

advances in Europe, and he covers well Germany's Christian Democratic Union which bound Catholics and Protestants against European socialism. Still, the power and proliferation of Catholic-affiliated Christian democratic parties throughout Europe during the Cold War betrayed the weakness of American Protestant work for a "Christian West." Recent and forthcoming works by Turek and Gene Zubovich suggest that ecumenical and evangelical movements thrived almost everywhere except on the Continent. This is a minor point of contention, however. Strasburg has done a great service in documenting how the "two-party" American Protestant system fought for the conquest of foreign and not just domestic soil.

Mark Edwards  
Spring Arbor University  
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***John Song: Modern Chinese Christianity and the Making of a New Man.* By Daryl R. Ireland. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2020. xx + 248 pp. \$49.99 hardcover.**

Through his book *John Song: Modern Chinese Christianity and the Making of a New Man*, Daryl Ireland has provided an important contribution to our understanding of Chinese Christianity. Scholarship in recent years has taken up the call to focus more on the Chinese actors in the history of Christianity in China. Joseph Lee's study of Watchman Nee and his Little Flock movement is notable in this regard. The story of John Song (Song Shangjie) fits well into this tradition. Ireland's book is based around the quest to reconsider Christianity in China as it was influenced by the New Life element of the May Fourth period and impacted by the societal turbulence of the 1930s. While he acknowledges that there were more established groups engaging in social welfare activities that are easy to identify, other Christians were charting their own path to the New Life outside the eyes of the government in the "furnace of revivals" (206) led by individuals like Song. The author reemphasizes this idea of transformation through the titles of each chapter, which emphasize transformation and appear to be influenced by Timothy Lew's (Liu Tingfang) ideas from *Truth and Life* (8).

Ireland begins the book with some important details about the early life of John Song that the author revisits periodically throughout the book. Most notable in this section are Song's relationship with the church and the change from his study of chemistry at Ohio State University to his transformation at the Union Theological Seminary, leading to his being committed to a mental institution. Song's story of his conversion is examined in chapter 2, which focuses on *My Testimony*, which recounts Song's change to a "new man." In examining this publication, the author skillfully weaves in different interpretations of Song's conversion story, noting that at the worst some might call him a charlatan (50). Chapter 3 takes the reader down an interesting path as it focuses on Song's relationship with the Bethel Worldwide Evangelistic Band that appealed directly to his interest in revivalism. Although the relationship was short, it appears to have been an important period in Song's career. In his examination of Song's style, Ireland notes that he incorporated a brand of story-telling that one could find in Chinese society that changed as Chinese society changed. This was most notable in the chapter titled "A

New Audience,” where Ireland focuses on Song’s attack on urban society in sermons to the petty urbanites (*xiaoshimin*) where the village became “a primary symbol of purity” (125) as Tianjin society began to decline in the 1930s. Ireland’s description of Song’s methods at the revival services truly takes the reader into the moment rather than just briefly describing the event. He also emphasizes them as a key to Song’s popularity in the religious competition in Tianjin. However, Ireland notes that although he was popular, Song was not always effective at attracting new members to the Church in the early years.

Ireland’s book also brings up some interesting perspectives on the support for evangelists like Song. Ireland focuses on the struggles that Song experienced as an independent preacher after leaving the Bethel Mission. He notes that Song’s need for support sometimes came into conflict with the messages he was giving in his sermons that railed against certain aspects of elite society. Due to his needs for funds, however, he now had to walk in the circles of the elite to continue his work, while trying to engage with the lower classes at the same time. Another significant element related to the support of evangelization appears in chapter 6, “A New Woman,” where the author provides information on Song’s call to form evangelistic teams during his preaching tour in Singapore in 1935. The new teams of evangelists were dominated by women, a fact which Ireland attributes both to Song’s preaching and their own experience of feeling alienated as new immigrants in Singapore’s society. This harkens back to the missionary reliance on local Chinese women in their own work. Through this chapter Ireland is keen to point out that Song developed and encouraged women to lead the way. He specifically draws a comparison with Watchman Nee who criticized Song for encouraging female preachers. It is clear that Song had his own ideas on how to spread his faith. This comparison with another famous independent Chinese Christian is interesting but the author did not take this same approach in other areas of the book.

The book is clearly well researched, with a plethora of related secondary sources and newly discovered primary sources, both in English and in Chinese. Overall, Daryl Ireland provides a vivid story of John Song, one of the most famous Chinese Christian revivalists of the period, that presents many important insights into this period of China’s history. Scholars will gain insight into the way the mind and methods of this famous evangelist were linked with the political and social struggles of the period.

John R. Stanley  
Kutztown University  
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***A Liminal Church: Refugees, Conversions and the Latin Diocese of Jerusalem, 1946–1956.* By Maria Chiara Rioli. Brill: Leiden, 2020. xiv + 387 pp. \$198.00 hardcover.**

In *A Liminal Church: Refugees, Conversions and the Latin Diocese of Jerusalem*, Maria Chiara Rioli builds upon a growing historiography which has examined the transnational Roman Catholic relationship to postwar Palestine and the wider Middle East. Themes in this body of work have included the Vatican’s response to the rise of political Zionism and the State of Israel, its attempts to protect its institutional and spiritual