

CHINESE YOUNG PEOPLE AND SPIRITUALITY: AN AUSTRALIAN STUDY

Submitted by

Mei Ling Chung

(Diploma of Teacher Education, Bachelor of Theology, Master of Mission and
Evangelisation, Master of Divinity)

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School of Religious Education
Faculty of Education

Australian Catholic University
Research Services
Locked Bag 4115
Fitzroy, Victoria 3065
Australia

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STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other institutions.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the Ethics Committee (see Appendix A).

Candidate's Signature: _____

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ABSTRACT

The research reported in this thesis is concerned with the spirituality of Chinese young people who attended a Chinese evangelical church in Melbourne, Australia. This research is a case study conducted in the framework of a qualitative approach using ethnographic methods, including fieldwork methods with data triangulation through participant observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews. Grounded theory was used to analyse data collected. The particular group of young people were Chinese in race, and Australian born, or had been living in Australia since early childhood. They attended the English speaking fellowship and services of a Chinese evangelical church in Melbourne, and their ages were between fifteen and eighteen years. They were born or had grown up in Australia, and had been exposed at least to two cultures, the Australian culture in the society, and the Chinese traditional culture in their family, in which the parents were the first generation in Australia. This research aimed to find out the characteristics of the spirituality of the Chinese young people through acknowledging the multicultural context in which they lived. Thus, it began with a cultural perspective and sought to study the cultural contexts that account for their distinctive Christian spirituality.

In summary, the research reported in this thesis describes the young

participants' spirituality from their own perspectives, discusses their construction of identity that led to their distinctive spirituality, and studies their parents' worldviews and the role of cultural institutions that have affected their spirituality. Finally, it concludes with development of theories of spirituality related to Chinese young people in a multicultural society, and proposes ways in which churches and families may encourage the development of spirituality for Chinese young people in a multicultural society.