and amazement were really refreshing....<sup>109</sup>

A common thread which runs through these two most popular of course offerings—English and geography—is their provision of means, in one form or another, for connecting to places outside of San Francisco's Chinatown. In other words, whereas the missionary heterotopia included education as an element of civilizing uplift, the Chinese heterotopia understood the same as a form of attenuated mobility within the Exclusion-era United States. Rather than the importance the missionaries placed on their heterotopia's gesturing toward a civilized America, an idealized historical Israel, or the Christian heaven yet to come, the significance of at least some portions of mission schooling to the Chinese was the freedom it afforded them to 'move' within the world around them when physical mobility was so strictly limited.

## **Waiting for the Fullness of God's Plan**

The discrepancies between the missionary and the Chinese heterotopic visions of the church paralleled the political/ideological shift in the transition from Speer's ministry to that of Loomis and Condit. The clear signal of this change that Loomis had communicated early on was his declared intention not to involve himself in "any political matters," but this was frustrated to some extent as the issue of Chinese immigration, entwined with issues of public morality, became sufficiently prominent on the national stage during the 1870s and 1880s that both he and Condit were drawn into the debate. In 1874, Condit, who has otherwise come to be regarded as generally sympathetic to the immigrants, both testified to the extent of prostitution among Chinese women in

California and sent an affidavit to U.S. Congressman Horace F. Page (R-CA), in support of the politician's efforts to restrict alleged "coolie" labor and Asian prostitution, efforts which resulted in the Page Act of 1875.<sup>110</sup> Loomis' turn on the national stage came two years later in the fall of 1876, during a month-long hearing in San Francisco convened by a joint special committee of the U.S. Congress on the effect Chinese immigration was believed to have on the health of "Christian civilization." His testimony that the Chinese did not pose a threat to American institutions was decidedly less detrimental to the history of Asian America than Condit's moralistically inclined assessments and, in fact, won him opprobrium from nativist quarters of the state.<sup>111</sup>

These appearances in the national political spotlight notwithstanding, Loomis' and Condit's otherwise general reluctance to participate in political affairs dovetailed with their inclination to view their ministries to the Chinese as a 'shepherding' vocation rather than the 'context-changing' vocation Speer had seen his ministry to be. How each of the latter two ministers understood their own motivations may likely have comprised varied factors—Loomis' "constitutional aversion to appear before the public in such a manner as might seem like throwing himself and his humble labors into notice," for example, perhaps combined with other contributing reasons to influence his tendency toward avoiding the political arena—but Condit's writings indicate that racialized theological reasoning had a decided role to play as well. Like Speer before him, Condit also understood the unfolding of human history within a global sweep firmly under divine direction. However, in his racialized vision of the future, Condit saw the role of China and the Chinese quite differently from Speer.

Theologically, Condit identified himself as "pre-Millenarian," meaning he anticipated Christ's return in person to establish His Kingdom on earth as a pre-condition to the arrival of the Millennium, or Christ's thousand-year reign just prior to the final judgment of humanity.<sup>112</sup> Until then, Condit wrote, "Christ has laid upon His Church in our day the tremendous mission, *not of converting the world*, but of EVANGELIZING THE WORLD, by carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth. He [Jesus] says, 'This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS, AND THEN SHALL THE END (OF THE AGE) COME. (Matt. 24:14).'" [Condit's capitalization; my italics.]<sup>113</sup> In Condit's view of the broader sweep of history, the conversion of "heathens" such as the Chinese was secondary to evangelization's primary purpose of ushering in the end times. Some Chinese—God's "chosen ones"—he believed, would be converted according to divine intention, but salvation for the Chinese as a whole would have to wait until Christ's return: "Then will be the time when China, with every dark nation, will have her chance." Condit's hierarchical and racialized view of soteriology was hardly surprising, given that he was also publicly identified with the belief that the Anglo-Saxon "race" was a continuation of the biblical Israel, specifically, the ten northern tribes. He consequently saw Great Britain and the United States as the literal inheritors of biblical prophecies about Israel, claiming that "...[T]hese two brothers yet live, and are full of a growing vitality which knows no limit."<sup>114</sup> Elaborating, he declared that, "The two great Anglo-Saxon peoples are, I believe, to be joined in a race federation, and march on side by side, until to Abraham's seed, the chosen of God, is given powerful dominion on the earth."<sup>115</sup>

Condit's vision of the future was not only as racialized than Speer's, it was decidedly more hierarchical. In it, the Anglo-Saxon race had a clear calling to a vanguard position in a new Christian-led world, while the Chinese were relegated to the very rear of the line—among the last to be saved and without a role in ushering in the new order. Here, the Chinese were not essential to an age of human flourishing as they had been in Speer's understanding, and Condit's expectation of their minor eschatological role consequently translated itself into a lack of urgency to maximize positive relations with them in the present. Theologically, there was little motivation to better their social conditions beyond a sense of *noblesse oblige*, because the religious mandate, as Condit understood it, extended only to making certain that they were exposed to the Gospel. What additional good could be done for the Chinese would be a credit to American Christianity, but it would not be a priority: the fullness of salvation for the Chinese he believed to lie somewhere else in the pre-Millennial future.

Against this theological vision, the heterotopia embraced and performed by the members of the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church championed the practice of sacralizing the present. True, the belief that God intervenes in history is foundational to the Christian faith, and Speer, in fact, had acted on that belief, but here in the second chapter of the church's life, just as there came to be a regular population of Chinese at the Mission, the white American leadership seemed clearly more interested in creating an inward-looking community focused on the Gospel than an outward-looking one tethered to the rights and opportunities of American society at large. What the Chinese did through the oppositional nature of their practices was to claim for themselves the focus on the present moment as a central focus of their faith: as opposed to clinging merely to the promise of a future Kingdom, they made the present moment sacred. Time was yoked to space, and the Chinese put themselves and their own history at the center of the memories that constitute the church as place. When the members of PCC today look to the past and struggle to hear the voices of the Chinese amidst the voices of the white missionaries, they are affirming that the present that confronted their forebears was no less important to those ancestors than the present is to the generations of Chinese churchgoers that followed.

## Vignette C: The Post-Earthquake Building

While the Great Earthquake that struck San Francisco on April 18, 1906 damaged portions of Chinatown, the raging fire that followed utterly leveled the quarter. Fortunately, no lives were lost at either the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church or at the Mission Home, but both buildings were completely destroyed. Together with other Chinese from the district who had lost homes and businesses, the members of the church and the residents of the Mission Home sought temporary refuge in Oakland and Berkeley. The Board of Foreign Missions, understanding the impact of this displacement on its various ministries, immediately started a relief fund both to support victims of the crisis and to finance rebuilding.<sup>1</sup>

The church, which had first been damaged in the earthquake and then was reduced to rubble by the fire,<sup>2</sup> was rebuilt on its former site on Stockton Street. Work commenced in June 1907, a little more than a year after the earthquake, and the cornerstone—enclosing a time capsule that contained a written history of the church, a copy of the day's *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper, copies of two Chinese newspapers, a Chinese tract, and an additional work in English—was laid by Fong Doon, the oldest Chinese convert living in the United States, in a public ceremony on August 17, 1907.<sup>3</sup> Construction was completed four months later in December. The new building was dedicated on January 5, 1908 and was the first Presbyterian church in the city to be rebuilt after the catastrophe. Excepting only the First Congregational Church and the Jewish Synagogue, it was also one of first worship spaces in the city to be resurrected in the wake of the disaster.<sup>4</sup> The total amount spent on the building itself, with a minimum of furnishings, amounted to \$28,440.00, with funding coming from the following sources:

Insurance: \$5,400.00  
Balance from the Board of Foreign Missions' relief fund: \$477.90  
Funds from churches and individuals: \$232.70  
Grant from the fund raised by the Relief Commission of General Assembly:  
\$13,000.00  
Profits from a transfer of Mission property in Oakland: \$9,164.40  
Special grant by the [Foreign] Board for the sidewalk: \$165.00.

The Foreign Board's 1908 Annual Report goes on to state that, "In addition to these sums the men of the church are furnishing the [Young Men's Christian] Association [/] prayer meeting and night-school rooms; the King's Daughters the kitchen; the Koreans will do the same for the room they are expected to use [a mission to Koreans in San Francisco had been started a little more than a year before], and the ladies of the Occidental Board will equip the two rooms set apart for their schools. The entire cost of the plant will be not far from \$29,000, on which will rest an indebtedness of not a cent. God hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."<sup>5</sup>



The façade of the church building in 1953, at the church's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration<sup>6</sup>

In its 1960s survey of the city's historic sites, an inventory regarded as one of the most extensive of its kind, the Junior League of San Francisco notes the style of the church building as "Colonial Revival," one of several "Revival" architectural styles fashionable in the city between 1890 and 1940.<sup>7</sup> More specifically, the style was Palladian, named after the Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580). His designs, which emphasized symmetry and classical Greek and Roman elements, had been influential during the American Colonial period, most notably being championed by Thomas Jefferson. The Chinatown church, designed by H. Starbuck, in fact, resembles rather closely the central structure of a prime example of American Palladianism: the Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis, Maryland, designed by William Buckland in 1773-74, which in turn was modeled on the Villa Pisa in Montagnana, Italy, designed by Palladio himself and recorded in his 1570 publication *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* [*The Four Books of Architecture*].



Harwood-Hammond House, Annapolis, MD

With the exception of a simpler staircase which ran from the front of the portico directly to the sidewalk, the lower two stories of the church's façade remains largely unchanged to this day. In the original design, the lower of these two original stories contained two rooms for day schools, with coatrooms and restrooms connected to each; a room for the night school, with a connecting kitchen and storeroom; and a room for prayer meetings and meetings of the Chinese YMCA. The upper story held the church sanctuary, with eight small attached Sunday School classrooms, and two more, slightly larger rooms which served as the studies for the assigned missionary and the Chinese pastor.<sup>8</sup> The structure was rendered in reinforced concrete with a slate roof, the threat of fire being an ongoing concern, but additionally, this building thus constructed was "regarded as earthquake-proof."<sup>9</sup>

In the ninety-five years the building stood until its major remodeling in 2002-03, the upper floor remained largely unchanged, although the Sunday School classrooms, separated from the sanctuary by wooden rolling doors which dropped from above, eventually fell into disuse, and the two pastors' offices became the vestry and a "cry room" (for the inclusion, via connected sound-system speakers, of parents with young children during services). The lower level saw more repurposing, with some rooms serving multiple functions as meeting rooms, study rooms, choir practice rooms, and Sunday School rooms, and with the pastors' offices eventually relocated there as well. To accommodate growing needs for space, a basement level was dug in 1954.<sup>10</sup> Externally, the only major change prior to 2002, with the exception of different paint colors over the years, was a large electric sign advertising the church's name, added in 1921 and removed at some later date.<sup>11</sup>



Electric sign over the portico, added in 1921<sup>12</sup>



## 5: Reimagining a Chinese American Church

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until day-break. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

- Genesis 32:22-31<sup>1</sup>

He'd operated..., jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix[,]....[a] consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation[,]....[a] graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system.

- *Neuromancer*<sup>2</sup>

At the same time that Speer's ethos of social engagement has been actively reclaimed by the English Ministry at today's Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, the institutional forms ushered in by Loomis and Condit have played without pause a consistent, though perhaps less trumpeted and less recognized, role in the background, shaping the community over the last century and a half. On a day-to-day basis, the latter reality often seems to escape conscious notice, perhaps because in so many respects, PCC has come to resemble rather closely other Presbyterian churches in the PC(USA) denomination, one which, while it includes black, Latino, and Asian congregations in small numbers, is still largely white. Historically, the denomination proudly traces its development directly to the sixteenth-century Reformation in Western Europe, so it is perhaps not unexpected that the Western European strain of influence has been so central and remains dominant. In a globalizing world, the non-white congregations in the denomination represent diversity, but their influence in theological, organizational, and cultural arenas within the church have thus far been more accretive than transformative.

At the denominational level—for example, at the General Assembly, the currently biennial gathering of representatives of the entire church, where issues of denominational creed, ministry, and polity are decided—PCC is viewed as a Chinese American Presbyterian congregation, with the emphasis on “Presbyterian,” meaning that the Chinatown church is generally regarded as a Presbyterian local church like any other, only populated by individuals of Chinese descent. This view reinforces a narrative of unity in the broader church, but it also tends to minimize the particularities of PCC’s often difficult journey to the present that we have been tracing in the previous chapters. The historical amnesia in the rush to an unexamined multiculturalism within the denomination is not so different from the same tendency elsewhere in American society, and it reflects in similar ways the triumph of an assimilationist narrative, which, in the case of PCC, traces itself back to the missionary project championed by Loomis and Condit, though not by Speer in quite the same way. Even though Speer, too, saw a place for the twin efforts of ‘Christianization’ and ‘civilization/Americanization,’ his expectation of a distinct role for China in an approaching age of human flourishing attenuated the sharper edges of the project of assimilating the Chinese into American society. Loomis and Condit, by contrast, seeing the Chinese population persist in the United States through times of tremendous persecution, considered its continued presence in the country inevitable and devoted more energy to incorporating the immigrants in the mode of their Western European forerunners.

This assimilationist trajectory, as it turns out, has been embraced not only by the missionary leadership at the Chinatown church but by a good number of its members as well. Particularly for many in the English Ministry, who grew up in the church during the 1950s and 1960s, assimilation was a social good to be embraced. It represented a means of access to American society—political, economic, and cultural—that had previously never been available, certainly not to their parents’ generation, which they had grown up observing firsthand. Though perhaps already birthright citizens themselves, ‘becoming American’ was nonetheless a very real phenomenon for this generation: it was a process which required effort and education, but one which clearly offered tangible rewards as well. And, for this group, the distance traveled is today sometimes reflected in their criticisms that more recently arrived members of the Mandarin or Cantonese worshiping communities “don’t understand how to do things the Presbyterian way,” or “don’t understand that we do things differently here in America.” Statements of these sorts signal a claim to both a distinct identity made legible by contrast with more ‘Chinese’ (vs. Chinese American) modes of being and acting and to the notion that this identity is an ‘achieved’ one, one to which new arrivals can reasonably aspire.

Interestingly, the comments also reveal faith in an underlying narrative of an evolutionary trajectory, wherein becoming more Presbyterian is a proxy for becoming more American and, thus, less Chinese, at least in those respects most objectionable within a white-determined American context. Unqualified, this equation of the religious with the national/racial is, of course, nothing less than a present-day articulation of the nineteenth-century missionary project at the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church. From this perspective, PCC has evolved naturally into a Chinese American church with the passage of the necessary amount of time and with the tutelage and leadership of white

American missionaries. This tendency toward an unquestioned narrative continuity of the type against which Foucault cautioned, a tendency we already saw emerging in the previous chapter, again asserts itself as the default perspective, absent a counter-narrative. In this chapter, I argue that a counter-narrative is indeed both available and embedded into the continuing place-making journey of the PCC community.

The missionary period at PCC formally came to an end in 1977 with the retirement of the Rev. Frank S. “Dick” Wichman, the last minister appointed to the Chinatown church by a denominational missions board. Wichman oversaw the church’s transition to financial self-support in the late 1950s, which was one of the final steps of PCC’s journey into the rank-and-file of the denomination’s local churches. The community’s arrival at ‘American-ness’ was, in this sense, signaled by its ‘standardization’: no longer a mission church because it ceased to require financial assistance from the denomination, it would henceforth also “call” its own ministers—rather than have missionary leadership assigned to it—and would thereby resemble other PC(USA) churches that much more closely. Left unchallenged—as indeed it oftentimes still is—this picture of the closing chapter of the missionary period dovetails perfectly with the narrative of continuity, in which the mission church matured into a self-confident Chinese American identity under the guidance of the denomination’s missionary establishment.

In actuality, however, the journey was not nearly so smooth but was, rather, characterized by the sort of “ruptures” Foucault argues propel society forward. By the time of Wichman’s retirement in 1977, after a decade-long influx of new arrivals from Asia ushered in by the Hart-Celler immigration reforms of 1965, it was already clear that the composition of the PCC community was changing dramatically and that the changing demographics at the church brought with them cultural and theological tensions that were not going to go away. These were exacerbated by the power-sharing structure consolidated under Wichman’s tenure, within which the English Ministry held the lion’s share of control. When open conflict erupted in the mid-1980s, the issue of place was interestingly at the very center of the debate, the desirability of a new church building ostensibly being the presenting issue, although a far longer set of grievances was understood by the community to trail behind it. The clash eventually came to a head in 1987, when the Rev. Calvin Wong, the pastor of the Cantonese Ministry, was asked to resign, his eventual departure resulting in the accompanying departure of three-quarters of the Cantonese worshiping group. Almost simultaneously in late 1987, a second dramatic rupture occurred at the church with the emergence of public allegations against the already-retired Wichman of repeated sexual abuse of boys and young men under his charge over his thirty years of ministry at the church and at Cameron House.

Together, the Wichman abuses and the demographic changes which transformed the composition of the church undermined in significant fashion the purported evolutionary continuity of PCC’s development. In a progression of my argument from Chapter 4 that contestation by the Chinese underlay the execution of the missionary agenda in the early life of PCC, I argue here that, at the opposite end of the missionary period, the Chinese American population at the church is engaged in the work of

reclaiming the institution's destiny from the vision of its last appointed white missionary leader and is struggling to shape a new Chinese American institutional identity relevant to the demands of the times. Far from the church's Chinese American institutional character being a 'given,' that is, a function merely of the passage of time—and especially of time spent under missionary tutelage—it is, rather, as the result of intense struggle over such trauma as abuse and schism directly attributable to missionary influence, that the church has come to determine its collective sense of self. How it is choosing today to be a Chinese American church, when “Chinese American” does not mean the same thing it did two generations ago and when white-Chinese interracial relations has meant actual harm *within* the walls of the sanctuary, is a process of continuing negotiation and contestation that I argue has imprinted itself upon the church space. The continued commitment to reach beyond these tensions in a manner true to both Christian faith and Chinese American identity is the process of sacralizing place itself.

## Changes in the Missions Context

When an aging Condit left the superintendency of the California Mission to the Chinese in 1904 and was transferred to his final pastorate across the Bay in Oakland, the context of missions work among Asian immigrants in the United States was much changed from what it had been when he began. Some of these changes were organizational realignments within the Presbyterian missions establishment, but more influential overall were the effects of demographic shifts within Asian America and changes in global politics that impacted the Chinese American community as a whole and, thus, also the Chinese Christian community at the Chinatown church. Just over two decades after the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, an extension of unlimited duration was approved for the law by Congress in that year, 1904, against a backdrop of the Chinese population in the country already seeing precipitous decline.<sup>3</sup> Chinese labor had increasingly been replaced by Japanese labor, and with Koreans beginning to arrive in small but growing numbers as well,<sup>4</sup> the Presbyterian denomination was accordingly shifting its domestic missions priorities. In 1908, the Gentleman's Agreement with Japan stopped the immigration of laborers from that country, but loopholes allowing the continued immigration of wives (and “picture brides”), children, and parents of laborers already here ensured that the Japanese community in the United States would continue to grow for several decades more until the 1924 Immigration Act put a virtual stop to all Asian immigration.<sup>5</sup> A quick glance at the title of the relevant section in the Foreign Board's Annual Reports during this period confirms the new operational emphases: in 1907 the title switched from naming the Chinese solely to announcing the “Mission to the Chinese, Japanese and Koreans in the United States.”<sup>6</sup> No longer were the Chinese the sole representatives of either an Asian promise or problem in the eyes of the American public and of the denomination, and the reports from the various Presbyterian missions bodies indicate the beginning of a trend of resources and attention being distributed over increasingly larger numbers of ministries serving communities of different Asian ethnicities.

The Rev. John H. Laughlin, formerly of the Presbyterian mission in West Shantung, China, was installed at the San Francisco church in Condit's stead and, like his predecessor, assumed both the Chinatown pastorate and the superintendency of the entire California Mission to the Chinese. Less than a year and a half into Laughlin's tenure, the Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906 occurred, completely destroying Chinatown in the process. The mission church was rebuilt a year and a half later, and though the church membership suffered in the interim, growth resumed soon afterwards. Through these early years under Laughlin's leadership, the character of the local ministry continued from the Loomis and Condit years relatively unchanged. The focus on Chinese "superstition" and "morality" was still there—"Idol worship is growing less from year to year, and foot binding among the children is less each year, and the unbinding of feet is quite common"<sup>7</sup>—and the notion of how Christianized Chinese might be blended into white American society in a subservient position also persisted—"These [white American communities] have profited by the higher grade of citizenship given to the Chinese by the mission teaching, by the better service the boys were trained to give in homes and shops, and by the friendly feelings for the Americans generally which the boys had, in the missions, imbibed from those who taught them."<sup>8</sup> Offering a self-assessment of the ministry's achievements in 1912, Laughlin concluded in theological superlatives and self-congratulating tones that, "An uplift they [the Chinese] have received that has almost, if not quite, Edenized the desert of their world and given them glimpses into the world eternal...."<sup>9</sup>

When the republican revolution erupted in China in 1911, Laughlin was moved to further recast the future significance of American missionary tutelage within a more expansive international frame:

China's political resurrection now in process [the republican revolution], lays the responsibility of opportunity more heavily upon the Christian Church than ever before—opportunity among the Chinese in America, as well as in their own land. The establishment of a new government, modeled after that of the United States, and with a powerful leaven of Christianity in its make-up—Sun Yat Sen, the Provisional President; Li Yuan Hung, Vice-President; Wu Ting Fang, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Wong Heng, Secretary of War; Wong Chung Wei, Attorney General—all these baptized Christians, and Yuan Shih Kai, the first regular President, most friendly to missionaries and their religion, and promising the largest liberty in its promulgation—his own children taught by a missionary lady, and four sons now in the Anglo-Chinese College at Tien-tsen—has thoroughly arrested the attention of our American Chinese. And if the converted ones did good work, religiously, for their own country under former conditions, how much better chance they will have under the new. Hundreds of temples have been emptied of their idols and thousands of hearts emptied of the old false faith. A waiting expectancy seems to be the attitude of the nation....<sup>10</sup>

And of the San Francisco church's involvement specifically, Laughlin reported that:

As a church, we have carefully avoided forming any alliance with this [republican] movement, yet quite a number of our members, as individuals, have long since joined it, and now that the revolution is actually accomplished it will be hard to find a Chinese Christian who is not in full sympathy with it, and praying and giving for its success. "Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty"; "The entrance of thy word giveth light"; and it may be that the future historian will discover that among the by-products of Chinese Missions in America may be counted the great political transformation of China.<sup>11</sup>

Laughlin's reaction to the events in Asia is reminiscent of Speer's excitement over the potential growth of Chinese Christianity in the wake of the Taiping Rebellion. But as the Superintendent of the California Mission to the Chinese, Laughlin had an added reason to trumpet the promise of the Foreign Board's work among the immigrants. For some three decades, since the 1870s, there had been internal debate within the denomination about whether the ministry to the Chinese in the United States rightly belonged under the purview of the Foreign Board or whether it fit better with the work of Board of Home Missions, given that some local churches which received financial support from the latter were also involved in outreach to the Chinese, particularly through their Sunday Schools.<sup>12</sup> Come the beginning of the twentieth century, the argument that the Home Board's<sup>13</sup> oversight would encourage more local involvement and regional support had won the day, and by the end of the first decade, the Foreign Board had relinquished control over all its domestic work among the Chinese, except for its mission stations in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Alameda.<sup>14</sup> Within this context, Laughlin's emphasis on the likely future importance in China of returning Christian converts had the subtext of reaffirming the methods used in the Foreign Board's work among the immigrants and, thus, of reaffirming the continued relevance of the Foreign Board's domestic efforts as a whole. Unlike the local churches overseen by the Home Board, which conducted their outreach in English, the missions under the Foreign Board leaned heavily on Cantonese, an obvious advantage in any future scenario where returning Chinese carrying the Gospel message home with them might require a vocabulary of evangelism in the local language.

This newfound enthusiasm and sense of purpose pinned to China and encouraged by the republican revolution that Laughlin reported blossomed at that very moment when a native-born second generation of Chinese Americans was just beginning to come of age.<sup>15</sup> The emergence of this group of young adults—delayed some forty-odd years until the 1920s by a pronounced gender imbalance within the community, the effects of which had been magnified by Exclusion, and by anti-miscegenation laws—was just beginning to be visible as the United States was drawn into World War I. As birthright citizens, the young Chinese Americans of this second generation were faced with the challenges of negotiating political choices different from their parents', a situation mirroring to some extent the country's encounter with the possibility of a new role on the international stage. Laughlin's widow Annie, who assumed responsibility for the Mission when her

husband died unexpectedly in 1918, reported of that last year of the Great War that, “The war conditions in California, as in other states, have affected the attendance at the services and night schools. A considerable number of Chinese native sons have enlisted in the army and navy, or have responded to the draft call. Some of them have become officers and have distinguished themselves.”<sup>16</sup>

Within this context of a world map so dramatically redrawn by the global conflict and of a United States emboldened by the success of its recent expedition abroad, the Presbyterian denomination in the post-war years strove to reorganize its missions organs and to refocus its foreign missions on work overseas. In late 1921, a committee appointed jointly by the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman’s Board of Foreign Missions made the recommendation that all domestic efforts among East Asians be turned over to the corresponding Home Boards by June 1, 1922, a recommendation subsequently accepted by the different decision-making parties involved.<sup>17</sup> Transfer of administrative duties was ultimately effected on April 1, 1923,<sup>18</sup> but almost immediately in the same year, the Board of Home Missions and the Woman’s Board of Home Missions were combined and reorganized as the Board of National Missions (which also had responsibility for missions in Alaska, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba).<sup>19</sup> Jurisdiction over the Chinatown church accordingly shifted to the National Board,<sup>20</sup> and there it remained until the congregation became a self-supporting local church at the end of the 1950s.

Barely a decade of economic expansion in the United States—driven by rapid industrial growth that obscured a troubled agricultural sector—followed the war before the world economy plummeted into the Great Depression. At its nadir in 1933, the National Board’s Annual Report noted darkly that, “It is a time of bitter privation. Fear and want stalk abroad in the land.”<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, San Francisco’s Chinatown not only did not escape the hardships gripping the nation but, in many respects, saw the problems multiplied as a result of resurgent racism: “...[T]he depression has brought a tremendous increase in the problems of the Chinese communities. Idleness and poverty have broken up families and have increased the moral problems among young people, while more children are in need of proper food and medical attention at the same time the city and county agencies are making serious retrenchments. ...With the number of unemployed white people increasing and the slogans ‘Employ Americans’ and ‘Buy American’ taking effect, the opportunities for Chinese girls and women to earn a living are daily becoming more restricted until housework is about the only field open to them on the Pacific Coast.”<sup>22</sup> As part of a section in the report concerning missions work among Chinese women, the latter sentence focuses specifically on the economic outlook for them, but the same forces limiting their opportunities were most certainly faced by Chinese men as well. “In addition, the depression meant even greater hardship for Orientals than for [white and black] Americans since government projects were only for citizens.”<sup>23</sup> The National Board’s 1931 Annual Report specified that, “Legislation was passed making it impossible for foreigners [non-citizens] to be employed on any government or municipal work which was being carried on with state, county or city funds, or money raised by any of these with bond issues. Then, too, practically all the

corporations and even the farming centers were compelled to discharge Orientals and other foreign laborers, so that Americans might be given employment.”<sup>24</sup>

As impactful as the privations of the Great Depression clearly were, what is important to note is how these only underscored a broader isolation of the Chinese in the United States, both socially and economically, that had been so dramatically reflected in the Exclusion Act and which, increasingly perceived as the norm in the decades that followed, persisted significantly unchanged until World War II. Despite the fact that, among the second generation, there were degrees earned from the University of California and decorations won for distinguished service in the U.S. military, the boundedness of Chinatown, as economic enclave and social ghetto, nonetheless reflected the continuation of very real limits to Chinese American existence. The National Board’s Annual Report for 1937, the same year the Second Sino-Japanese War—the prelude to WWII on Chinese soil—broke out with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, had this to say about challenges facing “Orientals” (mainly referring to Chinese) in this country:

Those who wonder why Oriental churches are slow in coming to self-support will probably be interested to know that they are not any slower than the rest of our churches, indeed, that they rate fairly high as contributors to the church. As a matter of fact, Oriental Christians approximate the per capita giving of the whole Presbyterian Church for congregational maintenance [\$14.40 per capita, compared with \$14.75 per capita for the entire Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.]. ...They face problems unknown to white churches in achieving full self-support. ...*Not only a minister but also teachers for a [“Oriental”/ Chinese] language school must be supported since even American Orientals speaking perfect English can find jobs as a rule only in an Oriental tongue. A cemetery must be provided as Orientals are generally refused burial with Americans and as Christians no longer want to send their “bones” back to China for ancestor worship. [My italics.]*<sup>25</sup>

An example of the type of language school to which the quote refers, the Hip Wo School in San Francisco, also known as the Chinese Christian Union Academy, was founded in 1925 as a joint effort by the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Methodists cooperating in a broader Christian Union movement in Chinatown. Initially housed at the Chinese Presbyterian Church and subsequently replacing Cameron House at 920 Sacramento Street from 1939 to 1949, the Hip Wo School was the largest and most successful Chinese language school in the country,<sup>26</sup> with hundreds of students and courted at one point by Lingnan University (Canton Christian College) as a potential branch school in the United States.<sup>27</sup> In its annual reports, the National Board tended to tout the work of the school as preparation of Christian leadership for China, but as the quote above suggests, the type of education that Chinese schools such as Hip Wo offered was equally important for economic survival in the United States, because prior to World War II, employment opportunities outside Chinatown were so limited for Chinese Americans.



The new generation of American-born Chinese, proficient in English and comfortable with the social practices of the dominant culture, nonetheless found mobility within American society only marginally less restrictive than it had been for the previous generation. On the legislative front, Exclusion still obtained, while in the everyday realities of living, assimilation, even when this was desired, ran up against racial barriers that prevented full economic and social integration. While emergence of second-generation institutions in Chinatown, such as Chinese branches of the ('international') YMCA (1914) and YWCA (1916) and the Boy Scouts (1916), signaled an unsurprising interest among the youth to adopt mainstream culture, the parallel existence of institutions such as the Hip Wo School illustrated a simultaneous need to hedge against the uncertain bet of successful integration. The Depression only exacerbated this greater reality of a second-class citizenship for all Chinese in the United States regardless of nativity, and so, for the first generation, the implications of the Chinese Revolution were far more than political change 'over there' in China: it signaled the transformation of a society to which this cohort still attached its identity, if not its prospects of a material home in old age. The second generation, having grown up under the tutelage of the first and yet immersed in American culture, may have been more ambivalent about where its future prospects lay, but the difficulties of integrating fully into American society certainly magnified the importance of the revolution across the Pacific.

All of these calculations changed significantly in the 1940s, first as a result of the United States' entry into World War II and the follow-on effects that had on economic opportunities for Chinese Americans and, subsequently, as I will discuss in a following section, as a result of the Communist Revolution in China at the end of the decade. Growing Japanese imperialism had pushed China ever closer to war since the beginning of the 1930s, and this had put Christians of both ethnicities in the United States in a challenging position, pitting homeland allegiances against a shared religious confession. They attempted to bridge their differences through a faith response that strove to reach beyond national politics, and in 1932, the National Board reported that, apart from the economic hardships of the Depression,

[A] second difficulty came about through the Chinese-Japanese war, first in Manchuria [1931] and later in Shanghai [1932]. It appeared likely that at any time almost insurmountable barriers would arise between our Chinese and Japanese Christians, but the Cross of Christ proved to be a greater power in the lives of the people than international hatred, and even at the height of the struggle in Shanghai, Chinese and Japanese ministers were meeting together and praying for peace. In one instance, the pastors of the San Francisco Japanese and Chinese churches sent joint cablegrams to both governments, pleading on behalf of the Christian churches in America that the war cease.<sup>28</sup>

As ever, the denomination was invested in trumpeting the transforming power of the Christian faith, but the subtext about "insurmountable barriers" and "international hatred" attests to the antipathy of the broader Chinese American community toward the invaders of their homeland. Again emphasizing unity in faith and using oblique references to

acknowledge broader conflict, the National Board reported in 1942 that, “The Chinese, making splendid progress in the matter of finances and church membership, have evidenced their Christian spirit by contributing heavily to the needs of war-torn China. Furthermore, they have shown a wonderful attitude toward Christian Japanese.”<sup>29</sup>

Both the increased financial capacity and the growing church membership mentioned had roots in the macro-political environment. The second was driven by a growing American-born generation more open to the Christian message than its predecessor and by the persisting momentum of a republican China that also signaled receptiveness to Christianity, a republican China which though now in turmoil, Chinese Christians on both sides of the Pacific nonetheless still saw as a hope for the future. The increase in economic wherewithal was, in turn, a direct consequence of the United States’ entry into the war in 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The National Board reported the following year that:

The draft has taken some of the younger men while defense work in industry and in government positions has opened up a much wider field of employment for American-born Chinese youth of both sexes. There is a definite psychological value in this as the young people now feel that they have “arrived” and are standing on the same footing as Caucasian Americans in the economic world. Participation in government projects especially has brought a deeper feeling of belonging and of the responsibilities of citizenship.<sup>30</sup>

The National Board’s observation spoke of new opportunities and their resulting benefits for an entire generation of Chinese Americans, and what was true for this larger group was most certainly also true for the congregation at the Chinese Presbyterian Church. The war, though so devastating in Asia, as well as in Europe, Africa, and Oceania, was nonetheless admittedly also a historical turning point for Chinese Americans. The Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, and although the token allowance of 105 Chinese newcomers a year by itself did little to reverse the accumulated effects of the law after a sixty-one-year ban on immigration,<sup>31</sup> the repositioning of Chinese in the American public imagination as allies important in the war effort worked in tandem with the availability of new employment opportunities to allow for a level of economic mobility the Chinese in the United States had never experienced before.

This was a watershed moment for Chinese America, a confluence of the effects of demographic change and international politics. It brought with it a sense of new possibility, but at the Chinese Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, what precisely this meant for an American-born cohort of Chinese Christians was not at the outset entirely clear. It was at this critical moment in the development of the church that the Rev. Frank Spirkel “Dick” Wichman<sup>32</sup> entered the scene, and over the next three decades, he would be one of the most influential figures—for better and for worse—in shaping the direction of the church.

## Transition and Trauma

Wichman was a Bachelor of Divinity student at San Francisco Theological Seminary, the Presbyterian denomination's theological school in San Anselmo, CA, from 1937 to 1940. During that time, along with Lois Chadsey, a fellow seminarian whom he married in 1939, he was deeply involved as a volunteer at the Chinatown church—by then widely known as the Chinese Presbyterian Church—eventually writing his B.D. thesis on the history of the community. Briefly serving two Southern Californian pastorates after graduation, Wichman returned to San Francisco in 1942 to be the Boys' Director at the Chinatown YMCA. He resumed his involvement as a volunteer at the Chinese Presbyterian Church and became much engaged in the discussion about the future direction of the ministry to the new generation of Chinese Americans there.<sup>33</sup>

The number of second-generation Chinese Americans had, at this point, just surpassed the halfway mark (52% in 1940) of the total ethnic Chinese population in the United States, and in the concentrated space of Chinatown, the visibility of the new cohort commanded renewed interest from the Board of National Missions, whose attention had for several decades been diluted by the need to attend to a growing number of different ethnic Asian ministries. In 1946, the National Board appointed a committee with representatives from its own staff, the Presbytery, the Chinese Presbyterian Church, and Cameron House to study the needs of the changing community and return with recommendations. The resulting proposal called for a “unified program” in Chinatown to be jointly offered by the church and Cameron House, with the following features:

1. Provision for worship.
2. Christian education, including Sunday School, lay leadership training, youth and adult clubs, group work in Chinese and English, hobby and craft shops, and English classes.
3. A vigorous effort to visit in the community.
4. Continued participation in the language school as a denomination.
5. An expanded social service program.<sup>34</sup>

While the ‘new’ agenda was especially intended to address the growing social needs of the second generation, it is worth noting that virtually all the institutional elements for which the plan called were already present in the mission Loomis and Condit built three quarters of a century before and that, now in the mid-1940s, the church was still engaged in the full range of functions. What was different in the new proposal was the deliberate distribution of responsibilities between two agencies, the church and Cameron House, a measure intended to reduce redundancy and increase the efficiency of the overall Presbyterian ministry in Chinatown, and one which would have lasting consequences for the future of the church. Lorna Logan, superintendent of Cameron House at the time the plan was presented, wrote of the proposed arrangement that:

The decision was that while the two departments [the Dept. of City and Industrial Work and the Dept. of Educational and Medical Work] of the [National] Board would carry financial and supervisory

responsibilities for their parts of the project, the session of the church would act as a local board. The pastor should have the work of shepherding the church and giving it leadership and pastoral care. The director of Cameron House would be co-pastor of the church, in order to draw all the activities of the House into relationship with the church; he would administer the program of the House, do public relations, represent the House in the judicatories of the church, and work with the other pastor of the church for a unified program. The social service department was to be autonomous as far as its internal workings were concerned, but to act cooperatively with the church and all parts of the Cameron House program.<sup>35</sup>

When the plan was put into effect the following year, 1947, Logan yielded overall superintendency of Cameron House, assuming the directorship of the new Christian Service [social services] Department, and Wichman was appointed by the National Board as the Director of Cameron House and a co-pastor of the church. That joint appointment ushered in a new era at the two institutions that was to last until the late 1980s, with significant lingering effects into the 1990s. During this time the line between the church and Cameron House became increasingly blurred. As the English-proficient second generation grew, both in size and in importance, the English-speaking ministry of the church and the ministry of Cameron House became gradually more and more inseparable.

Wichman was recognized as the new face of the National Board in Chinatown, the latest executor of its missions agenda, whose voice was featured prominently in the Board's annual reports, speaking on behalf of both institutions, despite the fact that at the church, he was nominally a co-pastor always working with one or more Chinese ministers. Undoubtedly because he had originally been appointed by the National Board and because he was more integrated into the national church establishment than his Chinese colleagues, Wichman was generally regarded as the bridge between the Chinese Presbyterian Church and the denomination. In 1958, the year the new name "Presbyterian Church in Chinatown" was adopted (see pp. 48-50), the relationship of the church—though not of Cameron House—to the denomination's missions establishment transitioned to a formal end when the church became financially self-supporting. The wider Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) was itself undergoing a complex process of both expansion and consolidation, on May 28 of that year merging with the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPCNA) to form to a new denomination, the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA). The encouragement of "Oriental" churches toward financial self-support in advance of the merger was widespread, and the annual report in 1959 indicates that three had achieved the goal the previous year.<sup>36</sup> Although Wichman continued to serve the Chinatown church until 1977, the significance of the church's move to financial self-support, a process which in large part he oversaw, was that it made him the last missionary pastor at the church, ending a twelve-and-a-half decade-long missionary relationship.

By all accounts, Wichman was a brilliant leader, with a bold vision for the generation of young Chinese American Christians he shepherded. He was responsible for a new youth program at Cameron House, which over the following years saw thousands of participants, and for adding a morning English worship service in 1959 to the evening one begun by Richard Norton in 1944.<sup>37</sup> Wichman nurtured the nascent English worshipping group at the church into a theologically confident community and one proficient in Presbyterian polity. In addition to his B.D., he earned a master's degree in Systematic Theology from the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School across the Bay<sup>38</sup> and is remembered as being a powerful and compelling preacher, tremendously influential in shaping the religious lives of his charges. Indeed, during his tenure at Cameron House and the Chinatown church, more seminarians and pastors were produced out of that combined community than any other Asian American church community in the United States.

Wichman served for thirty years until his retirement on July 7, 1977, and the timing of his years in leadership is notable for the way it straddled two broad generational changes among the Chinese in the United States—the consolidation of a second generation so long delayed and the emergence of a third. As noted previously, Wichman assumed his dual appointment at a time when a young second generation of Chinese Americans was experiencing a fresh sense of economic empowerment brought about by a transformed wartime economy. Emerging sociopolitical empowerment took another two decades, spurred on by U.S. involvement in yet another war overseas, this time in Southeast Asia, and by domestic social foment in the form of the Civil Rights movement—and the accompanying Black Power and Yellow Power movements—and the feminist/women's movement. These tectonic shifts within American society generally, and within Chinese America more specifically, generated a context of tremendous forward motion within Chinatown, a wave Wichman alternately rode and resisted.

Charged with overseeing the Chinatown ministry a full century after the mission was first established, Wichman's approach of emphasizing 'Americanization' was nevertheless no less pronounced than that of his predecessors, but now the ground across which the seed of this message was being scattered was more fertile than ever. With the second generation's weaker ties to China, the reassurance of birthright American citizenship, and the suggestion of broadened socioeconomic opportunities, assimilation exhibited a greater attractiveness than it ever had before. Wichman communicated to his charges not only that American society had a place for them but taught them—in a way that their own immigrant parents could not—how to participate in this new social milieu now unfolding before their eyes. And most importantly, in his capacity as religious leader, he offered a sense of purpose for this participation in the language of faith. The vocabulary was one of social justice, of accountability to the Chinese American community and society at large, and of an urgency to seize the opportunities presented by God. Reporting on how this ethos was gaining traction at Cameron House, the National Board described in its 1964 Annual Report how a "maintenance man" from the mission had joined a delegation of African Americans for the March on Washington the previous year, explaining that, "This young man gave up a selling job for broom-pushing, because

he believes in what the center [Cameron House] is doing and, on the maintenance time schedule, can take part in its program. He is one of an increasing number of college-age and young adults, deeply concerned with political issues, who, the Cameron House director [Wichman] says, are “convinced that *you aren’t Christian if you aren’t relevant.*” [My italics.]<sup>39</sup>

This theme of a relevance to society and to the times, grounded in Christian faith, is a legacy of Wichman’s that is oft repeated by church-goers and Cameron House participants from the days of his tenure. The tremendous expansion of membership at PCC and participation at Cameron House gave the impression, not only locally but also nationally, of progressive leadership of the sort that the Protestant missionary establishment had always claimed was offering ‘moral and social uplift’ to the Chinese. That Wichman encouraged and made possible a higher level of social engagement and greater participation in the wider church is undeniable, but it is equally true that there were clear limits to the social growth he envisioned for his Chinese American charges, particularly along the lines of gender and race. While some individual women who grew up in the Cameron House program remember him fondly as being unfailingly supportive, most recall a general practice of gender stratification, with more opportunities and rewards accorded the males in the program than the females. In more recent public forums and in a number of interviews I conducted, some women remember harassment and an active belittling of females, sometimes accompanied by verbal attacks about sexual orientation. The ability to properly name and contextualize this behavior has sometimes taken decades. Linda Lee, a PCC member, Cameron House alumna, and former Moderator of the Presbytery of San Francisco, notes the balance of the inheritances she received from Wichman:

...[M]ost of us learned our sense of what it means to be Presbyterian from Dick. But for myself personally, I also, as time went on, had issues—that probably arose out of [my awareness of] the feminist movement—with Dick. Because, he, in his Cameron House role, treated women and girls so much differently, and gave us, not quite second-class citizenship, but we didn’t get the same privileges as the boys in the program. And that...that kind of rankled me. And also, I think Dick belittled the whole feminist movement.<sup>40</sup>

Lee’s reaction was far from exceptional in its occurrence, but her comment stands out for its ability to meaningfully contextualize the broader implications of Wichman’s behavior, connecting as second-wave feminism taught, the personal with the political.

Ironically, Wichman’s biases with regard to gender were paralleled by his prejudices with regard to race. This was ironic, because in so many people’s eyes, his commitment to Chinatown placed him above any suspicion of racism. In an observation that echoes Lee’s for its ability to situate everyday practice within the wider social context, the Rev. Calvin Chinn, former pastor of the English Ministry at PCC, notes:

I remember he used to mispronounce Chinese just to make fun of our language. . . . And we would let him get away with it; we didn't challenge him. And then, when the times changed, and the '60s came, and there was Yellow Power and all that, boy, he was really trying to squelch people at Cameron House who were behind that.

Asked whether it appeared to be a conflict for Wichman that he was, on the one hand, undermining an empowered and politicized racial consciousness among Chinese American youth and, on the other hand, encouraging them to participate more fully in the life and leadership of the church, including attending seminary, Chinn, who had formerly served a Native American congregation in Warm Springs, OR, responded that:

Not as long as the society, including seminaries, were pretty much white. It's like the way the Bureau of Indian Affairs sought to civilize the "savages"—Native Americans—sending them to boarding school. You can't speak your language. . . . The church. . . go to church—because that was part of the institutionalization and civilization of Native Americans. Seminaries did that for us.<sup>41</sup>

Chinn's analysis identifies the power relationships and institutional arrangements that underpin the structural racism of which PCC and Cameron House were a part, but in most other conversations about Wichman's legacy I have heard, public and private, mention of any form of racism, let alone any analysis of such, is notably absent. As with so many other discussions within the PCC/Cameron House community about the role of white missionaries in the development of the church, the supposed altruism of these individuals and their undeniable commitment to their work in Chinatown seem to preclude consideration of any possibility of racism. Of course, my argument throughout the preceding chapters is that these forces—a faith-driven desire to serve, on the one hand, and racism, sometimes equally inflected by religious faith, on the other—need not be understood as exclusive and seem to have operated in tandem throughout most of the period of missionary administration at PCC. The matter to discern, I argue, is what the combined effect of these forces has been.

In the case of Wichman's legacy, his positions on gender and race, not to mention the many positive contributions he made to the PCC and Cameron House communities, seem, in recent years, to have been sidelined by revelations of the sexual abuse he perpetrated against boys and young men under his charge while in leadership at the two institutions. Though whispered rumors of his misconduct were in circulation even while he still held his offices, the first public allegation of molestation did not surface until late-1987, a full ten years after he had retired. Following other abortive attempts at addressing the issue, the Board of Directors at Cameron House in 2002 established a Healing Task Force to investigate those charges that had emerged, follow up on the possibilities of further incidents, document the stories of the victims, study the role and responsibilities of the institution, and make recommendations on how to help those who had been directly or indirectly affected and how to bring healing to the community. The task force completed its work in 2004 and issued a final report of its findings and

recommendations, which Cameron House subsequently made available to the public.<sup>42</sup> The careful and extensive process by which the report was compiled resulted in a document that currently serves as the benchmark for discussion about this painful chapter in the history of the community and offers a mostly uncontested starting point for conversation where there had previously been acrimonious disagreement between Wichman's critics and his defenders. The report, which noted that, at that point, eighteen persons had identified themselves as victims of Wichman's molestation and which included testimonies from a dozen voices, those of primary and secondary (parents, spouses, witnesses, etc.) victims, indicates an extensive pattern of abuse over the thirty-year period, the certainty of which is established but whose depth and breadth might never be completely known. In 1988, as the Presbytery of San Francisco prepared to bring charges against him through the denomination's judicial system, Wichman relinquished his ordination in the Presbyterian Church, effectively putting himself beyond the reach of the church's investigatory and disciplinary mechanisms. Criminal charges, in the meanwhile, had also become impossible, because the statute of limitations then in existence had expired. Wichman died in 2007 without publicly admitting to the abuses.

The Healing Task Force's Final Report continues to be available from Cameron House and press coverage of the revelations of the abuses and of the healing process can be found both in print-media archives and online. It is not the intention of this project to recapitulate these details already documented but, rather, to explore the connections of this painful chapter in the life of the community to the larger missionary project at the Chinatown church we have been tracing and, more importantly, to examine the implications of the trauma for PCC's institutional sense of self as this has been expressed through place-making. To understand the importance of the PCC/Cameron House complex during the 1950s to the 1970s when Wichman was in leadership, it is helpful to consider the idea of a "plausibility structure" as described by sociologist Peter L. Berger.<sup>43</sup> Berger argues that it is impossible for individuals to maintain the logics of a religious system without constant social validation, that religion is, by necessity, relational, and its shared nature is essential to its very existence. To hold a religious belief, individuals need to continually reconstruct and maintain a symmetry between the objective world—that world sensed by all human beings and taken for granted as a shared, commonsense reality—and a subjective reality that interprets the objective world in (religious) terms meaningfully imposed upon the individual consciousness. Thus, another human being might be recognized as 'one of God's children'; a sunrise or a tree as 'part of God's creation'; or an act of heinous violence as an act 'against the will of God.' When this process of translation between an individual's exterior (objective) and interior (subjective) worlds is not shared by others, they may be labeled 'mad,' or in some other manner cast beyond the pale of human society. For the purpose of establishing a shared subjective reality, therefore, religions engage myriad social processes to legitimate subjective experience, and Berger terms these social processes collectively a "plausibility structure." For Christian institutions such as PCC and Cameron House, the plausibility structure would include worship services, fellowship/study/activity groups, Christian literature, a shared religious/moral vocabulary, and personal relationships between individuals (friends, student/teacher, leader/participant, pastor/church-goer, etc.).



While, on one level, a plausibility structure can be said to be shared by Christians generally, the issues of race and ethnicity also come into play and give rise to a plausibility structure of different specificity in communities like PCC. In the 1950s and the 1960s, it was not the case in San Francisco, nor indeed elsewhere in the United States, that Chinese Christians could easily walk into a non-Chinese church and expect to find fellowship based solely upon a shared religious creed. The city's Chinese population was still heavily concentrated in Chinatown during this period—especially before the passage of the Rumford Fair Housing Act in 1963—and similar to the Chinatown YMCA and YWCA, which had evolved as parallel institutions for second-generation Chinese American youth out of pressures to preclude integration with the white public, the Chinatown church and Cameron House were Chinese Christian institutions which paralleled other Presbyterian churches in the predominantly white denomination. In terms of providing a plausibility structure that acknowledged the everyday lived experiences of Chinese American Christians, PCC was far from being interchangeable with other churches. It is unsurprising, then, that when asked what PCC meant to them in their youth, interviewees of the generation that came of age under Wichman's tutelage often use such words as "safe space" and "home." As it had been for the Chinese Christians before them, the Chinatown church was a place that allowed them full expression of their racial/ethnic identity at the same time it allowed them full expression of their religious identity. In other words, the plausibility structure that was nurtured there was one which legitimated the Chinese American experience at the same time that it legitimated the Christian one.

During this period, with interracial dynamics teetering on the cusp of major social change as the overlapping Civil-Rights and Vietnam-War eras wore on, it was still true that the religious/racial-ethnic plausibility structure which affirmed purpose and meaning in the lives of so many who came through the doors of Cameron House and the church was far more geographically tied than it is today. The previously rigid boundaries to Chinatown, which were only beginning to loosen, signaled as much about the difficulties of being Chinese American *Christians* beyond the quarter's limits as they did about the difficulties of being Chinese American beyond those borders. Irene Lin, writing about the Hsi Lai Temple in Hacienda Heights, CA, develops the idea of this tie between plausibility structure and place by noting how the temple, in an attempt at relevance to the many different aspects of Taiwanese American life, functions as a center for religious education, for intergenerational gatherings, for the provision of vegetarian Buddhist meals, for international diplomacy, and for cultural preservation, at the same time that it serves its most obvious function of providing a space for collective Buddhist practice. Riffing on Berger's term, Lin refers to the Hsi Lai Temple as a "plausibility superstructure," a geographically-grounded foundation of Taiwanese American Buddhist life in Southern California with such a deliberately large array of religious, social, and cultural offerings that members of its community can have a wide range of their everyday needs met without having to leave the premises and the shelter for their faith those premises imply.<sup>44</sup> David Lee, a longtime member of PCC and a Club leader (a leader of a youth group comprising boys younger than himself) at Cameron House during his high-school years, remembers how his father, himself a devout Christian and one of the

founding members of the Mandarin Ministry, was concerned that he was devoting so much of his days to those two institutions:

At home, I think my father always tried to press my bother and me to have a well-rounded life. He couldn't understand why, for a while there, I had put so much of my energy and time in one place, [meaning] Cameron House [/PCC]. He thought it was as important to be involved with school life, with sports, with other activities.<sup>45</sup>

Lee's recollection is far from atypical and summarizes how central to the life of an entire generation—not simply in symbolic importance but as an actual everyday destination—Cameron House and PCC were.

For many who had had immersive relationships with Cameron House, awareness of Wichman's abuses came as a tremendous blow. Reactions were obviously different from individual to individual: for some, the revelations were confirmation of a barely hidden secret they already knew; for others, it was the lifting of a veil; and for others still, it was a public uncovering of a trauma to which they had been personally subjected. Some were able to separate Wichman and his actions from the institutions he represented, but many were not, oftentimes feeling that Cameron House and the church had not sufficiently protected the young people who had believed the institutions to be sanctuaries. Some were invested in both Cameron House and the church, having grown up in the former and gone on to become members in the latter, sometimes marrying there and raising children among fellow church-goers. But even for those whose participation did not extend beyond Cameron House, the centrality of Wichman to the two institutions meant that faith had been broken with both. Encouragement to Christian morality rang hollow, as individuals would go on to testify in the Healing Workshops Cameron House and PCC sponsored following the publication of the Healing Task Force's Final Report. As it turned out, the community's understanding of Wichman's abuses was not limited to sexual misconduct alone; his authoritarian ways and his attitudes about gender and race had, over time, been perceived by many in the community as additional abuses of the powers of his offices. That he was, at the same time, one of the most important interpreters of Christian faith and theology in this community for one entire generation and the leading edge of a second meant widespread damage to the plausibility structure so many had so earnestly worked to build. People left the church, turned away from Christianity, and some chose not to darken the doorways of Cameron House and PCC again. What these places *meant* were in these instances altered significantly for the worse.

### **(In)Visible Changes to the Matrix**

Despite his fundamental proposition, captured in the epigraph to this chapter, that the cyberspace he is describing in *Neuromancer* is “experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation,” Gibson curiously omits mention of any of these in his narration of his character Case's journeys through the matrix. Case encounters trace

evidence of human activity in the digital world—archives of data, security measures, artificial intelligences, etc.—but he does not come into contact with the digital representations of other operators like himself. Cyberspace is presented as mostly static, although the reader is left to conclude that it must constantly be changing as data is added, subtracted and altered, and that this must be so, precisely because the “billions of legitimate operators,” not to mention the illegitimate “console cowboys” like the protagonist Case, are acting upon the digital environment in every single moment. Rather than the still lake that is narratively convenient for showcasing the main character’s actions, cyberspace as conceived by Gibson ought rightfully to appear more akin to a rushing river of digital activity.

As presented, however, Gibson’s portrayal is helpful to this project, because it mirrors the conception individuals and collectives generally hold of shared memory: that it is a collection of unchanging mental images from which an arrangement might be selected to suit the reflective or explanatory needs of a given moment in the present. To recall the multi-nodal model from the previous chapter, memory might be mapped as routes between episodic recollections of the past. And in the case of the earlier periods of PCC’s history, this mode of constructing institutional memory seems roughly adequate: there are those quanta of information known about the early years of the church, and depending upon, among other things, ideological orientation in the present, a different starting point might be chosen, certain documented incidents might be selected or avoided, but regardless, a route is charted between nodes of remembered information. Even when new information is added, as some of the historical excavation work in this project seeks to do, corrections, additions, and deletions are perceived to be made to the nodes without altering their fundamentally static natures.

As we move forward in time, however, and approach the present moment ever more closely, the possibility of memories being contested increases dramatically. By definition, institutional/collective memories are shared memories, meaning that the stability of these is negotiated between multiple parties, until some level of agreement is achieved. What is recalled may—separate from this negotiation process—be ‘acted upon’ by different parties, and these ‘actions’ can have rippling implications and consequences for everyone accessing the same set of memories. In other words, those neon pyramids and spheres and towers of Gibson’s cyberspace, as analogues of storehouses of accessible memories, might well be constantly changing, shifting, and transforming. But as with Gibson’s imagery, individual memory—let alone institutional memory, which by its negotiated, collective nature is even less nimble—tends to freeze snapshots of the past, saving us from being overwhelmed by the constant realization of unending change. For most individuals and institutions, this defense mechanism serves its purpose of shielding us from the need to unceasingly adjust our perceptions of the past. In other words, this arrangement works...until it does not.

The revelations of Wichman’s abuses were a traumatic assault on collective memory. No longer are individuals and the church and Cameron House free to select memories from Wichman’s thirty-year tenure without taking into consideration the harm he caused. In part, this is because of the shared and very public process by which the two

institutions brought the information to light, establishing the Healing Task Force and taking other measures I will discuss below. PCC and Cameron House deliberately ‘acted upon’ collective memory, effectively precluding such formulations as those which construct Wichman as a faultless, purely altruistic servant of the Chinatown Christian community. Still, despite our knowledge of change being effected by others, the overall functioning of our familiar defense mechanism remains largely unchanged: most of us do not, as a result of the realization that others are capable of influencing our memories, feel a moment-by-moment shift in our perceptions of the past. We continue to access a “field of memory,” *à la* Foucault, in snapshot manner, an approach which renders the field as curiously similar to the private cyberspace of *Neuromancer*, when, in fact, there are many other “legitimate operators” sharing that field of memory with us.

## **New Immigration, New Influences**

In addition to the Wichman revelations, a further Foucauldian “rupture” which underscored the presence of other significant influences on PCC’s institutional memory—the presence of other “operators”—was an immigration-driven demographic shift at the church. For the first century of PCC’s existence, its membership evolved slowly through only one generational transition. Those same forces of Exclusion which had slowed the generational shift also kept the community at the Chinatown church relatively homogeneous, namely, mostly Cantonese from the Pearl River Delta region. In the wake of the 1949 Communist Revolution in China, however, these demographics began to change. Immigration legislation, notably the 1953 Refugee Relief Act, which was ostensibly humanitarian but which nonetheless served American Cold-War-era interests of projecting moral superiority and recruiting talent in the highly competitive fields of science and technology, led to a new influx of Chinese from regions of China other than Canton. Then, at the height of the Cold War, the United States overhauled its immigration policy with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965—also known as the Hart-Celler Act—paving the way for significant chain migration for Asian and non-Asian ethnic groups alike, from all over the world.<sup>46</sup> At PCC, this meant newcomers from other parts of China, but also new cohorts of immigrants from Canton and Hong Kong, and new arrivals from the diaspora.

The global ideological struggle between capitalism and communism formed the backdrop against which the youngest of the language ministries, the Mandarin worshipping community, was formed. The Rev. Teng-Kiat Chiu, hired as the new Cantonese pastor in 1953, the same year the Refugee Relief Act was passed, was sensitive to an increasing demand in the neighborhood for a Mandarin-speaking church community and shepherded a nascent one into existence in 1958. Two years earlier, the Presbyterian Resettlement Service, which was cooperating with Church World Service to place arriving refugee families, requested that PCC and Cameron House assume a sponsorship role after a church in the Northwest was unable to fulfill its original commitment. The assent of the two Chinatown agencies brought Mr. Shih, his wife, and their seven children to San Francisco and to membership at the church.<sup>47</sup> According to David Lee, the Shih family was one of nine Chinese refugee families resettled in the

United States at the same time from Korea, where they had fled from the Communist takeover in China.<sup>48</sup> Lee's family was another from the same group, and after a sojourn of six years in Colorado and New York, Lee's father, responding to Mr. Shih's encouragement to join him in building the Mandarin Ministry at the Chinatown church, brought his own family to San Francisco.<sup>49</sup> The Lee family was not Cantonese, being instead from Shandong Province, and Jeremy Lue, a long-serving elder from the Mandarin Ministry, remembers how his own family, also from Shandong, and the Lees soon formed the nucleus of a mostly Shandong, Mandarin-speaking community at the church.<sup>50</sup> The Rev. David Kao, called to the church in 1976 to be the first dedicated pastor for the Mandarin Ministry, says of the composition of the group at his arrival: "...I remember just two major families: one was the Lee family, and one was the Lue family."<sup>51</sup>

The same sociopolitical forces that had brought the Lees and the Lues from China were also ushering into the church new Cantonese-speaking members. The significance of this new stream of immigration was that, as the English Ministry was swelling with second-generation Chinese Americans wrestling with issues of political empowerment and the desirability of assimilation, in other corners of PCC, there was an emerging group of new first-generation members with vastly different needs and concerns. This division has persisted, and gesturing toward the extent of the remove from one another the cohorts experience, David Lee says of his own journey:

I don't know if I have a relationship with the Chinatown community, other than through the Presbyterian Church. We [my family members and I] do not have any family-association ties, any [social] club ties, any ties through relatives. The Chinese American experience in San Francisco is very unique due to [the migration history] and the trials and the hardships experienced: the whole railroad and Gold Rush experience. That was a very unique experience, but I don't have any ties to it, so, in that sense, I have a different story. I don't know if my feelings of being an outsider are from my part, or from the community. This feeling has been with me all of my life, even to this day. ...The new generation [of the English Ministry] of this church has a different story, a different type of story. Most of them in our congregation [the English Ministry] today are second- and third-generation. They have a different life story: I don't feel a connection other than being a member together in this church.<sup>52</sup>

Lee, currently a member of the English Ministry, was, as mentioned above, a Club leader at Cameron House in his youth and went on to become an elder at PCC and to serve on the Cameron House Board of Directors. His longtime involvement in leadership at the two institutions testifies to his functional integration into the community and his commitment to its welfare, and yet, his words above express an obvious sense of disconnection from the narrative of historical progression, which well into the 1980s was communicated externally as the primary stream of institutional memory at PCC. If that was true for someone as functionally well-integrated as Lee, it is perhaps understandable

how more newly arrived, less functionally well-integrated, members, particularly the immigrant members of the Cantonese and Mandarin Ministries, may feel disenfranchised by a univocal articulation of the church's history that describes a continuity reaching back to 1853. That narrative has merit for the English Ministry, but even for the Cantonese Ministry, now made up mostly of immigrant-generation members, let alone the Mandarin Ministry, it is far more alien.

The ascendancy of the dominant narrative of continuity was long championed, as we have seen, by the missionary establishment of the Presbyterian denomination eager to see progress and a teleological development in its own missions work. The adoption of Christianity by the Chinese was obviously central to this developmental perspective, but it was equally important that an accompanying teleology of the social fruits of conversion validate the transformative efficacy of conversion. Profession of faith was confirmed by the parallel acquisition of the English language and American manners, by contribution to the social good via labor, and among the second generation, by increased participation in the leadership of the church. Wichman's emphasis on that last was, thus, a continuation of the century-old denominational missions project at the church. Unlike so many of his predecessors, however, Wichman did not speak Chinese and was not a veteran of China missions. He embodied far more the U.S.-centric approach of the National Board—appropriately so, since this was the body which appointed him to the Chinatown ministries—and emphasized the assimilation of the English-speaking second generation, with which he could easily communicate, and the maximization of the potential he saw in this group.

The burgeoning Chinatown—and hence, the PCC/Cameron House—population during Wichman's tenure was a confluence, as we saw above, of a growing native-born cohort, still to a large extent geographically restricted to the quarter by lingering socio-political strictures, and new immigrant cohorts resulting from a dramatic change in the patterns of immigration from Asia. By the late 1960s and 1970s, all three language ministries were, in fact, growing, but the second-generation English Ministry was outpacing its sister communities. In 1968, the Cantonese Sunday worship service averaged 160 attendees, and the Mandarin service 25, while the English worshipping community, split between a morning and evening service, averaged 280 people on any given Sunday.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the numbers at Cameron House were growing even more rapidly, its ministries involving “700 youth and adults” in 1963, as reported by the National Board.<sup>54</sup> By this time, PCC was no longer a mission church, but the system of shared leadership between the formerly paired missions agencies persisted. Wichman had earlier established what he called a pastoral “collegium”, a grouping ostensibly of equals—each member called a “co-pastor” or “collegiate pastor”—but a gathering within which he was unequivocally recognized as the dominant authority, not only as a result of his personal bearing but also as a result of his bringing to the church the ministerial staff he had personally hired for Cameron House. Interpreting the National Board's mandate to offer a “unified program” in Chinatown to include a reorganization of the leadership structures of the two formerly independent agencies, Wichman significantly increased representation for the interests of the second-generation, primarily English-speaking segment of the church in this supposedly democratic collegium. Logan writes that, “By

this time [in the early 1960s] the *tradition* had been established that the church call all ordained members of the [Cameron] House staff as collegiate pastors of the church, keeping the ministry of the two bodies together. [My italics.]”<sup>55</sup> Under this arrangement, with the salaries of the ministers under his direct supervision paid out of the Cameron House budget, Wichman’s own authority at the church grew disproportionately extensive, relative to that of his ministerial colleagues from the Cantonese and Mandarin worshipping communities. The Rev. David Kao, formerly of the Mandarin Ministry, summarizes the power relationship between the pastors succinctly when he says, “Dick was the king.”<sup>56</sup>

Wichman’s authoritarianism, publicly attested to today by so many in the community, supporters and detractors alike, combined with this biased leadership structure to grant dominance to his agenda, and by extension, to the developmental narrative which minimized the influence of the newer arrivals in the Mandarin and Cantonese Ministries. Primacy in PCC’s institutional memory was given to the church’s English-speaking elements—the recognized descendants of the nineteenth-century mission—despite the changes to the church’s composition that were occurring. In the Gibsonian cyberspace analogy, Wichman’s control of the politics at the church was similar to Gibson’s own authorial power to mask the continuous change of the digital world and present an artificial calm that highlights the activities of his own characters. Wichman had the ear of the denomination, not only the National Board but also the Presbytery of San Francisco, under whose jurisdiction the church fell once it became self-supporting and was no longer a mission church; he was the recognized authority at PCC and Cameron House on the heavily rule-governed Presbyterian decision-making process and knew how to maneuver within its structures to achieve his own objectives, as the formation of the collegium illustrates; and he was recognized by all as being charismatic, opinionated, outspoken, and energetic in pursuing his goals. While he was in leadership at the church and at Cameron House, his vision for the two institutions was indisputably the operative one.

This is not to say that there were no voices in dissent or disagreement, but Wichman’s views are remembered for having overwhelmingly prevailed during those thirty years from 1947 to 1977. When he retired, there was a very apparent hierarchy among the language ministries at the church—the English on top, the Cantonese in the middle, and the fledgling Mandarin at the bottom—which the Rev. Harry Chuck, Wichman’s successor, inherited. By then, there was already a struggle underway over the shared physical plant. The Rev. Dr. Bradford Woo, who served on the Cameron House staff and as an English-Ministry co-pastor at PCC from 1979 to 1988, remembers the discussion the Cantonese Ministry initiated:

[I]t was about “Build a new church, because this is an old building.” And it was: “It’s seventy years old, eighty years old. And dark and peeling.” And so there was a desire from the Cantonese, and dollars—talk about someone who was willing to give a big chunk of money. And then, as that became more and more real, and [was] expressed, the English—which you can say was a pretty broad, united front—felt like that was not a good use of money, because the church building was

still here. It was not falling apart. The English made it a stewardship issue. To us, there was space at the church, which we weren't using, and we could use Cameron House, which we [had] always [done]. We had Cameron House and didn't even use the church [much] actually. ...All the Session meetings would be at Cameron House, [and] most of the meetings for the English were going to be at Cameron House and not really at the church. So why spend all this money [on a new building], for which the English would have to kick in? Because it would be a united project, if we were going to build a new church. ...But here you had the Cantonese wanting it, feeling it was important, because they used the building more than the English.<sup>57</sup>

The Rev. Calvin Chinn expands on Woo's point concerning stewardship by explaining his perception of Wichman's continuing influence on the English worshipping community's position, even though Wichman was retired by this point in the early 1980s:

...I believe...Dick's theology...had a great influence on the English-speaking ministry. His mission theology was that the church is [about] mission and not about buildings. And so, when the Cantonese and Mandarin congregations, in the early '80s, if not earlier, started a building-fund campaign to raise enough money to remodel the church building, the English congregation, under Dick's influence, refused to join in that effort....<sup>58</sup>

Chinn's perspective, widely held among members of the current English Ministry who were present during that period of tumult, frames the conflict as one squarely centered on the meaning of place. Despite being nominally equal partners with the English worshipping community in the "unified program" between PCC and Cameron House, the Cantonese and Mandarin Ministries did not, in practice, have the same everyday access to Cameron-House facilities. With the Session meetings of the church regularly held at this place they could hardly call their own, the sense of being a part of an institution in which they did not have an equal say circulated among the members of the Cantonese and Mandarin worshipping communities. Their own growing numbers and their outreach to the immigrant populations in Chinatown suggested that they were no less mission-oriented than the English Ministry, and they clearly felt that a healthier physical plant would be of benefit to the fulfillment of their mission. Whether the dispute was framed as being about the equality of access to physical resources or as being about differing understandings of the church's mission, what was at stake in this struggle over the control of place was the ability to define the church's story going forward. How PCC's institutional history would continue to unfold and what role the various parts of the church, now increasingly identified along language-ministry lines, would have in determining that unfolding history was what was at issue.

While lay-persons at the church were clearly involved in the conflict as well, most versions of the retelling put the ministers, especially the lead pastors of the Cantonese and English Ministries, at the center of the fray. David Lee recalls of the Rev. Calvin



Wong, who led the Cantonese worshiping community at the height of the clashes in the early 1980s, that "...he believed that the pastor basically dictated what the congregation should do, and that is not part of our denomination. He did not understand the *Book of Order* [the constitution of the PC(USA)]. If he did, he would not have acted and conducted himself the way he did."<sup>59</sup> The Rev. Dr. Bradford Woo understands Wong's behavior as both individual inclination and as situated within a broader context whose origins preceded his tenure:

...[S]ome will say that he wasn't going to take that: being a second-class citizen. Before that, the Cantonese were kind of second-class, if you want to see it that way, with Dick [Wichman] being the head of everything, and then Harry [Chuck] kind of having that authority, just kind of passed on from Dick. So, when Harry started being the Head Pastor, the Senior Pastor—we didn't have [that] title, but [Harry] was kind of the Senior Pastor—David Kao [of the Mandarin Ministry] accepted that, because they were pretty much peers, and Harry had been there longer, with his years at Cameron House. But Calvin...he was a more cantankerous sort. He saw Harry just kind of assume certain things would be certain ways, and how the English would get their way. And it didn't even matter what it was—time, space, the building, dollars, priorities—it kind of didn't matter. [Calvin] just felt like he got no respect. To me, that's the heart of this split. It did not come from the members, as such, although, sure, there were some [Cantonese members] who felt they were second-class citizens.<sup>60</sup>

The disagreements escalated and spread to such an extent that the elders on Session conceded the three ministries were no longer capable of functioning productively together. In mid-1985, the Session reached out to the Presbytery for help, and it responded with efforts at mediation and eventually with the establishment of an Administrative Commission at PCC to investigate the conflict and to govern the church during this period of a collapse of shared leadership. When the attempts at reconciliation ultimately proved ineffective, Wong was, in 1987, asked to resign. He left PCC, and together with those who left with him—roughly three quarters of the 100+ members of the Cantonese Ministry—he started an independent congregation, Chinese Grace Church, on Larkin Street.<sup>61</sup>

This schism in 1987 rocked the church, but before the dust had even settled, the public allegations of Wichman's sexual misconduct surfaced at the end of that same year. Almost simultaneously, the church was marked by two gaping wounds. The beginnings of Wichman's fall from grace—the descent of someone who had previously, in so many ways, epitomized the church and the religion—undermined the very foundations of the Christian teaching that so many had received and had contributed to in this place. The plausibility structure that was expected to reinforce faith was now openly shadowed by the claim that even one of its most celebrated exponents could be capable of devastating harm. The corollary that not all members of the family of faith are equally embraced with dignity and integrity only served to echo the suggestion advanced by the conflict

between the language ministries that PCC did not, in practice, witness to the ‘oneness in Christ’ it preached.

## **The Road to Healing**

The consequences of the struggle between the language ministries did not end with Wong’s departure. Many who had contributed to the building fund demanded their money back; the Cantonese Ministry reeled from the crippling schism; and the leadership structure of the church was overhauled by the Administrative Commission to guard against future recurrences of similar difficulties. To achieve that last, the commission altered PCC’s by-laws and established the federated system of equal representation on the Session for the three language ministries—nine elders and a pastor from each—followed by the church today. Equality was the objective, but the measure also formalized clear dividing lines between the three groups.

In a retreat from the idea of a “unified program” that the National Board had advanced and that Wichman had bent to suit his own vision, the Administrative Commission recommended a separation of the ministries of the church and Cameron House. Oversight of programming at PCC would return completely to the newly reorganized Session, and Cameron House and its Board of Directors would oversee its own ministries. No longer, also, were the members of the ministerial staff of Cameron House to be co-pastors at the church. The consequence of that last was most immediate for the English Ministry, which had, until that point, never been served by any pastor other than one appointed by National Board or one hired primarily to serve as Cameron House staff. The search for a new pastor resulted in the first hire dedicated to the English Ministry at PCC, the Rev. Calvin Chinn, who arrived at his new position in 1990.

Chinn had grown up in Cameron House and the church and had remained connected to it via friendship ties throughout his years in ministry elsewhere, so he was well aware of the struggles with the clergy-sexual-abuse issue and the friction between the language worshiping communities that had led to the schism. Even so, Chinn confesses that he was surprised at the extent to which the accusations against Wichman, never resolved in a court of either the PC(USA) denomination or the criminal justice system, commanded so much attention just beneath public view. People took sides, and according to Chinn, Wichman still played a pastoral role in the lives of his supporters, a role deemed inappropriate by the denomination for all ministers after vacating their pastorates, let alone those who demit, or relinquish their ordinations, as Wichman had done. Chinn explains that:

The families I knew who were totally, one-hundred-percent supportive of Dick, didn’t trust my leadership, because they knew that I was not in their camp. And so, on a one-on-one level with families, certain families, I was concerned that I would not be trusted enough to be allowed to enter into their lives as their pastor, because Dick was still their pastor. ...Then, there were those who were so angry with him—

the victims...angry with the church for not coming to their defense, [not] coming to their support. And so, this could [lead to] growing division and polarization. And then not only that, I began to feel the conflict among [other] families over Dick: those who were for him, those who were against him. And so the congregation [the English Ministry] could eventually erupt into major conflict over Dick, if this were to remain unresolved, or not addressed. I didn't know how it was going to be resolved, but it was unaddressed.<sup>62</sup>

To finally begin the task of directly addressing the issue in a collective manner, a task he felt was essential to the future health of the church, Chinn chose the theme of forgiveness and Wichman's sexual abuses for the annual Lenten Study Series in the spring of 1998:

...Lent is a season for reflection and for developing spiritual discipline and self-examination.... And to me, the way to address this issue was not to point fingers and say, "We've got a problem here," or "He's a perpetrator," you know, ...but to find a theological theme. And that would help us look at the issue and, at the same time, provide us the means of grace to move forward, to address this in a constructive, reconciliatory manner. And so the theme was "forgiveness." And the idea for the Lenten Series [session] each week was to bring in a different speaker and to look at the meaning of forgiveness theologically, sociologically, psychologically, personally, and so on. But to make that—the theme, the theological concept—relevant, the letter of invitation announcing the program named Dick Wichman, addressing this issue which as dormant, yet not dormant but clearly on everybody's mind and heart. ...[N]ot too surprisingly, we filled Speer Hall [at PCC]. And it was probably the most consistently—week-by-week—attended series that we had had in years.

And I remember [at] the very first session, I was sort of introducing the topic, and the people were just all tense, not knowing how this was going to happen. I remember being challenged by one of our longtime members. I was saying something in the introduction, and he just picked up on it and went after me. Attacked me. And I, you know, I was taken aback, realizing that it didn't take much. I think I said something that he misunderstood, but he took issue and attacked and challenged me. And so I calmly responded to him, defused the emotional outburst, and we just moved on.<sup>63</sup>

The resurfacing of the issue in public discussion a decade after the first allegations of misconduct were made led to renewed attempts in the Cameron House and PCC communities to actively address consequences of the harms which had been perpetrated, including the formation of the Healing Task Force in 2002, five day-long Healing Workshops for the community following the release of the Task Force's Final

Report, and advocacy in the wider church, which resulted in a letter of apology from the denomination's General Assembly Council. As might be expected, the entire process was a struggle on many different levels. In the early 2000s, models for addressing clergy sexual abuse were few. The PC(USA) had recently dealt with a case of sexual abuse perpetrated by its missions personnel in the Congo, but apart from the lessons learned from that experience and those gleaned from the unfolding scandals in the Roman Catholic Church, there were few other ready resources toward which the PCC and Cameron House communities could turn. The fragility of emotions was also difficult to gauge, as Chinn's recollection of the outburst at the first Lenten Series meeting indicates. Many in the church and Cameron House communities had grown up regarding Wichman as a surrogate father, and it was not uncommon for those who had children to teach them to address Wichman as "Grandpa Dick." There was a palpable sense that a family had been torn apart, for some by the abuses themselves, and for others, at least initially, by the seeming audacity of those leveling charges against the community patriarch.

In the ensuing efforts toward healing, the leaders of the process at Cameron House and at the church were united in the objective of allowing the victims' truth to be heard and to be guided by those victims in the direction the healing process was to take.<sup>64</sup> Their own journeys of addressing the trauma from their past were themselves far from easy for the victims, even with the company of others in the same situation and with that of sympathetic counselors and therapists leading the support groups Cameron House had established. Chinn describes the careful pacing of the process in the following way:

I think it was an appreciation that if forgiveness happened before people were ready, then we would be irresponsible, because we would simply be glossing over the problem. I think the power of forgiveness is to appreciate that forgiveness is not just simply a nice-sounding theological concept. It really calls for a lot of hard, hard, deep work, requiring inner transformation and growth to come to a place where one can forgive. ...[T]he understanding of forgiveness at once challenged and gave us a hopeful way to see our way through this. And...it would take time. It would take a lot of work. A lot more tears. It was so deep and so painful, so hurtful, so violent, and so abusive from one who had once [had our] utmost trust and admiration and respect. [It was] to enable all of us to appreciate the gravity of this and to also recognize that it would take a lot of time for us to get to that place of healing. But...forgiveness was the path we had to follow.... Ultimate final healing would be when we reached the place where we could forgive.<sup>65</sup>

From the outset, the communal nature of the healing process emphasized the notion that it was not only the victims who were in need of healing, but the entire community. As the different Healing Workshops took place and individuals were encouraged to recount their own experiences with Wichman, both good and bad, it became more and more apparent that, beyond sexual abuse specifically, abuses of power that sprang from Wichman himself and from the structures of authority he established

poisoned an entire web of relationships in Cameron House and the church. In the broader perspective we have been pursuing in this project, it is important to remember that Wichman himself stood at the end of a line of missionary influence that stretched backwards a full century. His particular brand of racism that manifested itself as the attempt to define the parameters of appropriate Chinese behavioral identity in the United States—i.e. not too militant (not associated with Yellow Power or feminism) and squarely under the authority of a church structure dominated by white values—was descended from Loomis' and Condit's attitudes towards Chinese morality and even Speer's racial hierarchy. The struggle for liberation from the legacy of brokenness that came to be associated with Wichman personally was, therefore, in actuality also a much larger struggle to imagine a Chinese American Christian institutional identity beyond the linear narrative of institutional development the missionary project at PCC had bequeathed. How might Chinese American Christians be something other than imitators of their white American Christian brethren? The PCC/Cameron House community answered this question, at least in part, through its place-making practices.

## **Reimagining Racial/Ethnic Identity and Sacralizing Place**

At the same time that the church and Cameron House were engaged in efforts to heal the damage from clergy sexual abuse, there was awareness in the community that PCC also continued to suffer from its other set of wounds: the mistrust between the language ministries engendered by the decades-long domination of the Cantonese and Mandarin Ministries by the English, begun under Wichman's tenure. In the decade following the schism, the relative power of the three groups shifted somewhat. The English Ministry was still dominant, despite the minimization of previous ties with Cameron House, but the relative positions of the other two groups had reversed. The Cantonese Ministry experienced repeated episodes of internal dissent over the direction it should pursue and the pastoral leadership it needed. Members left, leaving the number of participants hovering repeatedly around two dozen; the worshiping community was without a permanent minister for long stretches; and the group suffered for both leadership and financial stability. The Mandarin Ministry steadily added new members in the meanwhile—virtually all individuals of the immigrant generation—and significantly exceeded the Cantonese Ministry in size of membership. What continued to be true for both of these groups, however, was their lingering suspicion that the English Ministry did not consider their interests as important as its own. Eager to change this perception, the newly arrived Chinn worked hard through the 1990s to encourage a general atmosphere of equal inclusion of all three groups. In particular, he understood that, whatever other contributing factors there had been, the contentious episode surrounding the aborted upgrading of the church facilities still remained in the collective memory the focal instance when the English worshiping community was perceived as imposing its will on its sister ministries.

With the financial backing of Wong's supporters now gone from the church, it initially seemed that any major changes to the building, let alone the construction of a new one, was beyond reach. The soaring stock market of the 1990s, however, soon

changed that calculation. David Lee, who served on the Session in the late 1980s into the 1990s and then went on to be the church's Project Manager overseeing the details of its remodeling in the early 2000s, pushed to invest the \$300,000 remaining in the Building Fund through the Presbyterian Foundation, the denominational body directing the larger church's investments. Though an entirely new building was unreasonable to expect, the prize, in Lee's eyes, was from the very beginning a significant remodeling, which he believed was within reach, despite the limited seed money the church had at the outset.<sup>66</sup>

As the investment grew in subsequent years and the conversation about a building project resumed, Chinn saw the growing possibility of a remodeling as an opportunity to heal the old wounds between the language groups:

The big strategy was the building, because that called on the three congregations [ministries] to come together. See, when Dick was the English pastor, he never called himself the Lead or Head Pastor, but everyone knew he was the Head Pastor. So it was important for the English congregation to begin to respect [the other two]. The more respect we had for the Cantonese and Mandarin congregations and their leadership, the less we would continue Dick's model of pastoral leadership, ... dictating how we did church business. And the remodeling, of all things, was the one thing where the Chinese [the Cantonese and Mandarin Ministries] were pitted against the English. And so, if there was a way that the congregations could get behind the building remodeling, then we would be able to accomplish together as a [church] something that Dick would never have approved of, much less supported. So the strategy early on was like.... When the English Commission had committee meetings and studies and so on, they always took place at Cameron House. None of our [previous] meetings and classes took place at the church. So, I said, "You know, this is *our* church. Let's have all of our meetings and all of our studies here at the church."<sup>67</sup>

Chinn's specific mention of countering Wichman's model of pastoral leadership clearly indicates that he saw the conduct of the planning for the remodeling project and the encouragement of a shared sense of ownership in the building as vehicles for reimagining a new ecclesial identity. The institutional memory preserved in the English Ministry's mission study completed in preparation for the search for Chinn's successor after he retired in 2006 confirms that the group remembers consonance between Chinn's intentions and his actions:

The prevailing sentiment at the time of Pastor Chinn's arrival was that the English-speaking members were holding up the PCC building campaign. Pastor Chinn and lay leadership were instrumental in helping PCC move forward in the building remodeling campaign by helping the English recognize that the building was an investment in the future of the church and that raising funds did not diminish the

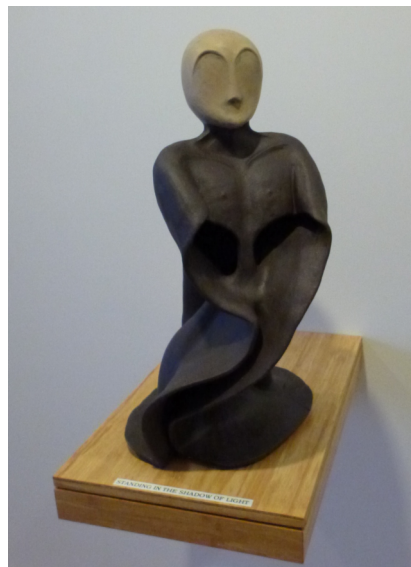
value of other ministries that the English-speaking members focused on. This example is illustrative of Pastor Chinn's ongoing efforts to communicate and open channels of listening between the three language groups.<sup>68</sup>

Interestingly, the original desire of the church, in addition to an upgrading of the functional space within, was for a change to the façade to reflect the Chinese American heritage of the institution.<sup>69</sup> Sue Associates Architecture<sup>70</sup> submitted plans that included a large circular window in the front, framing grilles which formed an equal-armed cross (Greek cross) at the window's center, and a new 'Chinese style' roof. Because the building was ninety years old and had been deemed historically significant by three separate surveys of San Francisco's architecture,<sup>71</sup> the plans were subjected by the city's Planning Department to a review by the Landmarks Advisory Board. This delay ultimately cost PCC two years' time, but Lee notes that the delay also allowed the church to earn more in the market toward the \$2.4 million the project finally cost.<sup>72</sup> After protracted negotiations between PCC and the Landmarks Advisory Board, the compromise that was finally reached called for the church to preserve the façade of the lower two floors, in exchange for permission to add an additional story. The sanctuary, originally on the second floor, was moved to the floor above, and the second floor became home to a new fellowship hall and kitchen.

The process of planning for the remodeling, the eventual construction, and the experience of settling into the new building together totaled a decade, and under Chinn's leadership, it was a period when there was a deliberate emphasis on cooperation between the three language communities and on equitable representation in decision-making. The work of reimagining place at the very beginning of this new era beyond missionary control was, thus, consciously marked by an attempt at reconciliation between the three ministries, an attempt at healing a wound that could be traced directly to the long line of missionary influence that had gone before. Wichman was identified by the community as the catalyst behind the divisions, but in reality, the seeds of those rifts had been sown long before he assumed the pastorate. In Christian terms, the efforts to heal the relational breaches were an attempt at reconciliation, and just as much as were the chronologically overlapping efforts at healing the wounds of clergy sexual abuse, these efforts, too, were an exercise in forgiveness. But whereas, the English Ministry was wrestling with the arduous process of coming to forgiveness of Wichman in the former case, in the latter, *it* was the party *seeking* forgiveness. The everyday practices of decision-making and compromise and cooperation infusing the place-making process of the remodel were thus as much religious as they were a functional necessity. Place was made sacred, because it was the vehicle by which a reconciliation rooted in faith was to be realized. In other words, God was understood to be acting through the work of place-making. And it was equally a racial/ethnic process, because the emphasis was on a recalibration of the relative weightings of the histories of the three groups. Rather than claiming only linear descent from 1853, the PCC community was proposing an institutional memory that would give added weight to the experiences, needs, and aspirations of the new first-generation groups. The "matrix" of the church's collective memory was increasingly reflective of the presence and influence of other "operators,"

and the church's Chinese American identity was being reconfigured according to a perspective that acknowledged the contributions of diasporic influences apart from those nurtured in the United States.

The imprint on place-making of the healing from the wounds of Wichman's sexual abuses took a slightly different direction. In the wake of the 1998 Lenten Study Series on forgiveness, the renewed efforts at unearthing the truth and at bringing healing to the victims and to the community were primarily led by Cameron House, which, by this point, was again an operationally separate agency. But the fact remains that, for the members of an entire generation, PCC and Cameron House are inextricably linked in spirit and memory, regardless of how separate they may be administratively. Thus, I argue that one particular place-making act, though physically executed at Cameron House, deserves attention as a place-making act of the church's as well, though with particular qualifications I will explore below. In 2012, at a Healing Celebration marking the passage of ten years since the establishment of the Healing Task Force, Cameron House dedicated its newly remodeled chapel and inaugurated the art installation there commemorating the healing process. Produced by Noël Chun, the installation consisted of two fabric panels featuring his poetry and a sculpture, entitled, "Standing in the Shadow of Light."



"Standing in the Shadow of Light"

The first piece of poetry, "In the Light," was composed as a gift to the primary and secondary victims who had formed a Survivor's Group and were for a period meeting regularly to offer support to one another. The members were notably each processing his/her own wounds at the same time that the very public series of community discussions was taking place. The second piece of poetry, "Stepping out of our Darkness, Into our Light," was addressed to the larger PCC and Cameron House communities and their journey coming to terms with what had occurred. Of the sculpture, Chun says:



The piece is an impressionist piece of a figure standing upright, with a very strong back, an open chest, and a sweeping cloak in front of it. ...I remember when I was...creating this piece, it was about standing ...I'm going to use the word "proud," but not in a negative way... standing upright, open to the goodness of the world. But as the piece progressed, it did end up having this sort of darkness to it because [of] the open chest. [A]lthough the open chest is shaped like a heart, because it's in the void of the piece, it's not lit typically, unless you point an artificial light into it. [T]he piece actually changes dramatically when you do light up the chest. There isn't this sort of dark void anymore: it's an open heart image. I have to say that when it's lit up, the feeling of the piece changes. ...[W]hen I'm talking about light and dark, I really am talking about many different kinds of images. On an individual level, I'm talking about the positive things that happen in an individual's life and, at the same time, maybe carrying around dark burdens that...one isn't able to speak of. ...[T]he representation of light and dark is also for a community, as it too moves through its life as a community. And how we allow our non-communicating burdens to stunt the community from growing in a positive way.<sup>73</sup>

Chun recalls that when he initially had conversations with Cameron House about the possibility of producing an art installation involving a sculptural piece, he had wanted to see it placed in Culbertson Hall, the main activities space in the building. He felt that there, the pieces could bear witness of Cameron House's commitment to remember its past to the greatest number of people. Programmatic considerations (i.e. occasional rough-and-tumble youth activities) precluded that option, and ultimately, the poetry and the sculpture became the focal points of the new chapel. Despite the fact that the room is still referred to as "the chapel," it is deliberately different in presentation from the darkened chamber with traditional pews and an altar and cross that it had been before. The current space, with newly uncovered windows, is airy and flooded with light, and the emphasis the design of the room gives to the art installation is impossible to miss. In that sense, whatever other purpose the chapel may serve, it certainly memorializes the healing process and the harms that necessitated it. Chun explains how he understands the message in what he produced:

I really thought that the art and the poetry together should be a reminder and celebration of not only the fact that this abuse had happened but also that...if you're willing to take the risk, given the difficult issue that we're dealing with, that you can bring about wonderful change. And also, I thought that the story that should be told [should speak to how] Cameron House works with a variety of different clientele [through] its youth work [and] its social service department. Many of those people are hurting in one way or another, whether they're struggling with cancer, whether they're victims of spousal abuse, whether they're immigrant kids who are being bullied

at school. [T]hese are children and adults who have their own story to tell, and they need to feel like their story is important, [that they] need to be heard. And I think that the sculpture and the poetry, when it's out there in public, [says to] people [that], "Your story is important." In spite of the fact that it might be embarrassing or that it might be painful, your story is important. I think that one of Cameron House's responsibilities to its clientele is to create a space [where it's] safe for people, their clientele, to speak their story. And I think putting the sculpture out there shows their clients that if they [Cameron House] can take this very difficult event and put it into a public space, then I can trust Cameron House to listen to my story.<sup>74</sup>

The 'work' that Chun intends his poetry and sculpture to do is, in fact, nothing less than a restoration of the plausibility structure that had been so badly undermined by Wichman's actions. Precisely in the same place where trust was broken with an entire community, Chun wants his redefinition of place through art to invite trust, to invite a sharing of the most difficult of memories in faith that the unburdening will contribute to a restoration of wholeness, the "wonderful change" of which he speaks. Though Chun today distances himself from what he considers formal Christianity, his act of place-making nonetheless echoes the central Christian theme of Christ himself bearing the wounds of humanity upon the cross, the message that healing and wholeness are possible through the compassionate openness of others to our own brokenness.

At the same time that this posture can be—and most likely is—read as a religious one in this chapel context at Cameron House, the field of memory in which it is grounded makes it no less a statement about race and ethnicity. As with the way in which the remodeling process at PCC was conducted, this act of infusing place with meaning is likewise a defining of the racial/ethnic identity of Cameron House and PCC over and against the version championed by the missionary establishment as last embodied by Wichman. The ability to publicly embrace a painful past rather than attempting to 'transcend' it, either through a religious faith in a faraway heaven of the future (*à la* Loomis and Condit) or assimilation into a white-defined religious and social milieu (*à la* Wichman) is a new way of being Chinese American Christians. Within this alternate framework, pain—and the shame so often associated with that pain—is not the enemy. Injustice is. The healing process and the reconciliatory measures between the three ministries redefine this Chinese American religious community, precisely because they enable the community to see beyond the pain and to identify the injustices to which it has been subjected, and because they defy the racist logic which claims that the parties that defined the harms need to be the ones to define the healing. Forgiveness, these efforts at healing affirm, need not wait for the acceptance of the forgiven but is a gift of wholeness that rests in the hands of the forgiver.

So what does it mean that the artwork—the memorialization through place-making of the community's woundedness and healing—is situated at Cameron House rather than at the church? Looking backward, the answer may be: 'Not much.' The two institutions were inseparable, both metaphorically and practically, during the period when

the harms were inflicted, so however more pronounced the separation between them may be today, the significance of any addressing of those painful memories is equally valid for both institutions, regardless of the physical location of the place-making act or practice. Looking forward, however, the answer is not quite so simple. Place-making is, after all, the investment of *physical space* with shared meaning. For a “sense of place” to have sustained meaning, location and locale matter. The fact that Chun’s installation is not at PCC will translate into its having less penetrative capacity into the process of investment with shared meaning there. At one point, to one generation, PCC and Cameron House may effectively have been one place, but they are no longer. New-comers walking through the doors of the church will not have the same tangible reminders of the sculpture and the panels of poetry to challenge them to incorporate the memories of the abuses and of the healing into the image of the church they construct in their minds. That Gibsonian node of data will be less prominent, less bright, less commanding of attention, if it exists at all. These newcomers may become bearers of institutional memory, and if they do, a route they reinforce linking the many nodes of available memories may skip this node altogether. Already now, this happens. New members in the Mandarin and Cantonese worshiping communities, and even ones in the English Ministry, often feel that the past trauma is not part of their inheritance upon joining the church community. They may not know about it; they may feel that the pains are possessions only of others in the church, perhaps that of the English Ministry exclusively; or they may feel that the related events lie so far in the past as to have no real relevance to the present.

Moreover, the absence of a memorializing gesture at PCC similar to Chun’s at Cameron House means that the door to willful ‘forgetting’ of this painful past is opened that much wider. The new Chinese American Christian identity that defends painful memories as defining elements of institutional character is not an inherently stable condition that once achieved is never relinquished. The ‘work’ of adopting this form of new identity is, rather, more akin to the etiological account of Jacob’s transformation into Israel recounted in the epigraph to this chapter: it is a struggle for blessing. In the larger narrative in which that pericope rests, Jacob, the patriarch of the twelve tribes of Israel, is also seeking healing for a relational breach: his estrangement from his older brother Esau, from whom he had stolen their father’s blessing in his youth. The account in Genesis offers his struggle with the ‘night visitor’ as the seminal impulse behind the name change to Israel, which means “The one who strives with God.” Not only is the blessing achieved only after extended struggle, but this figure who comes to be regarded by his descendants as a giant among the faithful, is left marked by injury. The biblical account resonates with the PCC/Cameron House experience and suggests that the sacralization of place, that encounter with the divine—as recognized by the encounter with such attributes of God as reconciliation and forgiveness, healing and wholeness—may not be exclusive of struggle, or of pain, or of injury. And that all of these things, bad and good, are worthy of naming and of remembering.

## 6: Conclusion

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble! tremble! tremble!  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

- First verse of the American spiritual “Were You There (When They Crucified My Lord),” first printed in *Old Plantation Hymns*, 1899

Like individuals, institutions live their way into becoming, following for their roadmaps the stories they tell themselves about themselves. Institutional memories, as I have argued, are negotiated affairs, stretched out across many ‘voices,’ some of these actually audible, others written down, and still others existent only in imagination. Memory is imperfect; it is often biased; and it is sometimes ill-informed. But, for all its flaws, it is powerful for being the springboard via which groups launch themselves on that journey to their future selves. Consequently, even when institutional memory is mistaken, its effects are generally no less real.

In this study, I have argued that the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown’s journey to becoming a Chinese American Christian institution has involved a struggle over interpretations of the past inscribed in the various physical incarnations of the church structure. Just as Chinatown is palimpsestic, layers of physical and cultural history built upon older layers, so is the source material from which collective memory at PCC draws multi-temporal and multi-vocal. I have focused especially on the missionary influence at the church, examining two ‘origin’ accounts at the beginning of that timeline and the church community’s struggle with the trauma of its concluding chapter, because PCC’s conception of its racial/ethnic identity has formed to such a great extent either in accordance with or over and against the definitions of Chinese-ness imparted by the Presbyterian missionary establishment. It has turned out that, in adopting Protestant Christianity, the Chinese worshipping community simultaneously adopted a framework for thinking about race/ethnicity thoroughly infused with religious vocabulary and religious categories. Whether the church community realizes it or not, it cannot conceive of its Christian heritage without engaging its racial/ethnic identity and vice-versa. Despite all claims to Christianity being universal in its embrace, the character of lived religion among the believers at PCC is sharply determined by the realities of being Chinese at this church in San Francisco across the different eras the church has been in existence.

What this has meant in practice is a constant drawing of linkages between past and present across a field of memory that I have heuristically constructed in the image of William Gibson’s presentation of cyberspace as a matrix of data. To satisfy the needs of the present—ideological claims, faith claims, claims to authority, etc.—different routes

are plotted through the memory matrix, and the more often these routes are traversed and the more often particular nodes of memory are visited, the more established as institutional memory these become. In other words, the more certain stories are rehearsed, whatever the actual extent of their veracity, the more established they become as ‘truth’ to the community. In retracing the various chapters of the missionary era that I do—the Speer period of founding, the Loomis/Condit period of institutionalization, and the Wichman period of conclusion—I attempt to disrupt the missionary narrative by suggesting that additional documentary evidence has been left unconsidered and/or that alternative readings are possible when the available evidence is linked differently. There are, in other words, additional nodes in this complex holographic memory matrix and other potential routes between the nodes.

What is at stake is the possibility for the community to recover a sense of the ‘work’ that has always been involved in the journey to ‘belonging,’ the journey to Asian-American-ness and Chinese-American-ness. This story is not exclusively a tale of agency, as Chapter 3 about Speer demonstrates. In that ‘moment’ in the life of the church, the story hinged more upon grace than upon the actions of the Chinese. The community, not yet fully formed, was dependent upon the efforts and the vision of Speer, a white American ally, to carve out space—and literally, place—for a potential future. The role of the Chinese was minimal in that particular narrative, but I am suggesting that in recovering the story, the ‘work’ of revealing and tracing Speer’s nationalism and racism is necessary to understanding the cost, in racial terms, required for the Christian identity the church celebrates today. Without plotting *that* route through the memory matrix, the memories surrounding Speer are only of unattenuated benevolence, suggesting that the first steps toward an American identity under this ethno-religious framework advanced by white Christian America was an unadulterated gift, a position I reject.

To provide a corrective to that perspective, the ‘work’ to be done lies mostly in the present, in the care afforded the consideration of collective memory. Chapter 4 about Loomis and Condit, however, suggests a different model, where the work of constructing an Asian American identity is divided between ‘memory work’ similar to that described above and the ‘work’ of heterotopic contestation engaged by the Chinese members of the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church. In other words, in that instance, the ‘work’ of demystifying the cost of becoming Asian American was/is carried out both in the past and in the construction of collective memory in the present.

In a third variation of the distribution of ‘work’ examined in Chapter 5, the events under consideration and the construction of institutional memory are very nearly simultaneous. The attempt to heal from the Wichman traumas and the attempt to reconcile from the breaches in trust between the language communities are happening now, even as the different parts of the church inscribe and reinscribe in printed documents—Church Information Forms, Mission Studies, etc.—and rehearse in oral history the versions of these narratives they wish to see endure. My argument in this instance is that Asian-American-ness is not a state that once achieved remains a permanent identifier. Rather, it is an identity that is constantly being constructed and

reconstructed—as the healing and reconciliatory measures challenging the darker aspects of the Wichman legacy demonstrate—and ensuring that these reinterpretations survive is the ‘work’ that carving out institutional memory engages.

## **The Sacredness of Being There**

Throughout this study, the primary locus of the institutional memory I have been discussing has been the place-making practices that have lent meaning to the several physical structures that have housed PCC over the years. My argument has been that place at this micro level of an institutional structure is uniquely significant in the case of this church, because the physical location has continuously defined a particularly circumscribed Chinese American world: a Chinese Christian universe when Chinese Christians were notably few; a plausibility structure, coterminous with a physical structure, that allowed the simultaneous full expressions of Chinese and Presbyterian identities; and an enforced mixture of different diasporic Chinese Christian identities at odds with one another. But in addition, the making of place, the “investment of physical space with shared meaning,” has, I argue, revealed what is, in fact, sacred to the Chinese American Christian community, sacred not in the universal sense of referencing a long-ago biblical heritage, but rather, sacred in that particular mode of understanding divine activity in the immediacy of everyday lived experience. In Speer’s proposition of an Asian American Christianity inscribed in the construction of the mission house, *race* was advanced as that particular portal through which divine history was encountered; in the occupation and use of an inherited Neo-Gothic church space, God was brought from the faraway reaches of a missionary heaven into the *present* of Chinese believers; and in the negotiations over use and memorial functions of the current shared space, *place* was put forward as the medium for divinely-led reconciliation and healing.

In each of these cases, ‘being there’ at the church was critical to being Chinese American and Christian. The spiritual I reference in the epigraph, “Were You There,” captures this notion in poetic and metaphorical terms. To be there, to embrace Calvary, is to appreciate the full significance of the role of Christ in the Christian narrative. Likewise, to be there, to embrace the meanings embedded in the physical place of the church in San Francisco and to wrestle over the significance of its existence is to appreciate the fullness—the joys and the challenges—of the Chinese American Christian legacy it represents.

## Endnotes

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### 1. Introduction

<sup>1</sup> The Central Subway line will connect Chinatown to Union Square, the Moscone Convention Center, and the Caltrain depot in Mission Bay.

<sup>2</sup> The Presbyterian Church in Chinatown is located at 925 Stockton St., San Francisco, CA 94108.

<sup>3</sup> Sharon Kim explores, for example, three models of church that negotiate first- and second-generation tensions differently: 1) a hierarchical model, 2) a “townhouse” model, and 3) an independent-congregation model (Sharon Kim, "Replanting Sacred Spaces: The Emergence of Second-Generation Korean American Churches," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, *The Asian American Experience* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).) Sheba George discusses how denominational politics, transnational pressures, and market forces can motivate schisms within churches (Sheba George, "Why Can't They Just Get Along? An Analysis of Schisms in an Indian Immigrant Church," in *Revealing the Sacred in Asian and Pacific America*, ed. Jane Naomi Iwamura and Paul Spickard (New York and London: Routledge, 2003). And Russell Jeung examines the pan-ethnic Asian church as an additional option for second-generation Asian Americans exploring church structures beyond those modeled by their parents (Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For an examination of how multiculturalism, as expressed in the United States, obscures material difference while celebrating superficial “diversity,” see Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> In 1852, the year before the founding of the church, serious crop failures in southern China magnified the complex of push factors impelling emigration, and the official count for Chinese entering through San Francisco jumped to 20,026 from 2,716 just one year earlier. Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882-1943*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, *Asian America* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000). 29.

<sup>6</sup> Ira M. Condit, “History of Presbyterian Chinese Missions in California,” 1, Condit Family Papers, 1860-1899, RG 264, Box 1, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>7</sup> See Clifford M. Drury to Earle R. Forrest, Mar. 7, 1951, “Speer, William: Copies and Misc. Correspondence,” Speer, William M. C., San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>8</sup> The most comprehensive historical research on PCC as an institution in the nineteenth century has been done by Wesley Woo. See Wesley S. Woo, "Protestant Work among the Chinese in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, 1983). and Wesley S. Woo, "Presbyterian Mission: Christianizing and Civilizing the Chinese in Nineteenth Century California," *American Presbyterians* 68, no. 3 (1990). Articles on William Speer, the founding minister of the church, include: Michael L. Stahler, "William Speer: Champion of California's Chinese, 1852-1857,"

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*Journal of Presbyterian History* 48, no. 2 (1970). and Earle R. Forrest, "Former Resident among First at China Mission," *Washington Observer* Apr. 28, 1951.

<sup>9</sup> I was responsible for assembling the church's official archival collection, which was deeded to the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley in 2004 and is held under the collection title, "Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, San Francisco, Historical Documentation Project Records," with a second collection dedicated to photographs and other visual media held under the title, "Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, San Francisco, Historical Documentation Project Photographs."

<sup>10</sup> Anti-Asian racism in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and early twentieth is well documented in many secondary sources, but for a catalogue and analysis of the most egregious systematic acts committed against the Chinese, see Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> This definition of "sacred" follows Emile Durkheim's distinction of the term as a reference to the attitude of worshipers, as opposed to the designations of "natural" or "supernatural" in reference to the object of worship. See Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*, Fifth ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2002; reprint, 2008). 12.

<sup>13</sup> "Canton," an anglicized reference of colonial origin, is increasingly being replaced by "Guangdong" in contemporary literature, following the Mandarin pronunciation of the Cantonese name for the province, usually transliterated from the Cantonese as "Kwangtung." However, the language of the region is still widely indicated in English-language scholarship as "Cantonese," and so, while I recognize that underlying political considerations may exist, I nonetheless opt for "Canton" to keep the terms for provincial name and language consistent with one another.

<sup>14</sup> Chinese Grace Church is located at 921 Larkin St., San Francisco, CA 94109. In 1953, the Cantonese Ministry had experienced a prior schism, though one smaller in size. Over issues of pastoral complementarity and shared vision for the multi-lingual church that foreshadowed the schism in the 1980s, the Rev. K'ei T'in Wong, who had served the Cantonese Ministry since 1946, was forced by the church to resign. In protest, twenty-nine people withdrew their memberships, and of these, sixteen followed Pastor Wong to establish the Chinese Community Church. Bradford Woo, and Clinton Huey, ed., *120th Anniversary Report* (San Francisco: Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, 1973). 10-12.

<sup>15</sup> Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, Cantonese Commission Mission Study 2007, 2. A mission study is required by the denomination as part of every search process for a new minister. Together with the profile of the church referred to as the "Church Information Form" or "CIF," also required by PC(USA) as part of the pastoral search process, the mission study is generally the most formalized process of introspection that the church, and especially the language ministry calling a new pastor, engages, with input solicited from all members. The latest Mission Study/CIF for the Cantonese Ministry was completed in 2007-8; for the English Ministry in 2008; and for the Mandarin Ministry in 2001.



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<sup>16</sup> In 2004, the previous formula for dividing building-related expenses—the bulk of expenses shared between the three language ministries—into equal thirds was changed to an apportionment plan based upon membership. See English Ministry, PCC, “Mission Study of the English-Speaking Worshipping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown (Presbyterian Church, USA), San Francisco, California,” May 8, 2008, 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Woo and Huey, ed., 9-10. In the following year, 1945, the Rev. Larry Judd, who also served PCC for a single year, introduced a “youth budget,” intended for the attendees for the evening English service (*Ibid.*, 10).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>20</sup> In its 2008 “Church Information Form,” the English Ministry reported church-school attendance at thirty for the ‘pre-kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade’ age range (English Ministry, PCC, “CIF,” 2008, 1). In addition, the English Ministry also has an active high-school fellowship.

<sup>21</sup> English Ministry, PCC, “Church Information Form,” 2008, 2.

<sup>22</sup> English Ministry, PCC, “2012 Annual Report,” 2013, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Lorna E. Logan, *Ventures in Mission: The Cameron House Story* (Wilson Creek, WA: Crawford Hobby Print Shop, 1976). 151.

<sup>24</sup> Mandarin Ministry, PCC, “Mission Study,” 2001, 2.

<sup>25</sup> As of this writing, the Mandarin Ministry is in the process of seeking a new permanent pastor. In accordance with Presbyterian practice, this process is a highly consultative one, involving the Presbytery of San Francisco, the presbytery to which the church belongs, as well as the Cantonese and English Ministries.

<sup>26</sup> David Pan, interview by author, May 12, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.

<sup>27</sup> Whereas elders are charged with the leadership and governance of the church, deacons, in the Presbyterian tradition, are ordained to a ministry of service to the community, which may include such responsibilities as visitation, hospitality, and caring for the sick and elderly.

<sup>28</sup> At PCC, regardless of language ministry, the liturgist is the primary person responsible for the forward momentum of a worship service. The sacraments of baptism and communion, on those intermittent occasions when they are being celebrated, are always conducted by the pastor or some other ordained minister. On a typical Sunday, however, the pastor, or guest preacher for the day, offers the sermon—and, in the English Ministry currently, also the children’s sermon—and the benedictory prayer at the end of the service, while the liturgist welcomes the gathered, offers the opening prayer, leads the congregational prayer of confession, speaks the accompanying assurance of pardon, leads the “prayer of the people,” where the joys and concerns of the assembled are shared, and leads the recital in unison of the Lord’s Prayer.

<sup>29</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972). 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>31</sup> Religionist Meredith B. McGuire puts it this way: “Religious groups are inherently conservative because they base their beliefs and practices upon the tradition or scripture produced in an earlier era.” McGuire 2002 (2008), 133.

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<sup>32</sup> Foucault 1972, 21.

<sup>33</sup> The more academically inclined may argue, with good reason, that origins of the Christian church do not technically rest with Jesus, who saw himself as fully a Jew and not a Christian, but with the Apostle Paul, who is credited with consolidating a theological basis for the movement that held the ministry of Jesus as central to its faith.

<sup>34</sup> Foucault 1972, 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-58.

<sup>36</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004). 7.

<sup>37</sup> John A. Agnew, *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987). 26-28.

<sup>38</sup> Cresswell 2004, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Gibson used the term “cyberspace” for the first time in his short story “Burning Chrome,” which was initially published in the July 1982 issue of *Omni*. The year of the term’s coinage is thus noted by many scholars and readers as 1982. However, Gibson himself writes that he coined the term in 1981 (William Gibson, “The Net Is a Waste of Time,” in *Distrust That Particular Flavor* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2012). 193), no doubt because the story had, in fact, been written that year and had been read at a science fiction convention in Denver, CO that fall.

<sup>40</sup> Gibson does not mention the time frame in the novel itself, but he indicates what he intended it to be in his May 27, 2010 speech at Book Expo America in New York. William Gibson, “Talk for Book Expo, New York,” in *Distrust That Particular Flavor* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2012). 45.

<sup>41</sup> William Gibson, *Neuromancer: 20th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Ace Books, 2004 (1984)). 157.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

<sup>44</sup> Gibson 2012, 45.

<sup>45</sup> Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, “Orienting Orientalism, or How to Map Cyberspace,” in *Asian America.Net: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Cyberspace*, ed. Rachel C. Lee and Saul-Ling Cynthia Wong (New York: Routledge, 2003). 3-4.

<sup>46</sup> Mark Hansen, “Data-Driven Aesthetics,” *The New York Times*, Jun. 20, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Gibson 2004 (1984), 150.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>49</sup> Gibson 2004 (1984), 73-74.

<sup>50</sup> Oliver Sacks, *Hallucinations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012). ix.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>52</sup> A major exception is Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991). For geographical emphases in studies of Chinatowns outside North America—namely the one in Singapore—a key work is Brenda S. A. Yeoh, *Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2003).

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## 2. Religion and Race as Praxis

<sup>1</sup> Roger G. Kennedy, *American Churches* (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, Publishers, Inc., 1982). 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 35:4 - 40:38.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 40:12-13.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 40:34-38.

<sup>6</sup> Tim Cresswell, *In Place/out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). 16.

<sup>7</sup> Peter W. Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002). 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Galatians 3:28a.

<sup>9</sup> The notion of reading “place” introduced in the Cresswell quotation above is extended by geographers to larger scalar levels of neighborhoods, districts, and cities. Examples include: J. Duncan and N. Duncan, "A Cultural Analysis of Urban Residential Landscapes in North America: The Case of the Anglophile Elite," in *The City in Cultural Context*, ed. J. Agnew et al. (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984). S. Lewandowski, "The Built Environment and Cultural Symbolism in Post-Colonial Madras," in *The City in Cultural Context*, ed. J. Agnew et al. (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984). David Ley, "Styles of the Times: Liberal and Neo-Conservative Landscapes in Inner Vancouver," *Journal of Historical Geography* 13, no. 1 (1987). Yeoh, *Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment*. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980*.

<sup>10</sup> Newer “Chinatowns” and other ethnic-Chinese-dominated districts—including the Clement-Street “New Chinatown” in San Francisco’s Richmond neighborhood—have arisen in various urban and suburban locations since the 1980s, a consequence of increased immigration from Asia in the wake of both the 1965 immigration reforms and the Vietnam War. See, for example, Timothy P. Fong, *The First Suburban Chinatown: The Remaking of Monterey Park, California*, ed. Sucheng Chan, *Asian American History and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). These newer districts, however, for the most part do not share the same sense of collective history as the “historic” Chinatowns, with regard to the particularities of the challenges faced under Exclusion. In that respect, they are farther removed from my considerations here of the histories claimed in the place-making process of an institution such as the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony W. Lee, *Picturing Chinatown: Art and Orientalism in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> John Kuo Wei Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York: Dover Publications, 1984). 14.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. “His [Genthe’s] photographs,” argues Tchen, “were created to be hung in the homes of upper-middle- and upper-class friends and patrons.” (15)

<sup>14</sup> Congregational Vertical File: “Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, SF,” Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA. The photograph is undated, but it is most likely from either the periods 1870-76 or 1892-1904, when the Condit's were based out of the San Francisco church.

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<sup>15</sup> Art historians identify the disciple to Jesus' right as John and the one to his left as James, brothers and together known as the Sons of Zebedee. The Synoptic Gospels (the biblical books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share source material and organizational approaches) do not actually comment on the seating arrangement at the Passover meal widely known as "the Last Supper." The Gospel of John, however, places John beside Jesus: "One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved [a reference to John]—was reclining next to him (John 13:23)...." The additional identification of James on Jesus' left refers to Mark 10:37, where John and James say to Jesus, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." Matthew 20:20-21 recounts a similar story, but in this later version, the person making the request is the mother of John and James.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the Page Act, see Erika Lee, "Exclusion Acts: Chinese Women During the Chinese Exclusion Era, 1882-1943," in *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology*, ed. Shirley Hune and Gail M. Nomura (New York: New York University Press, 2003). and Jennifer Gee, "Housewives, Men's Villages, and Sexual Respectability: Gender and the Interrogation of Asian Women at the Angel Island Immigration Station," in *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology*, ed. Shirley Hune and Gail M. Nomura (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). 32-33.

<sup>18</sup> Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003). 24.

<sup>19</sup> The Chinese Exclusion Act was finally repealed in 1943.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Roberts Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1909; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969). 412.

<sup>21</sup> See Chalsa M. Loo, *Chinatown: Most Time, Hard Time* (New York: Praeger, 1991). 60.

<sup>22</sup> Pfaelzer, 126-127.

<sup>23</sup> Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991). 50-51. The intervention of Washington's territorial governor stayed the sailing of the steamer, but a portion of the Chinese passengers ultimately still elected to decamp for San Francisco.

<sup>24</sup> Translated literally, the Cantonese word *tong* means "chamber" or "assembly hall." However, in the context of social organization in which we are interested, the word refers to fraternal organizations, or "sworn brotherhoods," patterned after seventeenth-century triads in China, secret organizations created to overthrow the Qing Dynasty.

Accordingly, *tongs* have historically maintained secret membership rolls, are known for the extreme loyalty of members initiated through complex rites and rituals, and traditionally maintained fighting forces. The *tongs* in the United States, mostly lacking the moral purpose of the original triads and established instead for mutual protection and economic advancement, were involved from early on in the vice industries. Over time, however, the organizations have become sufficiently established and adept at reinvention to be regarded as legitimate elements in the political governance of the various Chinatowns in this country. For an introduction to the origins of *tongs* and their

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evolution in more recent decades, see Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987). 97-100 and 107-123.

<sup>25</sup> See Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1989; reprint, updated and revised, Boston: Back Bay Books, 1998). 250-51.

<sup>26</sup> Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, *Asian America* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). 114.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>28</sup> Reports from the Chinese Mission Home often commanded pride of place and the lion's share of the reporting in the annual reports of the mission boards of the Presbyterian Church.

<sup>29</sup> See Carol Green Wilson, *Chinatown Quest: One Hundred Years of Donaldina Cameron House*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1974 (1931, 1950)). Mildred Crowl Martin, *Chinatown's Angry Angel: The Story of Donaldina Cameron* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, Publishers, 1977). and Logan, *Ventures in Mission: The Cameron House Story*.

<sup>30</sup> Joan B. Trauner, "The Chinese as Medical Scapegoats in San Francisco, 1870-1905," *California History* 57, no. 1 (1978). 70.

<sup>31</sup> Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Shah, 127-8. See also Robert Barde, "Prelude to the Plague: Public Health and Politics at America's Pacific Gateway, 1899," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 58, no. 2 (April 2003).

<sup>33</sup> The Haffkine vaccine employed a small amount of plague bacteria to induce an immune response. Aware of this, the Chinese were justifiably wary. Shah writes: "The concern about inoculation perhaps demonstrated an astute awareness that the vaccine was prepared with the very pathogenic microbes that produced the plague. No matter how confident the health authorities were about their ability to calibrate the pathogens in order to manufacture a safe vaccine that would build immunity rather than induce death, the Chinese residents had enough experience with the health authorities to doubt their motives. And an assault on the body figured prominently in the general refusal to submit to inoculation." (29)

<sup>34</sup> Shah, 120-157.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>36</sup> Wilson, 29.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-58.

<sup>38</sup> Chan, 90.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson 1991.

<sup>40</sup> In these pieces of legislation, the Chinese were sometimes alternatively referred to as "Mongolians," "persons who cannot become citizens," and "coolie labor," but who the targets of the measures were was never unclear.

<sup>41</sup> See Pfaelzer, 79.

<sup>42</sup> Chan, 56.

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<sup>43</sup> See Philip P. Choy, *San Francisco Chinatown: A Guide to Its History and Architecture* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2012). 37.

<sup>44</sup> Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). 223-224.

<sup>45</sup> By design, the impact of the Alien Land Laws was greatest on the Japanese population in California and in the dozen other states which adopted similar legislation. Of the Asian groups present in the country, the Japanese had the greatest economic investments in California agriculture from the years just preceding WWI to the eve of WWII. The reference in the laws to “aliens ineligible to citizenship,” however, meant that other Asian groups, including the Chinese, were also directly affected.

<sup>46</sup> Philip P. Choy, *The Architecture of San Francisco Chinatown* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 2008). 10-11.

<sup>47</sup> Chan, 56. The author notes that extant documents do not indicate which alternative the women chose.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Choy 2012, 45.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-46; and Choy 2008, 10-25.

<sup>52</sup> See Chen, 54.

<sup>53</sup> Estimates for war-related deaths during the Taiping Rebellion range from ten to thirty million. Essentially a civil war, the Taiping Rebellion dwarfs the American Civil War in terms of casualties suffered. Direct war deaths for the latter are estimated to be between 600,000 and 700,000. Even with indirect casualties factored in, the estimate is barely one tenth of the lowest estimate for the Taiping conflict.

<sup>54</sup> See Pfaelzer, 199.

<sup>55</sup> Chen, 164-165.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Kwong, *Chinatown, N.Y.: Labor and Politics, 1930-1950*, Revised ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979; reprint, New York: New Press, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang, "The Structure of Dual Domination: Toward a Paradigm for the Study of the Chinese Diaspora in the United States," *Amerasia Journal* 21, no. 1 and 2 (1995).

<sup>59</sup> Chen, 7.

<sup>60</sup> Chen's evidence for an early sense of nationalism is decidedly general and includes such markers as widespread reverence for the dragon as a cultural symbol, the preservation of genealogies of family migration histories within China, the Cantonese reference to the Tang Dynasty in self-identification, and the transcendence of clan and district lines by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Associations in the United States (128-130).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-161.

<sup>62</sup> Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900-1936* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>63</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1990).

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<sup>64</sup> Saskia Sassen, *A Sociology of Globalization*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Contemporary Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2007). 23-32 and 97-128.

<sup>65</sup> Jan Lin, *Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic Enclave, Global Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1998).

<sup>66</sup> Kwong 1987, 43-56.

<sup>67</sup> For a broader discussion of the segmenting effects of globalization and the disproportionate impacts on different populations, see Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: The New Press, 1998).

<sup>68</sup> Lin 1998, 79-120.

<sup>69</sup> Kwong 1987, 57-80.

<sup>70</sup> Woo and Huey, ed., 13. See also Logan, 152.

<sup>71</sup> Calvin Chinn, interview by author, Mar. 24, 2004, San Francisco, audio-tape recording/transcription, Bancroft Library, U.C. Berkeley.

### **Vignette A: The Earliest Locations**

<sup>1</sup> William Speer to John Lowrie, Jan. 14, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> John Waldo Douglas (ed.), "The Gospel to the Chinese," *The Pacific*, Feb. 11, 1853, 290.

<sup>3</sup> This informal designation for the church and the missionary's home should not be confused with "Mission Home," which was the formal name for the institution which would eventually be renamed "Donaldina Cameron House."

<sup>4</sup> Stahler writes that the mission house had "thick stone walls" (116), but this is contradicted by Speer's own correspondence, which indicated the building was of brick.

<sup>5</sup> William Speer to John Lowrie, Jun. 15, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>6</sup> Stahler 116.

<sup>7</sup> William Speer to John Lowrie, Jun. 15, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>8</sup> Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel, San Francisco to Walter Lowrie, Nov. 4, 1858, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>9</sup> William Speer, "Gas in the Chinese Mission House," *The Oriental; or, Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, November 1855, 3.

<sup>10</sup> "Chinese Mission. Photos.," Presbyterian Missions to the Chinese. Photos and Misc., San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

### **3. Anchoring Memory**

<sup>1</sup> New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup> Gibson 2004 (1984), 139.

<sup>3</sup> Hsu, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Stahler, 113.

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<sup>5</sup> “An Abstract of the Twelfth Annual Report, 1849,” Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: 1848), 419, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>6</sup> S. W. Bonney, “A Letter from China,” *The Pacific*, Apr. 9, 1852, 2. The article reprinted a letter from Bonney to the Rev. T. C. Hunt, dated Dec. 20, 1851, in which Bonney introduced Afun, a Chinese Christian arriving in the United States.

<sup>7</sup> William Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the United States* (Pittsburgh: Robert S. Davis and Co., 1870; reprint, 1877). 646-651.

<sup>8</sup> John Waldo Douglas (ed.), “Mission to the Chinese in California,” *The Pacific*, Nov., 19, 1852, 246.

<sup>9</sup> Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1853).

<sup>10</sup> James L. Woods, *California Pioneer Decade of 1849: The Presbyterian Church* (San Francisco: Press of the Hansen Co., 1922; reprint, 1981, Pioneer Publishing Co., Fresno.). 58. See also Stephen L. Taber, *Pioneer Community of Faith: Old First Presbyterian Church 1849-1999* (San Francisco: Old First Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, 1999). 33. Taber puts the number of Chinese gathered lower, at about one hundred. And thirdly, Edward Arthur Wicher, *The Presbyterian Church in California: 1849-1927* (New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock, 1927). Woods and Taber put the date at *August 20, 1850*, while Wicher has it at *October 20, 1850*. Given that the former date was a Tuesday, a work-day for Chinese laborers, and the latter was a Sunday, it seems that the October date would have been the more likely.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Lee Abbott, and Kenneth A. Abbott, “Chinese Pilgrims and Presbyterians in the United States: 1851-1977,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 55, no. 2 (1977). 126.

<sup>12</sup> Woods, 58, and Taber, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Woo 1983, 32-33. At this point, the Presbyterian denomination nationally was divided, for theological and ideological reasons, between Old School and New School. The Presbytery of California was Old School, the larger of the two factions and the claimant of continuity in American Presbyterianism, while the Presbytery of San Francisco was New School, representative of the newer, “breakaway” faction. At approximately the same time that the Presbytery of California petitioned the PCUSA’s Board of Foreign Missions, the Presbytery of San Francisco also requested the interdenominational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions appoint a China missionary to California. The latter body, however, did not commission anyone to the work. (See Woo 1983, 33, and Abbott and Abbott, 126.)

<sup>14</sup> Stahler, 115.

<sup>15</sup> S. W. Bonney, “Letter from China.” *The Pacific*, Jun. 11, 1852, 171.

<sup>16</sup> See Abbott and Abbott, 127; Woo 1983, 33; and Guanghua, Peng, “A Simple History of the San Francisco Chinese Christian Presbyterian Church, in *The Presbyterian Church in Chinatown 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Yearbook*, edited by Scott Barlow, Virginia H. Mei, and Leslie Wong (San Francisco: Fong Brothers, Inc., 1993), no page number. Woo and Huey, ed., 3-4, is the exception, placing the Speers’ arrival date in San Francisco at November 6, 1852, instead of November 11, possibly a confusion with the founding date of the church a year later on November 6.



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<sup>17</sup> Speer was born to Dr. James R. Speer and Hettie Morrow Speer on April 24, 1822, in New Alexander, Westmoreland County, PA.

<sup>18</sup> Speer, William M. C., San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>19</sup> O.C. Wheeler, "An American-Chinese Mission—No. 1," *The Pacific*, Sept. 26, 1851, 2.

<sup>20</sup> John Waldo Douglas (ed.), "Mission to the Chinese in California," *The Pacific*, Nov. 19, 1852, 246.

<sup>21</sup> William Speer, *China and California; Their Relations, Past and Present. A Lecture, in Conclusion of a Series in Relation to the Chinese People, Delivered in the Stockton Street Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, June 28, 1853.* (San Francisco: Marvin & Hitchcock, 1853).

<sup>22</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Jan. 31, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>23</sup> Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1853), 52.

<sup>24</sup> The Methodist mission to the Chinese in San Francisco was established in 1868, and the Congregational and Baptist missions were established in 1870. See Chen, 131. The Congregationalists formally established a church for the immigrants the city in 1873; the Methodists, theirs also in 1873; and the Baptists, in 1880. In the meanwhile, in 1878, the Presbyterians had established a second church across the Bay in Oakland. See Timothy Tseng and James Chuck, ed., *2008 Report: Bay Area Chinese Churches Research Project Phase 2* (Castro Valley: The Institute for the Study of Asian American Christianity, 2009). 2.

<sup>25</sup> Joshua Paddison, *American Heathens: Religion, Race, and Reconstruction in California*, ed. William Deverell, *Western Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). 39.

<sup>26</sup> Woo 1983, 37.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, William Speer, "A Sunday in the Chinese Chapel," *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Mar. 22, 1855, 3.

<sup>28</sup> See Frank S. Dick Wichman, "The History and Influence of the Presbyterian Church in the Chinese Community of San Francisco" (B.Div. Thesis, San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1940). 21.

<sup>29</sup> Woo 1983, 34.

<sup>30</sup> The Rev. Guanghua Peng, a former minister at PCC, writes in his synopsis of the church's history, that the mayor of San Francisco came to the service on November 6, 1853 to distribute Bibles to the Chinese who attended and that the governor of California came to offer well-wishes (Peng 1993). The mayor at the time was Cornelius Kingsland Garrison, but more significantly, the governor was John Bigler, who was and is known for his anti-Chinese views and for the anti-Chinese legislation he sponsored. Peng does not cite the sources for the claims.

<sup>31</sup> Speer 1877 (1870), 659.

<sup>32</sup> Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1853), 52.

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<sup>33</sup> Speer 1877 (1870), 659-660.

<sup>34</sup> Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1855), 74.

<sup>35</sup> The term “Foreign Board” is used, here and in text following, interchangeably with the more complete designation “Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.”

<sup>36</sup> William Speer, “Report of the Mission to the Chinese in California for the Year 1855,” *The Oriental; or, Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, February, 1856, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Victor Low, *The Unimpressible Race: A Century of Educational Struggle by the Chinese in San Francisco* (San Francisco: East/West Publishing Company, Inc., 1982). 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Ira M. Condit, “History of Presbyterian Chinese Missions in California,” 1, Condit Family Papers, 1860-1899, RG 264, Box 1, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>40</sup> William Speer, “Heal the Sick,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Mar. 29, 1855, 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, and William Speer, “Chinese Dispensary,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Jan. 4, 1855, 2.

<sup>42</sup> William Speer, “Chinese Dispensary,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Jan. 4, 1855, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Trauner, 82.

<sup>44</sup> William Speer, “The Chinese Companies. Their Members, Numbers, and Property,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Jan. 25, 1855, 2.

<sup>45</sup> William Speer, “Chinese Dispensary,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Jan. 4, 1855, 2; and William Speer, “Report of the Mission to the Chinese in California for the Year 1855,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, February, 1856, 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* Speer, himself, interestingly commented on the high percentage of new arrivals availing themselves of the clinic, noting that those who had been California for any length of time seldom came. The reason for this is unclear. Those who had been in this country longer may have had their medical needs met elsewhere, most likely among the providers of traditional Chinese medicine, given the available options, but it was also possible that, because of the transient nature of the Chinese population in those early years, the numbers of Chinese residents in the city who had been there a longer time were simply lower and, thus, the number of sick from among that population, correspondingly lower. Alternatively, it is possible that the Chinese judged the Western doctors at the Dispensary to be more effective than their Chinese counterparts at addressing the ship-borne illness. Speer reported initial difficulties accurately diagnosing the malady and used *The Oriental* as a vehicle for soliciting input from physicians elsewhere. After some trial and error, however, the physicians at the Dispensary seemed to achieve considerable success in combating the sickness.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Woo 1983, 34, 36.

<sup>49</sup> William Speer, “The Commencement of the Oriental,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Jan. 4, 1855, 2.

<sup>50</sup> The issues from April through July, 1856 were put out with the help of “several ministerial friends.” Publication of the August and September issues were “rendered

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impossible by the death of the lithographer, and other circumstances,” but Speer was back to edit the issue put out in October (but marked “August-October”).

<sup>51</sup> William Speer, “The Commencement of the Oriental,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Jan. 4, 1855, 2.

<sup>52</sup> William Speer, “Report of the Mission to the Chinese in California for the Year 1855,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, February, 1856, 2.

<sup>53</sup> The ship-borne illness found among the Chinese was one of the focused issues discussed most frequently in the newspaper. Dedicated articles on it were to be found in the July, August, and October issues in 1855.

<sup>54</sup> In PCC’s collective memory, Speer is often mistakenly remembered as an advocate of a complete repeal of the 1852 law to tax the miners (see for example, English Ministry, PCC, “Mission Study of the English-Speaking Worshipping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown (Presbyterian Church, USA), San Francisco, California,” May 8, 2008, 4). In fact, as the main text here will go on to discuss, Speer supported the taxation up to the \$4-per-miner level, and championed a repeal only of *increases* to that amount.

<sup>55</sup> William Speer, “Foreign Miners’ Licenses,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Nov. 1855, 2.

<sup>56</sup> See Editor, *Empire County Argus*, “Foreign Miners,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Mar. 29, 1855, 3; William Speer, “Spirit of the Press Upon Taxation of the Chinese,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Nov. 1855, 2; and “Extracts from Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions of the Presbytery of California,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, May 1856, 2.

<sup>57</sup> William Speer, “Extracts from an Answer to Objections to Chinese Testimony, &c.,” *The Pacific*, Apr. 2, 1857, 4.

<sup>58</sup> The prohibition against Chinese witness resulting from *People v. Hall* was written into the state’s statutes in 1863 and was not dropped from the books until 1872.

<sup>59</sup> William Speer, “Influence of Christian Commerce on the East,” *The Pacific*, Feb. 4, 1853, 287.

<sup>60</sup> Speer 1853, 13-16.

<sup>61</sup> William Speer, “Legislation upon the Chinese,” *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Mar. 22, 1855, 2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> See Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel, San Francisco to Walter Lowrie, Nov. 4, 1858, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries’ Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>64</sup> John Waldo Douglas (ed.), “Rev. Wm. Speer,” *The Pacific*, Apr. 9, 1857, 2.

<sup>65</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Nov. 15, 1852, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries’ Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>66</sup> In 1925, after PCC had been moved under the jurisdiction of the Board of National Missions, the denomination continued to recognize it in its annual report as “the mother church of all our Chinese Missions.” Second Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1925), 200.

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<sup>67</sup> English Ministry, PCC, "Church Information Form," 2008, 4.

<sup>68</sup> See Walter Lowrie to the Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel, San Francisco, Feb. 22, 1859, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; and John Waldo Douglas (ed.), "Churches and Ministers—Rev. Wm. Speer," *The Pacific*, Feb. 6, 1862, 2.

<sup>69</sup> John Ewing Speer was born on July 7, 1854. See William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Jul. 15, 1854, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. Speer and his wife Elizabeth Ewing also had a second son, Breeding Speer, and a daughter, Hettie Speer. Speer had had a child in 1847 with his first wife Cornelia Breckenridge, but Breckenridge died giving birth in Macau, and the child died about six months later. See Earle R. Forrest, "Dr. William Speer: Missionary to the Chinese in China and San Francisco," in *The Westerners Brand Book #9*, ed. Henry H. Clifford (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, 1961).

<sup>70</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Jan. 14, 1855, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>71</sup> See for example, William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Apr. 29, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; and William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Jan. 14, 1855, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>72</sup> William Speer, "Encouragement of Chinese Evangelization: An Address before the California State Sabbath-School Convention," *The Occident*, May 16, 1877, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Woo 1983, 90-103.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>75</sup> Speer 1853, 11.

<sup>76</sup> William Speer, "Influence of Christian Commerce on the East," *The Pacific*, Feb. 4, 1853, 287.

<sup>77</sup> Speer 1853, 15. Ham is introduced in the ninth chapter of the Book of Genesis as a son of Noah and the father of Canaan. Genesis 9:18-28 recounts the story of Ham discovering his drunk father unconscious and naked in his tent, and reporting this to his older brothers Shem and Japheth. The latter two walked backward into their father's tent with a garment and covered him without looking upon his nakedness. Gen 9:24-27: "When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers.' He also said, 'Blessed by the LORD my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave. May God make space for Japheth, and let him live in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave.'" The Book of Psalms refers to Egypt as the "land of Ham" (Ps 78:51; 105:23, 27; and 106:22), and this has widely interpreted by mid-nineteenth-century white American Christians to mean that Africans more generally are descended from Ham and, thus, were the peoples cursed by Noah to lives of slavery.

<sup>78</sup> William Speer, "Influence of Christian Commerce on the East," *The Pacific*, Feb. 4, 1853, 287.

<sup>79</sup> Speer 1853, 26.

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>81</sup> William Speer, "Influence of Christian Commerce on the East," *The Pacific*, Feb. 4, 1853, 287.

<sup>82</sup> Speer 1853, 21.

<sup>83</sup> William Speer, "Influence of Christian Commerce on the East," *The Pacific*, Feb. 4, 1853, 287.

<sup>84</sup> William Speer, "Legislation upon the Chinese," *The Oriental; or Tung-Ngai San-Luk*, Mar. 22, 1855, 2.

<sup>85</sup> Considering that Speer wrote this in 1853, he was rather prescient about the tenacity of Chinese miners working claims already abandoned by others. In 1860, when the easiest surface claims were already depleted, 85% of the Chinese (roughly 24,000) in mining counties were still panning or surface digging; in 1870, 65% (roughly 21,000); in 1880, 59%; and in 1900, there were still 2,000 Chinese gold miners in the country. See Chan, 28; and Takaki, 82, 84.

<sup>86</sup> Speer 1853, 13-16.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>88</sup> Taber, 33-34.

<sup>89</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Feb. 15, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>90</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Nov. 30, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1853), 51.

<sup>93</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Jan. 14, 1855, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>94</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Feb. 18, 1857, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>95</sup> See Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel, San Francisco to Walter Lowrie, Nov. 4, 1858, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; and William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Nov. 30, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>96</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Jul. 31, 1855, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>97</sup> Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1855), 75.

<sup>98</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Jul. 31, 1855, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Feb. 18, 1857, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> "Extract from the Minutes of the Presbytery of California, San Francisco, 18 February, 1857," PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>103</sup> Speer 1877 (1870), 22-23.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 638-639.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 639.

<sup>108</sup> Speer 1853, 27.

<sup>109</sup> William Speer, "Baptism of a Chinese Convert in San Francisco," *The Pacific*, Mar. 27, 1856, 4.

<sup>110</sup> William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Feb. 18, 1857, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> See William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Apr. 29, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; William Speer to John Lowrie, Jun. 15, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; and William Speer to Walter Lowrie, Sept. 15, 1853, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia

<sup>113</sup> Augustus W. Loomis to Walter Lowrie, Jan. 30, 1860, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>114</sup> William Speer, "Encouragement of Chinese Evangelization: An Address before the California State Sabbath-School Convention," *The Occident*, May 16, 1877, 1.

<sup>115</sup> See William Speer, "Baptism of a Chinese Convert in San Francisco," *The Pacific*, Mar. 27, 1856, 4; and Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1857), 77.; and Ethel C. Lum, "A Brief History of the San Francisco Chinese Presbyterian Church," 1938, 2, Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California (Box), San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>116</sup> Stahler, 117.

<sup>117</sup> Augustus W. Loomis, "The Mission among the Chinese of California," *The Pacific*, Jan. 28, 1864, 2.

### **Vignette B: The Neo-Gothic Building**

<sup>1</sup> Thirty-Sixth Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1873), 92.

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<sup>2</sup> Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1874), 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1875), 68.

<sup>4</sup> Forty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1880), 72.

<sup>5</sup> The purchase of the building was completed in April 1882, but the Chinese church did not occupy it until November of that year. See Ira M. Condit, *The Chinaman as We See Him and Fifty Years of Work for Him*, Digital reprint (University of California Libraries) ed. (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900). 188.

<sup>6</sup> The address change in the city directory occurred sometime between 1911 and 1923. See research notes, dated Jun. 1, 1997, in the Historical File: 925 Stockton Street, at the San Francisco Planning Department.

<sup>7</sup> A number of details of the construction are offered in First Presbyterian Society of San Francisco, *Specifications of Labor, Materials, and Mechanical Workmanship, to Be Used and Employed in the Erection and Completely Finishing of a Church Edifice, for the First Presbyterian Society, Which Is to Be Constructed on the West Side of Stockton Street, between Clay and Washington. The Work Is to Be Executed in Accordance with the Several Plans, Elevations, and Sectional Drawings, and with This Specification*. (San Francisco: B.F. Sterrett, Printer, 1857). "San Francisco Presbyterian Church" bound collection of pamphlets, Bancroft Library, U.C. Berkeley. For additional details, a photograph and sketch of the building, and a plan of the pews, see Taber, 44-46, 49.

<sup>8</sup> A common feature of the Gothic style, the ogee arch is a pointed form composed of two double curves in which one part is convex and the other concave, meeting at the apex.

<sup>9</sup> Condit 1900, 188.

<sup>10</sup> Ira M. Condit and Mrs. I. M. Condit, "Our Headquarters," *The Chinese Review*, January, 1896, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Sixty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1904), 356.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Ira M. Condit, "1866. Chinese Presbyterian Church, School, Etc. in San Francisco," 1-4, post-1904, Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California (Box), San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>14</sup> "First Presbyterian Church, Stockton Street, San Francisco," c. 1860-1870, The Lawrence and Houseworth Albums, 1860-1870 California Views, Society of California Pioneers Photography Collection.

#### **4: Institutionalizing a Community**

<sup>1</sup> New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup> Gibson 2004 (1984), 221.

<sup>3</sup> Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel, San Francisco to Walter Lowrie, Nov. 4, 1858, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Lowrie to the Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel, San Francisco, Feb. 22, 1859, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>5</sup> Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1858), 93.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Lowrie to the Trustees of the Chinese Mission Chapel, San Francisco, Feb. 22, 1859, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Loomis, himself, confessed that, "From the manner in which I have spoken of our work, a stranger might suppose me able perhaps to speak the language fluently; but the fact is quite otherwise: I have my own trials on this score. Studying the language is still the heavy work; and when I speak, it has to be with stammering lips and another tongue. My Chinese teacher is employed also in the capacity of assistant, and he gives me great satisfaction; indeed, I should feel greatly crippled were we to lose him." Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1861), 84.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Augustus W. Loomis to Walter Lowrie, 1863, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>11</sup> A "synod" in the Presbyterian Church is a judicatory division comprising a number of presbyteries.

<sup>12</sup> Augustus W. Loomis, "Synod of the Pacific—Report on Public Morals by the Rev. A. W. Loomis," *The Pacific*, Oct. 22, 1863, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1861), 84.

<sup>14</sup> Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1862), 57.

<sup>15</sup> Augustus W. Loomis to Walter Lowrie, January 3, 1860, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Augustus W. Loomis to Walter Lowrie, Jan. 30, 1860, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>18</sup> The articles in the series are numbered I to XI, but there is, in fact, no installment X. Installment IX was published on January 16, 1869; and installment XI, the following week, on January 23.

<sup>19</sup> C, "The Heathen Among Us—III. Why So Little Has Been Done," *The Occident*, Dec. 5, 1868, 356.

<sup>20</sup> James Eells, "Our Chinese Mission," *The Occident*, Dec. 12, 1868, 374.

<sup>21</sup> Augustus W. Loomis, "Our Chinese Mission," *The Occident*, Dec. 19, 1868, 388-389.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*



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<sup>24</sup> Sylvester Woodbridge (ed.), "Mission to the Chinese in California," *The Occident*, Mar. 27, 1869, 136.

<sup>25</sup> Augustus W. Loomis to John C. Lowrie, Jun. 17, 1875, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>26</sup> See Augustus W. Loomis to John C. Lowrie, Mar. 7, 1876 and Mar. 20, 1876, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>27</sup> Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1861), 81.

<sup>28</sup> Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1870), 44.

<sup>29</sup> Augustus W. Loomis, "The Mission among the Chinese of California," *The Pacific*, Jan. 28, 1864, 2; and Ethel C. Lum, "A Brief History of the San Francisco Chinese Presbyterian Church," 1938, 3, Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California (Box), San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>30</sup> Augustus W. Loomis, "Chinese Church in California," *Foreign Record*, July 1866, Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California (Box), San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo. Of the twelve men who signed the petition for reorganization of the church, four had been baptized in China. Upon the Presbytery's approval of the request, Chin Shing Sheang, Loomis' Cantonese teacher and assistant, was elected elder, no doubt smoothing the process of church governance for Loomis, who was still struggling with the language.

<sup>31</sup> Sixty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1905), 411.

<sup>32</sup> Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1870), 45.

<sup>33</sup> Low, 13-14.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1870), 45.

<sup>36</sup> Sylvester Woodbridge (ed.), "Chinese Mission School: Twenty-Second Anniversary," *The Occident*, Jan. 7, 1875, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1873), 94.

<sup>38</sup> Sylvester Woodbridge (ed.), "The Chinese Girls School," *The Occident*, Jan. 22, 1874, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Fifty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1892), 85. This report, which notes the renaming of the school after Loomis, also notes that it was moved out of the Globe Hotel on January 1, 1891 to a new location at "No. 1108 Stockton St.," because the hotel "had become a den of gamblers, opium smokers, etc." The Globe Hotel School was sometimes also referred to as the Union Mission School (see, for example, the Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1884), 120), which suggests that the Presbyterians, though they

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were fully in charge of the school by 1891, may not have been the only denomination involved in its start and early years.

<sup>40</sup> John H. Laughlin, *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Series: Asiatics in the U.S.* (New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1912). 13.

<sup>41</sup> Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1883), 110.

<sup>42</sup> The Foreign Board's report in 1884 reported that, "The [night] school has been found an effective means of increasing the Sabbath congregations. A large majority of the members of the church have been pupils in this school." Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1884), 121.

<sup>43</sup> Ira M. Condit, "1866. Chinese Presbyterian Church, School, Etc. in San Francisco," circa 1904, Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California (Box), San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>44</sup> Ira M. Condit, "1866. Chinese Presbyterian Church, School, Etc. in San Francisco," circa 1904, Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California (Box), San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>45</sup> Fifty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1893), 70.

<sup>46</sup> Ira M. Condit, "1866. Chinese Presbyterian Church, School, Etc. in San Francisco," circa 1904, Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California (Box), San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.

<sup>47</sup> Sixty-First Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1898), 261.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1903), 356.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, and Sixty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1900), 281.

<sup>51</sup> Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1903), 356.

<sup>52</sup> Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1934), 52.

<sup>53</sup> English Ministry, PCC, "Church Information Form," 2008, 4

<sup>54</sup> Mandarin Ministry, PCC, "Mission Study," 2001, page unnumbered.

<sup>55</sup> Cantonese Ministry, PCC, "Presbyterian Church in Chinatown Cantonese Commission Mission Study 2007," 2007, 5.

<sup>56</sup> See Holland Cotter, "Beyond the 'Palace,' an International Tour in One City," *The New York Times*, Jun. 6, 2013.; Ken Johnson, "A Confederacy of Mavericks," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2014.; and Carol Vogel, "New Guide in Venice," *The New York Times*, May 26, 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Gibson 2004 (1984), 221.

<sup>58</sup> Augustus W. Loomis to Walter Lowrie, Jan. 30, 1860, PCUSA Board of Foreign Missions, Secretaries' Files, 1829-1895, RG 31, Box 45, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

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- <sup>59</sup> Forty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1880), 71.
- <sup>60</sup> Paddison, *American Heathens: Religion, Race, and Reconstruction in California*.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>62</sup> Eightieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1917), 190.
- <sup>63</sup> Forty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1880), 74-75.
- <sup>64</sup> Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1895), 76.
- <sup>65</sup> Jiwu Wang, *"His Dominion" and the "Yellow Peril": Protestant Missions to Chinese Immigrants in Canada, 1859-1967*, ed. Theodore de Bruyn *et al.*, *Editions Sr* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006). 127-131.
- <sup>66</sup> Wang, 31.
- <sup>67</sup> Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16 (1986).
- <sup>68</sup> This is a common condensing and paraphrasing of John 15:19 and John 17:14-19.
- <sup>69</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967; reprint, 1990). 26.
- <sup>70</sup> Foucault 1986, 26.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.
- <sup>75</sup> We know from missionary reports that, whether immigrants came to the church for instruction in English, for other types of classes, or for worship, they were, at the very least, involved in "recitations of Scripture, Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, and in singing." [California Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese, *Report of the Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese in California* (San Francisco: George Spalding & Co., Steam Book and Job Printers, 1881), 4.] Through these means alone, if not through others, the immigrants would have had at least a minimal exposure to both the ideas of eternity and divine judgment.
- <sup>76</sup> Foucault 1986, 24.
- <sup>77</sup> Berger, 19-22.
- <sup>78</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). 96.
- <sup>79</sup> The First Presbyterian Church dedicated its Stockton-Street building on May 13, 1858. Taber, 44-46.
- <sup>80</sup> First Presbyterian Church was renamed "Old First Presbyterian Church" in 1960.
- <sup>81</sup> Taber, 76.
- <sup>82</sup> Loo, 33.
- <sup>83</sup> The First Presbyterian Church had invested \$12,000 in the lot and \$25,000 in construction costs. The building was sold for \$22,500. Taber, 44, 82.
- <sup>84</sup> Paddison, 144. The new cathedral, the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, at the northwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and O'Farrell Street, was dedicated on Jan. 11, 1891.

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- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>86</sup> Taber, 49.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>88</sup> San Francisco Central Presbyterian Church, *Circular Addressed by the Central Presbyterian Church: To All Interested in the Erection of a "Tabernacle" in the City of San Francisco, with a Free Pew System.* (San Francisco: B.F. Sterett, 1872), 3-5.
- <sup>89</sup> Woo 1983, 212.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.
- <sup>91</sup> Forty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1880), 72.
- <sup>92</sup> Lee 2003, 94.
- <sup>93</sup> Lin 1998, 26.
- <sup>94</sup> Chinese wedding ceremonies, with their attendant religious aspects, traditionally take place in the home.
- <sup>95</sup> Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1885), 137-138.
- <sup>96</sup> Sixty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1904), 358.
- <sup>97</sup> The society was first organized in 1874 as the "California Branch of the Philadelphia Woman's Foreign Missionary Society"; later its name was changed to the Occidental Branch of the Philadelphia Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, then to the "Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbytery of San Francisco." Occasionally the word "Women's" was used in place of "Woman's," and "of the Pacific Coast" was added. In 1889 the Society became a separate board with the name "Woman's Occidental Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church." The Society existed until 1920, when it merged with the other women's boards into the United Board.
- <sup>98</sup> Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). 13-14.
- <sup>99</sup> Forty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1879), 74.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-6.
- <sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.
- <sup>102</sup> Judy Yung, *Unbound Voices: A Documentary History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). 124. As the broad ranges illustrate, it has been difficult for scholars to determine reliable figures from raw data culled from U.S. censuses. American immigration policy tended to be biased toward overstating the number of prostitutes among arriving Chinese women.
- <sup>103</sup> Woodbridge, Sylvester (ed.), "Current Topics—Chinese Women in California," *The Occident*, Apr. 3, 1869, 141.
- <sup>104</sup> Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1861), 83.
- <sup>105</sup> Woo 1983, 158.
- <sup>106</sup> Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese, California, 2.
- <sup>107</sup> See Woo 1983, 160-161.

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- <sup>108</sup> Presbyterian Mission to the Chinese, California, 5.
- <sup>109</sup> M. M. Baskin, "Occidental School," *The Occident*, Sept. 10, 1884, 7.
- <sup>110</sup> Paddison, 52.
- <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-92.
- <sup>112</sup> Ira M. Condit, *The Story of Christ's Return* (San Francisco: The Murdock Press, c. 1900).
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>114</sup> Ira M. Condit, "The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel Found in the Anglo-Saxon Race," Oakland, CA, c. 1900.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

### **Vignette C: The Post-Earthquake Building**

- <sup>1</sup> Sixty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1906), 429-430.
- <sup>2</sup> Seventy-First Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1908), 502.
- <sup>3</sup> "Lay Corner Stone of New Chinese Mission," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 17, 1907.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 502.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 502-503. Interestingly, no monies for the new building came from the denomination's Church Erection Fund, to which the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church had regularly contributed.
- <sup>6</sup> <http://www.pccsf.org/ourStory/timeline/oldestAsianChurch.html>
- <sup>7</sup> The Junior League included a number of the sites it surveyed in its 1968 book, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (Roger R. and T. H. Watkins Olmsted, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968).), and the original files from the survey are available at the San Francisco History Center at the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. Sadly, the information on the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown is minimal, and the church is not included in the published volume. While the Junior League refers to the style of the church building as "Colonial Revival" in reference to the Colonial period in American history, it is rendered elsewhere (e.g. the San Francisco Planning Department's website) as "Classical Revival," an acknowledgment of the use of design elements from the classical Greek and Roman periods—such as the ionic columns featured in the church's portico—in Colonial and Colonial Revival architectural styles.
- <sup>8</sup> John H. Laughlin to Dr. McDonald, Sept. 9, 1907, "Chinese in California—Missions Work," Presbyterian Missions Work with Chinese in California, San Francisco Theological Seminary Library Archives, San Anselmo.
- <sup>9</sup> Seventy-First Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1908), 502.
- <sup>10</sup> 153<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report of the Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1955), 56.
- <sup>11</sup> Eighty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1922), 190.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

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## 5. Reimagining a Chinese American Church

<sup>1</sup> New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup> Gibson 2004 (1984), 6, 69. This sentence combines a description of Henry Dorsett Case—the main character in *Neuromancer*—at work, and a portion of Gibson’s most in-depth explication of cyberspace in the novel.

<sup>3</sup> From a total population of 107,488 Chinese in the United States in 1890, the number had dropped to 89,863 a decade later. See McKeown, 31.

<sup>4</sup> The Korean presence on the U.S. mainland was both limited and dispersed—mainly across California—during these early years. The Presbyterian denomination formally began its mission efforts among the Koreans in 1906 in Los Angeles, although as early as 1902, “a [Sunday School] class of eight or ten Koreans” had been gathered at the Chinatown church in San Francisco, and a room was set aside there for ministry to the Korean community in 1905. See *Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1903), 356; and *Seventy-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1916), 188.

<sup>5</sup> Presbyterian mission work among the Japanese in California was started in 1886 by Ernest Adolphus Sturge, a former medical missionary to Japan. See *Seventy-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1916), 188.

<sup>6</sup> *Seventieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1907), 448.

<sup>7</sup> *Sixty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1904), 359.

<sup>8</sup> Laughlin, 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9. The Board of National Missions’ Annual Report in 1936 adds that, “Also it is a well-known fact that five out of the ten members of the Chinese cabinet were educated in America and two out of the five were members of the Chinese Presbyterian Church of San Francisco while here.” *Thirteenth Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1936), 66.

<sup>11</sup> *Seventy-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1912), 464.

<sup>12</sup> Woo 1990, 177.

<sup>13</sup> The term “Home Board” is used, here and in text following, interchangeably with the more complete designation “Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.”

<sup>14</sup> The Foreign Board also owned the building that housed the Chinese Mission in Santa Rosa, but the ministry there was administered by a local white American church. *Seventy-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1911), 421.

<sup>15</sup> American-born Chinese accounted for 41% of the total Chinese population in the United States in 1930; and 52%, in 1940. Takaki, 254.

<sup>16</sup> *Eighty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: 1919), 150.

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<sup>17</sup> Eighty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1922), 189-190.

<sup>18</sup> One Hundred and Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1923), 88. Responsibility for financial support of domestic work with East Asians was gradually transferred between the Foreign and Home/National Boards over a period of three years, the handover completed in the 1925-26 fiscal year. See Third Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1926), 76.

<sup>19</sup> First Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1924), 132-33.

<sup>20</sup> The term “National Board” is used, here and in text following, interchangeably with the more complete designation “Presbyterian Board of National Missions.”

<sup>21</sup> Tenth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1933), 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71.

<sup>23</sup> Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1937), 78.

<sup>24</sup> Ninth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1932), 92.

<sup>25</sup> Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1937), 78.

<sup>26</sup> Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1936), 66. Although it was known for its instruction in Chinese, some subjects at the Hip Wo School, at least initially, were also taught in English. See Sixth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1929), 52.

<sup>27</sup> Seventh Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1930), 44.

<sup>28</sup> Ninth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1932), 92.

<sup>29</sup> Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1942), 28.

<sup>30</sup> Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1942), 30.

<sup>31</sup> Demographically, the War Brides Act, passed in 1945 and extended to include Asians in 1947, and various pieces of Cold-War-period legislation (i.e. the 1948 Displaced Persons Act and the 1953 Refugee Relief Act) did far more to arrest and reverse the decline in the Chinese American population than did the minimal admission quota that accompanied the formal ending of Exclusion.

<sup>32</sup> In the final decade and a half of his life, after the scandal of his sexual misconduct broke, Wichman adopted the first name “Franz,” explaining in an open letter to friends that, “That’s me Dick. It’s my baptismal name. It just might be used in Heaven and at 80 I should begin to get used to it.” See Frank S. Dick Wichman to “Friends at Home and Overseas,” Nov. 3, 1991, “Dick Wichman Papers,” 137G, Box 1, Accession no. 980911f,

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Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. Searches for material online and in more recently established archives will sometimes return results for “Franz Wichman,” where there appear to be none for “Frank/Frank Spirkel/F. S./Dick Wichman.”

<sup>33</sup> Logan, 90-91.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>36</sup> 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Board of American Missions of the United Presbyterian Church of North America and the 157<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1959, 94.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Norton was a seminary graduate who served the church for a year while preparing to leave for a missionary posting in China.

<sup>38</sup> Logan, 91. In 1968, the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School changed its name to its current one, the “American Baptist Seminary of the West.”

<sup>39</sup> 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: 1964), 15.

<sup>40</sup> Linda Lee, interview by author, Sept. 7, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.

<sup>41</sup> Calvin Chinn, interview by author, Mar. 5, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.

<sup>42</sup> Donaldina Cameron House, “Final Report of the Healing Task Force,” 2004.

<sup>43</sup> Berger, 45-51.

<sup>44</sup> Irene Lin, “Journey to the Far West: Chinese Buddhism in America,” in *New Spiritual Homes: Religion and Asian Americans*, ed. David K. Yoo (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999). 146-47.

<sup>45</sup> David Lee, interview by author, May 21, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.

<sup>46</sup> The 1965 law established a preference system, under which 170,000 immigrants would be admitted from the Eastern Hemisphere, with a limit of 20,000 per country, and 120,000 would be admitted from the Western Hemisphere, with no country-specific limit. Furthermore, immediate family members of U.S. citizens—specifically, spouses, minor children, and parents—would not be charged against these limits.

<sup>47</sup> Logan, 176-77.

<sup>48</sup> David Lee’s personal history intersects two key events in East Asia during that period: the Communist victory in China (1949) and the Korean War (1950-53). Born into refugee status in Korea in 1949, Lee notes that he arrived fleeing a revolution and entering a war.

<sup>49</sup> David Lee, interview by author, May 21, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.

<sup>50</sup> Jeremy Lue, interview by author, Jun. 10, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.

<sup>51</sup> David Kao, interview by author, Jun. 29, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.

<sup>52</sup> David Lee, interview by author, May 21, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author’s collection.



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- <sup>53</sup> Interpretation and Stewardship Committee, Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, San Francisco, CA, "Our Presbyterian Mission in Chinatown," San Francisco, 1968, Historical Documentation Project Records (BANC MSS 2004/174c), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
- <sup>54</sup> 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Report of the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, (New York: 1964), 15.
- <sup>55</sup> Logan, 151.
- <sup>56</sup> David Kao, interview by author, Jun. 29, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>57</sup> Bradford Woo, interview by author, Mar. 23, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>58</sup> Calvin Chinn, interview by author, Mar. 5, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>59</sup> David Lee, interview by author, May 21, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>60</sup> Bradford Woo, interview by author, Mar. 23, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>61</sup> English Ministry, PCC, "Mission Study of the English-Speaking Worshipping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown (Presbyterian Church, USA), San Francisco, California," May 8, 2008, 5.
- <sup>62</sup> Calvin Chinn, interview by author, Mar. 5, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>64</sup> The Healing Task Force's Final Report captures that orientation in the following manner: "More than anything else, the highest priority of the Healing Task Force was to initiate the process of healing by trying to listen to the untold number of victims who had been molested or abused by Dick Wichman." Donaldina Cameron House, "Final Report of the Healing Task Force," 2004, 10.
- <sup>65</sup> Calvin Chinn, interview by author, Mar. 5, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>66</sup> David Lee, interview by author, May 21, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>67</sup> Calvin Chinn, interview by author, Mar. 5, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>68</sup> English Ministry, PCC, "Mission Study of the English-Speaking Worshipping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown (Presbyterian Church, USA), San Francisco, California," May 8, 2008, 7.
- <sup>69</sup> David Lee, interview by author, May 21, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.
- <sup>70</sup> Ed Sue, the principal of the firm, was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry and formerly served on the Cameron House staff under Wichman.
- <sup>71</sup> The three historic surveys were the Junior League's survey in 1968, the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage survey in 1978, and the National Register of Historic Districts survey of Chinatown in 1997. See "Report for: 925 Stockton Street," <http://propertymap.sfplanning.org>.

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<sup>72</sup> David Lee, interview by author, May 21, 2010, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.

<sup>73</sup> Noël Chun, interview by author, Jun. 20, 2014, San Francisco, digital audio recording/transcription, author's collection.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

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