

Challenging the Tiger Mother Stereotype? Christian Chinese Immigrant Homeschooling
Mothers' Parenting Practices

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents with my deepest appreciation for their infinite love and support throughout my education journey in the United States.

Abstract

Good parenting has a major influence on positive child outcomes (Baumrind 1983; Darling & Steinberg, 1993), and parents often seek information about how to raise their children according to their personal and cultural values. Young Chinese parents tend to seek information and materials originating in the West for good parenting references because of the lack of indigenous parenting studies (Goh, 2011) and because of their higher regard for Western society (Fong, 2004; Goh, 2011). However, Chinese immigrant families who live in the United States increasingly choose to homeschool their children for academic reasons and/or religious reasons (Fu, 2008; Sun, 2007).

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to explore three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' cross-cultural parenting practices in the United States. This study addresses three research questions: (1) What does it mean for evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant mothers to home educate their children? (2) How do evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers and their children interact with each other when confronting conflicts in the homeschooling setting? and (3) What stories do evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers tell regarding their parenting beliefs and practices in the homeschooling setting in the U.S.? These research questions emerged from an extensive literature review.

Three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers were recruited to participate in this study. Data were collected through intensive participatory observation, interviews, and selective documentary collection at each mother' home. The

findings suggested that identity is subjective and context oriented. Additionally, three

parenting patterns were illustrated from these Christian Chinese immigrant

homeschooling mothers' parent-child conflict management: (1) pushing for obedience

and immediate discipline, if needed; (2) negotiated child obedience; (3) letting go without

pushing for obedience. Implications from this study suggest the need for individualized

and cultural-sensitive parent education programs.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Along with social and economic development, well-educated, young Chinese parents have increasingly paid close attention to the quality of their parenting. Good parenting has a major influence on positive child outcomes (Baumrind 1983; Darling & Steinberg, 1993), and situates parents in the strongest position to influence their children's value acquisition and social behaviors. Parents are also in a significant position to monitor and understand their children's behaviors due to the parents' constant exposure to their children (Kuczynski & Grusec, 1997).

Young Chinese parents tend to improve their parenting skills by referring to information and materials originating in the West because of the lack of indigenous parenting studies (Goh, 2011) and parenting education programs, and the higher regard for Western society (Fong, 2004; Goh, 2011). These materials include parenting self-help books and information on parenting practices based on research that is mostly based on white American, middle and upper class families' parenting norms and standards. To improve their own parenting practices, Chinese parents look up to parents of successful children, based on their definition of "successful." Like many other parents, they want to have a quick fix for their parenting problems and to raise an equally or more successful child compared to their friends and neighbors.

A very public but typical example is Amy Chua, a Chinese immigrant who is currently a Yale law professor. Her parenting memoir has raised wide and heated discussion regarding Chinese parenting. Chua's self-reported parenting practices have received considerable criticism in the United States, and her "tiger parenting"

(excessively controlling style) is perceived through American mass media as a representation of Chinese parenting. In contrast, in China, her book was been retitled and is well accepted as a self-help parenting book (Zhang, 2011). These largely contradictory public attitudes toward Chua's parenting memoir reveal a fundamental difference between American and Chinese parenting practices, values, and beliefs that are rooted in existing social, historical, and cultural differences. To Chinese parents, Amy Chua has authority as a Yale law professor and Chinese-American who has raised successful children (Zhang, 2011). However, to American parents, she has exceeded or maybe even abused her parental power in the process of raising her children.

Culture sets the ground rules for parent-child relationships and the demonstration of agency, power, and bidirectional influence in parent-child interaction. Culture also determines the power arrangement (egalitarian, hierarchical) (Kuczynski, 2003) and it is "a source of rights, constraints, and entitlements for both children and parents" (Kuczynski & Grusec, 1997, p. 26).

Interestingly, both the value systems of American evangelical Christians (Rosemond, 2007) and Chinese Confucius-influenced parents position them as the authorities in their children's upbringing, and children's obedience toward these authorities are highly valued and cultivated. However, given the backgrounds of these two value systems, each system has distinct interpretations and implications for parents and parenting.

Confucius ideology positions parents on the top of the relational hierarchy and children's obedience is toward the parent. In contrast, evangelical Christianity positions

God on the top of the authority hierarchy and children's obedience is toward God through their parents. However, the parent-child power dynamic of their everyday interactions on the behavior level is the same. A deep and detailed study is needed to explore Chinese immigrant parenting that has been shaped by both of these value systems, particularly how it relates to child obedience. Some form of compliance in childrearing is considered the foundation of cooperative living (Kuczynski & Grusec, 1997) and should be examined dialectically. Kuczynski and Grusec stated that the quality of compliance is crucial. They believe that compliance resulting from external pressure is negative in healthy parent-child relationship development. In contrast, conformity that comes out of an individual's genuine willingness to cooperate with the other is a positive outcome in parent-child relationship construction because it involves mutual self-regulation.

This childrearing ideology tends to be easily linked to the unidirectional model of parent-child interaction that involves asymmetrical and imbalanced power relations between the parent and child, and reinforces the idea of one-way (parent to child) causality, as children are perceived as passive objects and recipients of environmental influence (Goh, 2011; Kuczynski, 2003; Kuczynski & Grusec 1997).

The predominant parenting theories (e.g., parent-child attachment theory, trait theory, family-system theory) are based on developmental psychology and Western culture. In particular, Baumrind's (1971) parenting style (trait theory) has been exclusively applied in many parenting related studies. Asian parents or other ethnic minorities are invariably categorized as more authoritarian (a high level of controlling and low level of loving their children); European-centered, white, middle class families

are described as more authoritative (a high level of loving and low level of controlling of their children) according to Baumrind's theorization of parenting styles (Chao, 1994; Chao, 1996; Cheah et al., 2009; Cheah, Charissa, Leung, & Zhou, 2013; Chen, Tao, Main, Ly, Zhou, & Lee, 2013; Gorman, 1998; Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, & Murtuza, 2012).

White, middle class families' parenting practices appear to be the parenting norms and standards for parents in the West. The parenting practices of immigrant minority families who live and grow up in different social contexts might be perceived as deficient if their living context and social culture are not carefully examined (Ek, 2009; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In particular, the parenting style dichotomy (Chao, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000; Fung & Lau, 2010; Gorman, 1998; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Wu et al., 2002) may not capture the essence of Chinese immigrant parenting due to the differences in their lived culture context. Instead, it potentially reinforces and perpetuates the stereotypical authoritarian public image of Chinese immigrant parents.

Many differences exist in terms of parenting practices between Chinese and American cultures based on different values. Immigration, religious beliefs, and homeschooling practices have also complicated the way each culture views parenting. This study challenges the prominent idea of Chinese filial, piety-oriented parenting practices as an authoritarian, one-way communicative, and emotionally restrictive method of child rearing.

I draw upon Kuczynski's (2003) bidirectional parent-child communication model to open up space for new and transformative understanding of Chinese child rearing

practices in homeschooling settings. This theoretical framework seriously considers the agency of both parent and child, as it emphasizes the mutual parent-child power influences. In examining compliance, for example, parents significantly impact how well their children want to collaborate with them. Children could exercise their agency through genuine compliance toward their parents because of their shared strong emotional bond, or they could pretend to obey their parents due to external pressure that causes children to feel threatened. This reciprocal power influence shapes the parent-child interactional dynamic and relationship development.

This study challenges the stereotypical image of Chinese immigrants as authoritarian parents, i.e., *tiger parents*, through a close examination of three evangelical Christian Chinese homeschooling families' parenting practices in the United States. This study examines the ways these Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers show spiritual and emotional caring for their children based on their religious beliefs. It also explores alternate perspectives of Chinese immigrant parenting practices by investigating the complex and dynamic interaction of Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers and children in the United States. Based on my review of existing research, cross-cultural Christian Chinese immigrants' parenting practices in homeschooling settings is an area that has rarely been researched. This study addresses the need for further research as the Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling population has increased (Fu, 2008; Sun, 2007). In addition, a systematic study of these families' child-rearing practices is valuable to Asian parents, in general, and Chinese immigrant parents, in particular, given that Chinese immigrants are the largest recent

immigrant population in the United States, and millions of Chinese immigrants now reside in the United States (Chen, 2013).

Research Purposes and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the interactional dynamic of three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers and their children in the United States, and to paint a holistic picture of these three Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' parenting practices, particularly related to conflict. It seeks to build a comprehensive understanding of these mothers' parenting behaviors, strategies, values, and beliefs through intensive participatory observation of the parent-child interaction in homeschooling settings in the U.S. It is significant to note that homeschooling itself is not the center of this study, but instead is studied as the context of these three Christian Chinese immigrant mother's parenting practices.

Christian Chinese immigrant mothers, their children, and their interactions, which are embedded in cross-cultural and homeschooling settings, are the sources for my analysis. My focus on parenting dimensions includes these mothers' parental warmth, parental control, and conflict management in teaching and parenting the child. Three research questions were used to guide this study.

1. 1. What does it mean for evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant mothers to home educate their children?
 - a. How do Christian Chinese immigrant mothers characterize their religious beliefs in shaping their parenting practices?

- b. How do Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers characterize their identities and their children's identities in their homeschooling settings?
2. How do evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers and their children interact with each other when confronting conflicts, and how do their relationships take shape (e.g., verbal and non-verbal communication, parent and child intimacy, and hostility) in the homeschooling setting?
3. What stories do evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers tell regarding their parenting beliefs and practices in the homeschooling setting in the U.S.?

Definition of Key Terms

The following eleven key terms needed to be clarified to help readers better understand this research study: acculturation, evangelical Christian, homeschooling, parenting, parenting belief, parenting practice, parenting style, authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style, and neglectful parenting style.

Acculturation is “the changes that take place when two cultures come into contiguous first hand contact” (Costigan, Koryzma, Hua, & Chance, 2010, p. 183).

Evangelical Christians stress the authority of the Bible, believe Jesus Christ is God's only Son who saves people personally from sin, emphasize evangelism, and live out biblical truth.

Homeschooling: Ray (2000) defined homeschooling as family-based education to which parents commit to raise and educate their children in a non-institutional environment. It is usually child-led and individualized, informal schooling.

Parenting consists of a series of interactions between the parent and child; these interactions change both the parent and the child. It is the process of child rearing that assumes parental responsibility for providing protection, guidance, and nurturance for the child (Brooks, 1991). Child socialization with the external environment is positioned at the heart of parenting. Parenting involves many aspects of a child's development, and it remains a universal parental responsibility.

Parenting belief is "knowledge or ideas about parent-child relations that are accepted as true" (Su & Hynie, 2011, p.946.). It includes the parental ideology of how to be a parent and how to raise a child (Su & Hynie, 2011).

Parenting practice is a behavior designed to meet specific goals such as helping children develop socially, achieve academically, or conform to societal expectations (Wu et al., 2002, p. 482). One aspect of parenting practice is parental behavior, and parenting practice is specific to each situation (Chao, 2000).

Parenting style is "aggregates or constellations of behaviors that describe parent-child interactions over a wide range of situations and that are presumed to create pervasive interactional climates" (Mize & Pettit, 1997, p. 291). Parenting style can also be defined as stable patterns which parents display in controlling and socializing children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Parenting style is demonstrated through parenting practice. For example, parents often make their children obey them when there is a disagreement without hearing the children's voices. Authoritarian parenting practice includes a constant requirement of compliance when disagreements occur between a parent and a child without attention to the child's opinions. Parenting styles and parenting practices

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are culturally generated in nature and vary from culture to culture (Chao, 2001; Chen, 2000a; Wu et al., 2002).

Baumrind (1971) identified four parenting styles based on parents' levels of responsiveness and demands in controlling and socializing their children within white, middle class Western families.

Authoritative parenting style: Exhibited by parents who are very sensitive and responsive to their children's needs while they set limits and boundaries to prepare a child's development. Authoritative parents socialize their children with acceptance and warmth. They exert control over their children with consideration of their children's voices.

Authoritarian parenting style: Exhibited by parents who socialize their children with excessive control and with little parental warmth. These parents control their children through physical coercion, verbal hostility, and irrational regulation.

Neglectful parenting style: Exhibited by parents who neither control nor show parental warmth toward their children. In fact, the children's existence is often ignored.

Permissive parenting style: Exhibited by parents who show extremely high levels of sensitivity toward their children's needs but have extremely low levels of parental control (Eastin, Greenberg, & Hofschire, 2006). Parents often allow their young children to make decisions (e.g., significant household decisions) that are beyond the children's capacity.

In this chapter, I discuss my research problem and research questions.

Definitions of key terms are also shared to help my audience better understand the study.

In the following chapter, I situate my study in a broader theoretical context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

An extensive literature review was conducted to situate this study in the larger context of parenting practices. Bronfenbrenner's (2003) bio-ecological model of human development theory was drawn on to provide an overall context to examine the three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' parenting practices and beliefs within their immediate living context. This conceptual framework guides the multi-level analysis of the specific human development process that includes four components: historical time, individuals, everyday activities and contextual factors. The development and formation of parenting practices, beliefs, values, and styles shape and are shaped by these four components of human development.

A discussion of the development of homeschooling both in China and the United States sets up the historical background of this study. The Chinese definition of self and

its extended social meaning in relation to an individual and family helps to frame the cultural context for a better understanding of Chinese immigrant parenting practices. Confucius-based parenting and a critique of Chinese filial piety and emotional control is also included to provide significant insights into Chinese immigrants' parenting practices. American cultural values of the self, which often are embedded in the concept of parenting practices, are discussed to enable a full understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of Chinese immigrant parenting in a cross-cultural setting. A discussion of evangelical Christianity-based parenting is also included to present more complete understanding of the influential forces on these three Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' parenting practices.

Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's bioecology perspective is a bidirectional approach to study the broader interactional process of an individual and immediate environment in which this individual is situated. However, interpersonal bidirectional influences in human development are not examined. Kuczynski's (2003) bidirectional model of parent-child interaction is examined to study the reciprocal impact between parent and child in homeschooling settings in the U.S. These conceptual frameworks guide this study and take into account the equal agency of both parent and child in their interactions, which is situated in the bioecological system.

Bioecological Human Development

Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1917-2005) bioecology model of human development provides a broader context for my exploration of the interactional dynamic of the three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers and their children in

cross-cultural settings. The bioecology model centers on the reciprocal impact of an individual and the immediate environment in which the individual is situated.

Development in the ecological environment occurs through the process and interaction that maintains reciprocal relations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These bidirectional influences exist among numerous aspects of context and individual characteristics over time and through everyday activities. Bronfenbrenner's theorization of human development lasted 33 years and went through many transformations and updates across his professional life, but one of the main theoretical shifts was from ecology to bioecology.

Bioecology is Bronfenbrenner's final advancement of human development theory, and it included Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT). The bioecological model of human development involves studying the "process of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active evolving biopsychological human organism and the person, objects and symbols in its immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1993, p. 317). The result is a man-made evolution of Bronfenbrenner's contextually based theory of the ecology of human development. Bronfenbrenner stressed that an individual is a fairly complex biopsychological organism with interrelated and dynamic capacities for thought, feelings, and actions, and these individuals often "modify, select, reconstruct and even create their environments" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1989 p.223).

These four elements (PPCT) simultaneously influence human developmental outcomes. With the shift from an ecology model to a bioecology model, Bronfenbrenner paid close attention to individuals' agency in their own development. He defined the bioecological model as an evolving theoretical system (Bronfenbrenner, 2001;

Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) that presupposed the proximal process as its center, and the proximal process was mainly viewed as the driving force of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1999, 2000, 2001; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Proximal process is defined as the enduring interaction form in the immediate environment over an extended period of time on a regular basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999, 2000, 2001). It focuses on individuals' roles in interactive and regular everyday activities that shape who we are and how we understand ourselves in the ecological system. Bronfenbrenner stated that the proximal process is the most powerful predictor of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999, 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006). It helps to explain the connection among the various aspects of context, such as race, ethnicity and social class.

Proximal processes involve not only interpersonal relationships but also relationships with symbols and objects that are connected. From Bronfenbrenner's perspective, the proximal process could have a greater chance to promote positive developmental outcomes in a stable environment within which a strong and close emotional relationship is developed, but at the same time, avoiding and slowing down negative developmental aspects from a disadvantaged and unstable environment within which children are neglected (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 2000, 2001). It is worth pointing out that researchers have also found that a person's resources (e.g. skills, knowledge and capacity) and disposition play a much more significant role in affecting the power, content and direction of proximal processes than interpersonal interactions when engaged in individual activities (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Person. Bronfenbrenner concluded that there are roughly three types of *personal characteristics* involved in the bioecology system of human development. The first one is *disposition*, which includes generative and disruptive manners. Generative characteristics “involve such active orientation as curiosity, tendency to initiate and engage in activity alone or with others, responsiveness to initiatives by others and readiness to defer immediate gratification to pursue long-term goals” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.810). By contrast, disruptive characteristics include “impulsiveness, explosiveness, distractibility, inability to defer gratification, or in a more extreme form, resort to aggression and violence” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.810).

The second type of personal characteristic is *resources characteristics* defined as factors that impact the individual’s capacity to engage effectively in the proximal process, and the constructive resources characteristics including “ability, knowledge, skill, and experiences” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.810). Disruptive resources characteristics include “genetic defects, low birth-weight, physical handicaps, severe and persistent illness, or damage to brain function” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.812). The third type, *demanding characteristics*, are those ostensibly noted qualities (e.g. gender, skin color and age) of a developing individual. These characteristics either invite or discourage a response from the environment in which an individual is situated, such as a calm or agitated temperament, attractive and unattractive appearance, and hyperactivity and passivity (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Context was the earliest element that was comprehensively studied in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach of human development. Bronfenbrenner paid

closer attention to the microsystem in the bioecological model of human development.

The theorization process evolved through four models.

Social address model exclusively emphasized the impact of the broad environment (e.g., nationality, class, family structure etc.) on human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) while ignoring the influence of individual characteristics.

Person-context model embraced individuals' characteristics (e.g., gender) in conjunction with the external environment in the study of human development, going beyond the social address model. However, it neglected the changing nature of both the context and individual's characteristics across time (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

The process-context model considered the impact of external settings on a specific developmental feature, such as the influence of parental work experience on the atmosphere and function of the family (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

The Person-process-context model conceptualized that developmental outcomes come from the interaction of individuals with context within which the proximal process is given careful consideration in an individual's development.

Bronfenbrenner redefined both microsystem and macrosystem in his later work. Microsystem was redefined as a pattern of interpersonal relations in a given environment that included other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality and systems of belief (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Macrosystem was redefined as the "overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristics of a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure" (Rosa & Tudge, 2013, p.250). The extended structure included "similar belief system, social and economic resources,

hazards, life-styles, etc. social class, ethnic or religious group” (Rosa & Tudge, 2013, p.250).

These redefinitions helped break the disconnected layers of the earlier version of ecology systems (micro-, meso- and exo- and macro-systems), and reconstructed an interconnected channel among these four subsystems under the umbrella of the bioecology model of human development. Culture was no longer perceived as a distant influence that was positioned at the outer circle of the ecological system. Instead, it was embraced at every level of the bioecological system. Additionally, individuals’ developmental time was taken into serious account in human development.

Time. Bronfenbrenner argued that human development involves both continuity and changes, and there are progressive changes in an individual’s characteristics over developmental and historical time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An individual’s life course constantly changes according to the conditions and events that occurred in the past (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). Bronfenbrenner described time in three dimensions: microtime, mesotime and macrotime. *Microtime* is defined as the continuity and discontinuity of ongoing everyday activities. *Mesotime* describes how often these everyday activities occur over days and weeks. *Macrotime* looks at changing events in a larger scope (e.g., different generations and societies).

All in all, Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological approach of human development includes the following components: (1) the setting in which an individual spends time; (2) an individual’s relations with others; (3) an individual’s characteristics and others’ characteristics and the interactive relation between these two; (4) life stage and historical

time; and (5) the mechanism driving the forces of development (proximal process)

(Bronfenbrenner, 2001; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Finally, Bronfenbrenner emphasized the bidirectional interaction of a person and the context to study how a human being's developmental process functions within the dynamic of bidirectionality over time.

Homeschooling in the United States and China

The homeschooling population in the U.S. has increased sharply in the past 20 years (Saleh, 2010; Higgins, 2008; Nemer, 2002; Romanowski, 2006). There were about two million home-educated K12 students in the spring of 2010, based on a nationwide homeschooling population investigation conducted by homeschooling research pioneer Brian Ray, the founder and director of the National Home Education Institution. The population was moderately estimated based on a combination of data that was collected from existing research, some from the State Department of Education, five national private companies that serve homeschooling students, and an online survey created by researchers for collecting data from the leaders of nation-wide homeschooling organizations (Ray, 2011).

Homeschooling families are extremely diverse (Meehan & Stepheson, 1994). Research indicates that “homeschoolers could be Black, White and Oriental; low, middle and high income; parents with PhDs and parents with no degrees; conservatives and liberals; families with 1, 5 & 10 children” (Meehan & Stepheson, 1994, p. 4). American families choose to homeschool mainly for the following reasons: religious concerns and/or moral instruction; dissatisfaction with school academic instruction; and children's physical and mental health issues (Higgins, 2008; Meehan & Stephenson, 1994; Nemer,

2002; Ray, 2011; Van Galen, 1988). Family bonding and bullying prevention are also significant reasons for parents' homeschooling practices (Ray, 2011).

Although American homeschooling has been growing and developing for several decades, data on Chinese immigrant homeschooling families started to appear only in the past decade. They share similar homeschooling motivation with American homeschooling families based on existing literature (Fu, 2008; Higgins, 2008; Nemer, 2002 ; Meehan & Stephenson, 1994; Sun, 2007; Van Galen, 1988)). Nemer (2002) stated that homeschooling families are mainly ideology motivated or pedagogy motivated, with families falling into both categories. Pedagogy-motivated home educators appear to be strongly influenced by John Holt's (2003) "Unschooling" theory. Parents who prefer "unschooling" are primarily professional educators or people who have done research or studies on child development and educational methods (Taylor, 2010). Unschoolers consider life as education and children learn as they go, and they strongly object to the formal education that cuts off the children's creativity and growth by inspiring capital conformity (Holt & Farenga, 2003; Higgins, 2008; Meehan & Stephenson, 1994; Nemer, 2002; Taylor, 2010; Van Galen, 1988).

Ideology-motivated home educators are mainly religious families. These parents often have specific values, beliefs, and skills that they want their children to learn, and families' religious beliefs mainly shape their homeschooling practices. Ideology-motivated homeschooling parents believe their families' values are not taught in public schools, and formal schools often teach curriculum that is directly opposed to their families' beliefs. In particular, they seek homeschooling as a way to shelter their children

from inappropriate discussions of drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, and sexual orientation (Higgins, 2008; Meehan & Stephenson, 1994; Nemer, 2002; Van Galen, 1988).

Homeschooling families were more exclusive in the United States in the early stage of its development (Bauman, 2002; Higgins, 2008). Home educators were predominantly white, middle and upper class parents who most likely had higher education. In addition, homeschooled students often came from two-parent households where one parent could afford to stay out of the labor force. Girls were more likely to be homeschooled than boys (Bauman, 2002; Higgins, 2008).

Similarly, most current Chinese immigrant homeschooling families are two-parent households, and they are financially more secure. Additionally, parents of these homeschooling families are most likely international scholars, and at least one parent went to graduate school (Fu, 2008; Sun, 2007). Chinese immigrant homeschooling families are more rare than their white counterparts, but the numbers appear to be growing steadily. There were about 200 Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling families in the U.S. based on Sun's (2007) study. According to her study, seventy percent of them lived in California, and one of the parents (usually the mother) stayed out of the labor force to allow him or her to be the homeschooling parent.

Homeschooling is not an entirely novel education approach in Taiwan and Mainland China. It is legal in Taiwan, and there were about 18,000 Chinese children receiving homeschooling in Mainland China based on a report conducted by the 21st Century Education Research Institute Saturday and the Beijing Morning Post (Guo,

2013). Thus, coming to the United States and making the choice to homeschool their children may not be as novel as some may assume. However, there are very limited culturally sensitive resources to guide Chinese immigrant homeschooling practices in the U.S. Thus, Chinese immigrant families mainly adopt American homeschooling resources and supplements with only a small proportion of Chinese parents adopting culturally based curricula. Given the limited culturally sensitive resources and models, Chinese immigrant homeschooling families are homeschooling orphans (Sun, 2007) compared to American families who have a well grounded and culturally based homeschooling system.

Historically, Chinese immigrant families chose to send their children to schools for a Western education and retain their cultural tradition at home. However, increasingly, immigrant families prefer to homeschool their children for academic reasons and/or religious reasons (Fu, 2008; Sun, 2007). For example, there are significant cultural differences in terms of individual values and the sense of self between the Chinese and American cultures. Americans develop the sense of self through an individual lens, so American families are more likely to home educate their children based on individual needs and interests (Knutson, 2007; Silverman, 1995). Chinese tend to incorporate others into their sense of self more often than Americans (Lien, 2006), The value of incorporating others in the development of the sense of self finds its roots in the fundamental teachings of Confucius. These cultural differences in childrearing practices and the cultural roots of children's self concepts need to be examined carefully to better

understand Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' cross-cultural parenting.

The Concept of Self and Other in Confucian

Confucius teachings have been deeply rooted into Chinese people's minds and actions through everyday cultural practices. Bond and Hwang (1986) generalized three essential components of Confucius: (1) a person is defined by his or her relationships with others; (2) relationships are structured hierarchically; and (3) social order and harmony are maintained by each party honoring the requirements and responsibilities of the role relationships (Chao, 1994).

The purpose of living, based on Confucius ideology, is to achieve harmony, and harmony is the most treasured social value that supports cooperative living. The answer of how to achieve harmony is that every individual acts toward others in a proper way as prescribed by the rule of conduct (Chen, 2003). Namely, everybody should harbor a heart of *ren* (e.g., benevolence). *Ren* contains the core value of Confucianism, and it functions as the ideological foundation of building a harmonious society. It also carries the highest virtue in Chinese culture.

The *ren* (人), meaning human being, has the same Chinese pronunciation and similar character formation as the *ren* (仁) meaning benevolent, and these two types of *ren* are interdependent to construct social meaning. Thus, the definition of human being is a combination of “*ren* 仁者 (benevolent), *ren* 人也 (human being)” (Bo, 2008; Sun, 2011; Tung, 2000). The benevolent *ren* primarily has two layers of meaning in its definition. The first one focuses on the character as human beings, and it is both a noun

and an adjective. It means benevolence, compassion, altruism and selflessness, care and respect for others, and love in the broadest sense (Tung, 2011). This meaning is positioned at the heart of the Confucian value system and ideology. It functions as the standard of conduct and the essential character that human beings should possess. *Ren* sets the standard that requires Chinese people to whole-heartedly treat everyone with humanistic care (Sun, 2011).

The second layer of the meaning focuses on the structure of the benevolent *ren*. Benevolent *ren* (仁) is formed with a “human” root (人) and with the number “two” (Tung, 2000) as shown in the order left to right (the digital number does not mean exactly the number of people, but provides a very general numerical concept in ancient Chinese culture). A Chinese person as a non-independent individual is demonstrated through the formation of the Chinese word for human being, and a person’s identity should be legitimized through a relationship with a social group that is comprised of at least two people. It is a social group(s) in which a person is immersed and lives with over an extended time period (e.g., family). Families have the most power to form a child within this relational dynamic. Thus, the concept of self appears to be very relational and interpersonal within Chinese families (Bo, 2008; Sun, 2011; Tung, 2000).

There are no clear self-other boundaries (Bo, 2008; Sun, 2011) in a family context due to the social value ideology of *ren* (Su & Hynie, 2011) advocated by Confucius. Boundaries are “a sense of knowing where one stops and others begin, the proper degree of concern for other person, and the source of energy and motivation in life decisions,” according to Tung (2000, p. 5). He argued that boundaries are the foundation of self-

identity, social and interpersonal interactions, beliefs, and value systems. Self-identity mainly is gained and recognized through a person's upbringing in a certain cultural context. The ideology of *ren* structures a person's self-identity through the two-person relationship in Chinese culture according to Tung (2000).

According to Huang and Charter (1996), the ways to demonstrate *ren* are to be altruistic, selfless, and willing to sacrifice based on the Confucian value system. For example, Chinese people highly respect parents who sacrifice greatly for their developing children, and similarly, children who are very altruistic toward their parents when they become adults are given high respect. This reciprocal love transfer finds wide support among Chinese families. Family ties and intimacy are constructed through this selfless love, and they are crucial in a well-bonded Chinese family's life (Huang & Charter, 1996). It is believed that individuals' interests disrupt the building of an altruistic character and eventually interfere with the construction of a harmonious society (Huang & Charter, 1996). However, Bo (2008) argued that being truly altruistic and selfless toward others is most likely limited to families and other recognized insiders, as it does not work well beyond these groups.

Bo (2008) noted that Chinese society appears to be based largely on family kinship with an emphasis on hierarchy, and every individual has his or her own position within this kinship. This kinship is most likely constructed on layers of the two-person formula, or the relational understanding of self. These two-person relationships are emperor-chancellor, father-son, husband-wife (Bo, 2008; Chao, 1994; Sun, 2011), older brother-younger brother, and friend-friend (Chao, 1994). "The subordinate member is

required to display loyalty and respect to the senior member, who is required to responsibly and justly govern, teach, and discipline” (Chao, 1994, p.1113).

Three out of five two-person relationships focus on family members. This suggests that the family kinship-based relationship governs many aspects of Chinese peoples’ daily lives. The family hierarchal relationship is much subtler today than in ancient times (Goh, 2011), but it still provides significant insights into Chinese immigrant family culture and parent-child relationships. Children appear to be positioned at the bottom of this kinship hierarchy. Parents are expected to love their children while their children are expected to respect and obey their parents. This type of two-person definition of self leads children and sometimes parents to see their bodies as their own, but their spiritual and psychological self is bound to the two-person tie (Bo, 2008; Chao, 1994; Sun, 2011). This two-person definition of self is particularly true among young children who have not yet reached six years old. Children in China who are younger than six are perceived as not reaching the age of understanding according to Ho (1971), and therefore they are completely dependent on their parents.

An individual’s behavior is inseparable from the whole family’s honor, and an individual’s behavior represents the collective qualities of the family. Chinese see the family name as a collective property, and family members work closely together to bring honor to it. If one member shows unacceptable or deviant behavior, the whole family loses face (Chen, 2003; Fung & Lau, 2010). *Mianzi* and *lian* are the two types of face in Chinese culture. *Mianzi* is directly associated with social status determined by education, wealth, and social position, and *lian* is equated with reputation, prestige, and

respectability. *Lian* and *mianzi* can be used as very powerful tools to humiliate and ultimately control people. One's face is a collective property (Chen, 2003) that is tightly connected to the family name. At this point we need to look at the style of parenting that mainly is embedded in the Confucian model of self and other.

Confucius Parenting

Compliance. *Ren* is demonstrated through filial piety within a family ecology system. Filial piety basically requires children to obey and love their parents. A good child is informally defined as an obedient child. Therefore, obedience is a significant characteristic that parents try to cultivate in their children's personality in their early years. For a basic child outcome evaluation, parents usually refer to their children as *tinghua* (they listen to and obey their parents or any other authority in the household) or *bu tinghua* (they do not listen to and obey their parents or any other authority in the family) (Wu et al., 2002). Above all, Chinese parenting focuses on parental respect and obedience (Gorman, 1998).

Despite the strong emphasis on respect and obedience, there are reflective spaces for the cultural standard of parental authority and child obedience within a two-parent household. Traditional Chinese parenting is centered on the principle of *ci mu yan fu* (kind mother and firm father). A mother functions as a loving and caring figure while a father disciplines his children strictly and functions as a distant figure. Today's parenting does not strictly fall into this pattern; instead, there can be a lenient father while the mother is firm.

Children under six years old are to be loved and cared for by a kind and compassionate mother without the pressure of their firm father, since they are not at the age of understanding (Ho, 1971). After they reach the age of understanding, children are trained to behave themselves by cooperating with their parents and may live under the pressure of being shamed by their firm father (Bo, 2008; Ho, 1971; Sun, 2011). A firm father may wield his power over the child through the use of force (e.g., physical coercion, spanking). When a child is disciplined, the father is likely to use physical force under the name of parental love to train a child to make good choices or critical thinking to accept existing social standards and norms (Sun, 2011). Typically, a father has to pretend to have a firm temperament even if he does not to educate good children, as found in the *Three-Character Classic's* (三字经) description: it is only the father's fault if a child does not turn out to be a good person (子不教, 父之过). Thus, traditionally, discipline from fathers should be firm, distant, and strict.

Physical discipline. Physically punitive parenting behavior is more common among Chinese immigrant families than their American counterparts (Fung & Lau, 2010; Lau, 2010). There are three triggers related to parental adoption of physical discipline according to Chao (2000). First, children fail to reach parental expectations of school achievement. Chinese immigrant families consider schooling as the child's primary responsibility and may even be the very reason for immigration. Additionally, parental efficacy is evaluated through the child's school performance (Chao, 2000). Consequently, a child's poor academic performance may cause a sense of shame and disappointment considering the heavy financial investment and other parental sacrifices (e.g., downward

social mobility after immigration, perceived discrimination, distance from the homeland) that parents have made for their children's education.

The second trigger for parental application of physical discipline from the parent is the strong acculturation gap and conflict. Research has found that the more Chinese immigrant parents adapt to North American culture, the more parenting efficacy they may have (Costigan & Koryzma, 2010; Su & Costigan, 2008). Sun and Costigan (2008) argued that child rearing behavior changes only when parents are willing to modify their core cultural values. The adoption of physical discipline can occur as a result of interaction between an acculturation gap and contextual stress caused by experienced discrimination, language barriers, lack of social support, or family harmony. Parents under stress tend to have lower tolerance of children's misbehavior (Fung & Lau, 2010). Lau (2010) stated that physical discipline tends to be associated with the value of firm parental control that immigrant parents strongly hold on to, but it might not directly relate to the application of an authoritarian parenting style.

Acculturation gaps significantly challenge current immigrant families' intergenerational intimacy (Ying, 1999). Parent-child bonding in Chinese culture tends to be more hierarchical in contrast to European culture-centered American parent-child relationships which tend to be more egalitarian. Chao (1994) indicated that Chinese parenting is heavily influenced by Confucian ideology that constructs a parent-child hierarchy (parents as the authority) and values a strong work ethic and filial piety (respect and obedience to one's parents). In contrast, European and American culture-centered parenting practice is strongly influenced by the North American psychology movement

according to Brooks (1991) and Chao (1995). American culture and parenting emphasizes individualism, independence, questioning of authority, self-esteem, self-reliance, and emotional expression (Su & Hynie, 2011). The child rearing ideology is a strong reflection of these theoretical models and findings of developmental psychology. For instance, a parent is only a facilitator of a child's learning from a child-centered parenting perspective that is based on child developmental psychology (Chao, 1995).

There are Chinese immigrant parents who apply bicultural socialization (adoption of both sets of cultural norms, beliefs, and attitudes) in their parenting practices and intentionally adapt their parenting practices to the new environment (Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, & Murtuza, 2012). However, many Chinese-American children confront escalated intergenerational conflicts when they try to adapt to the American culture they see around them while their parents maintain and value traditional Chinese culture (Ying, 1999).

Acculturation gaps affiliated with intergenerational contradictions are particularly painful for Chinese immigrant families due to the cultural emphasis of family ties and intergenerational intimacy (Ying, 1999). These families strive to build close family relationships and intergenerational harmony as it is a culturally valued family model. Ho (1986) stated that Chinese-American children have serious intergenerational conflicts even though greater emphasis is put on intergenerational harmony within the family context in the process of parenting. However, interestingly, Cheah, Leung, and Zhou (2013) found that there is no association between acculturation and parenting practices and beliefs.

The role of education. Among Chinese immigrant families, education is highly valued, and Chinese parenting practices give priority to academic achievement (Chua, 2011), family responsibility (e.g., filial piety), and interpersonal relationship development (Chao, 1994, 1995, 2000). Many Chinese parents migrate to the United States with their children to seek better educational opportunities (Chen, 2013), and they maintain high expectations for their children's academic achievement (Cao, 1996). Education is emphasized as the avenue to upward social mobility (Cao, 1995; Gorman, 1998; Chen & Uttal, 1988), so parents may financially sacrifice anything they have to provide opportunities for their children to be well educated (Chao, 1996 ; Sun, 2011). Chinese immigrant parents tend to believe that parental involvement plays a crucial role in children's school outcomes (Chao, 1994, 1995, 1996), and parental efficacy is evaluated through children's school performance (Chao, 1996). In general, Chinese immigrant students have done very well at all school levels (Cheah et al., 2009 and Cao, 1996).

Education is highly emphasized among Chinese immigrants primarily because of its moral value (morality is equated with the level of schooling) and practical value (upward social mobility). Parents both consciously and unconsciously send messages to their children that their worth is weighed by the grades they bring home from school. Striving for upward social mobility leads to the great intensity of academic competition and pressure to perform well on exams in school (Chen, 2003). However, researchers have argued that Chinese immigrants pay a price for excelling in academics. This price includes potential psychological and social distress due to parents' high expectations (Su, Hua, & Costigan, 2010) and verbal criticism (Chua, 2011; Wang, 2001). "Humiliation,

in fact, is the most persistent, observable, and distinguishing feature of the learning environment in China” (Chen, 2003, p. 36).

Authoritarian/tiger parenting, authoritative parenting, and permissive parenting. The bulk of the research on Chinese parenting being more authoritarian has argued that Chinese parents are authoritarian regardless of their living context, and authoritarian parenting echoes the traditional Confucian beliefs, particularly emotional reservation (Chao, 1994; Chao, 1996; Cheah et al., 2009; Cheah, Charissa, Leung, & Zhou, 2013; Chen, Tao, Main, Ly, Zhou, & Lee, 2013; Gorman, 1998; Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, & Murtuza, 2012). Cheah et al. (2009). Chinese parenting has been historically seen as more authoritarian than its American counterpart (Chao 1994; Chao, 1995; Chao 1996; Chao 2000; Gorman, 1998), and more recent research has found that Chinese immigrant parents are more authoritarian even when it comes to academic and extracurricular activities (Cheah et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2012). Some other research has indicated that the authoritarian Chinese-American family parenting style is due to their family’s deep concern for their children’s well-being in American society (Wu et al., 2002).

The parenting practice Chua (2011) described as “tiger mother” disrupts the traditional Chinese parenting image of kind mother firm father. Tiger parents are defined as parents who apply classic authoritarian (high level of control) parenting, authoritative (high level of warmth) parenting, and psychological control in their child-rearing practices (Kim et al., 2012), and those who are exceedingly demanding of their children both academically and at home. Chua (2011) reinforced the authoritarian image of Asian-

American parents. The term tiger parent is widely used to colloquially refer to the Asian-American parent (Chen et al., 2013).

Research has been done to test if tiger parenting really exists among Asian-American families (Cheah et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2012). Researchers found that Chinese immigrant families mostly tend to adopt flexible and supportive parenting strategies (parental warmth, democratic parenting, parental monitoring, and inductive reasoning), and one researcher even found that Chinese immigrant mothers tend to implement an authoritative parenting style (firm parental control with high responsiveness toward children's needs) with preschoolers (Cheah et al., 2009; Chao, 2000; Gorman, 1998). Ho (1986) also found that Chinese immigrant parents tend to be more indulgent toward preschoolers because they have not yet reached the age of understanding (as cited in Gorman, 1998).

While much research has indicated that Chinese immigrant mothers tend to adopt an authoritative parenting style (Chao, 2000; Cheah et al., 2009), Chao (2000) found that Chinese-American mothers use a combination of training, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. Gorman (1998) argued that Chinese immigrant mothers apply subtle ways to express their wishes, and they indirectly influence their children to make the right decisions through their relationship. Mothers' expectations of their children come out of a deep desire for their children to have successful adjustment rather than out of a desire to dominate their children. Gorman (1998) also stated that Chinese mothers' parenting practices tend to be vigilant rather than controlling. He argued that it is more accurate to characterize Chinese parenting as an interaction process of parental

expectations and filial obligations rather than parental demands and child compliance.

He asserted that it is not appropriate to adopt Baumrind's (1968) parenting style concepts to characterize Chinese parenting practices because of the different underlying parenting values that guide Chinese immigrant parenting behavior. These research results challenge the stereotypical interpretation of Chinese immigrant parents as tiger parents who mainly apply an authoritarian parenting style in their child rearing.

Alternative parenting strategies may come into practice due to the transformation of the recent social and political context in China. For example, the Chinese one-child social/political policy has led some families to apply a permissive parenting method (Chao, 2000; Chen, et al., 2012). Similarly, Chao (2000) argued that today's Chinese immigrant parents pay more attention to children's social and emotional development. Most of her research participants indicated that they care more about their children's long-term happiness and asserted that the parenting method they received from their own parents is no longer relevant to this generation of children.

Goh's (2011) ethnographic research not only resonates with today's Chinese parenting practices but also strengthens our understanding of it. She explained the 4-2-1 parenting phenomenon in Xia Men, China (4 represents the only child's paternal grandparents and maternal grandparents, 2 represents the child's parents, and 1 represents the only child). Her work complicated the publicly simplified descriptions of the Chinese only child as the "little sun" and "little emperor." She unfolded the other side of the "spoiled" only child as one who carries the whole family's hope. Goh's findings in her study of parenting of the only children in Da Lian, China, echo Fong's (2004) study in

Xiamen. Many Chinese parents have been actively seeking scientific parenting methods, as physical discipline and verbal shaming are no longer their dominant parenting options. Parents shared that the traditional way they were raised is no longer relevant to their children, and they are more concerned about their children's long-term happiness (Goh, 2011). Both Fong (2004) and Goh (2011) indicated that the social context (one-child policy) has deeply changed Chinese parenting practices since 1979. These studies strongly suggest that social, political, and economic transformations heavily impact Chinese child-rearing practices.

Critical Examination of Chinese Immigrant Families' Authoritarian Parenting Style

Authoritarian parenting is a Western concept and may not capture the significant traits of Chinese child rearing given the different parenting beliefs, values, and motivations that underlie Chinese immigrant parenting and European-American parenting (Chao, 1994; Chao, 1995; Chao, 1996; Chao, 2000; Fung & Lau, 2010; Gorman, 1998; Steinberg & Darling, 1993; Wu et al., 2002). Research also raises concerns regarding the application of Baumrind's (1971) research categorizing parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglect parenting styles) since it excludes minority groups (the research participants were exclusively white, middle class families) (Chao, 1994; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Despite these concerns, research examining Chinese immigrant parenting practices often exclusively draws on Baumrind's (1971) parenting trait theory. The concept of authoritarian parenting is often used to describe Chinese parents who exert high levels of control and low levels of warmth in the process of parenting their children. However, the

term authoritarian is theorized from Baumrind's (1971) study of American white, middle class parents in the United States. Strictness is often equated with manifestations of parental hostility, aggression, mistrust, and dominance (Kim et al., 2009; Rohner & Pettengill, 1985). For Asians, parental obedience and parental strictness may come out of parental concern, caring, and involvement in children's growing-up process. Asian families' parental control may not always involve domination of children per se, but rather may be more family structural control for the purpose of maintaining family intimacy and fostering family harmony (Lau & Cheung, 1987). Thus, the concept of authoritarian may have very different implications when cultures and ethnicities are taken into consideration. Classifying Chinese parenting as authoritarian may not be very helpful.

Chao (1994) argued that terms such as authoritarian, controlling, and restrictive, often are ethnocentric and misleading. Chinese immigrant parents scoring high on authoritarian and controlling parenting styles may have entirely different implications compared to European-Americans due to the significantly different cultural systems (Chao, 1994). Gorman (1998) also stated that authoritarian parenting style derives its methods from an entirely different cultural background and may have completely different attitudes and values attached to it. Chao (2000) and Tseng (2002) indicated that Chinese children do not necessarily benefit from authoritative parenting style per se. Authoritarian parenting style actually maintains and improves Chinese immigrant children's academic performance (Chao, 1996), and it is associated positively with

children's social competence, peer acceptance, school achievement, and studentship (Cheah et al., 2009).

Chao (1994) has offered an alternative concept of *jiao xun* (teach and guide) or *guan* (training) that is mainly derived directly from an appreciation of Asian culture in terms of parenting. The essential similarities of *guan* and *jiao xun* include a set of conduct standards and an emphasis on the potential involvement of parental care, love, and warmth toward their children in the process of parenting. Chao (1994) stated *jiao xun* and *guan* have distinctive features and more adequately describe Chinese immigrant parenting practices because these concepts come out of the Chinese Confucius based sociocultural structure. However, *xiao xun* also has another meaning of scolding with guiding that Chao neglected to discuss.

Critique of Confucius and Confucius-based Parenting Practice

Since the early 20th century, Chinese scholars and philosophers have challenged Confucius traditions. Lu (1918), a great Chinese intellectual in the twentieth century, mentored Chinese young adults with his vision of reality and the power of his written words. He argued in his article entitled "the Diary of a Madman" (*Kuang Ren Ri Ji*) that Chinese literature is often overloaded with the words "eat people" (metaphor for Confucius's *ren* - hierarchy, benevolence, righteousness, and morality). He stated that China has four thousand years of man-eating history, and man-eating existed in every historical event. He went further to criticize Confucius's morals and virtues as oppressive, and claimed that the standard and norms of morality and virtue "eat" away Chinese people's spirit, to erase their essence of being (Lu, 1918; Chen, 2003). Eating

people is a powerful metaphor that prompts the Chinese younger generation to re-examine the existing Chinese Confucius-based cultural heritage. In addition, Confucius found no fault with inequity through emphasis on a hierarchical family structure (Chen, 2003). Lu (1918, 1925) encouraged the young Chinese generation of his time to open themselves to doubt about traditional wisdom and to the possibility of new ideas.

Lu (1925) stated that children represent their parents, but at the same time, they are also an independent individuals. Therefore, parents have the responsibility of educating their children and helping them to become independent individuals. He concluded that parents' responsibilities are to give their children the best education and complete freedom of becoming full human beings. Lu's (1925) statement resonated with Wang's (1919) and Hu's (1919) parental expectations, that is, they not only want their children to have filial piety but also want them to become independent and complete human beings. Lu (1973) criticized Chinese parents for failing to educate each child to become fully independent; instead, children are encouraged to follow the flow and conform to collective action. An old saying, "you rely on parents when at home, and rely on friends while not at home" (在家靠父母, 在外靠朋友) demonstrates the significance of the interpersonal relationship for a child to thrive in society. This parenting ideology contributes to interdependent child-rearing practice.

Another Chinese value relates to emotions. Children tend to be trained not to express their emotions (Fung & Lau, 2010; Lau, 2010), and particularly not to show love and hate easily (Bo, 2008). Teaching emotional expression and understanding is disruptive and can endanger social and family harmony (Wang, 2001). Children's

emotions are mainly used as instruments to reinforce appropriate social behavior. The capability to tell other people's emotions and to behave accordingly is considered the appropriate character of a good child (Wang, 2001).

Parents often focus on training children to maintain harmony within social groups by discouraging disagreement and argument (Lau, 2010). Thus, children are trained to be mindful of these social relationships including appropriate distance with outsiders and the social hierarchy that is embedded in the two-person definition of self. This type of training contributes to the tendency to be selfless as shown by thinking about other people, worrying about their worries, and being sensitive to other people's needs. At the same time, children's individuality is eliminated and facial and emotional expression is repressed.

Sun (2011) and Bo (2008) both asserted that Chinese adults do not have the awareness of admitting mistakes and apologizing to their children. With the traditional social hierarchy, admitting mistakes could compromise parental authority and cause parents to lose face. However, Zhang (1944) stated that children are not as muddled as parents think they are. Parents do not always know and understand their children, but children are very perceptive about their parents. Parents rarely notice the earnest eyes of their children according to Zhang (1994).

Bo (2008) stated that Chinese parents train their children as adults and treat adults as children. For example, traditional classic literature that was not comprehensible to children was required in their primary education in ancient times. This old educational content and method became new, and it is highly valued and widely practiced today.

Modern Chinese children are highly encouraged to read ancient classic literature as an essential part of morality education (Guo, 2005). Many children are also required by their parents to master many skills, such as playing the piano, violin, and learning dancing, swimming, and Chinese calligraphy.

However, many parents treat their adult children like young children who seem to have little sense of self-determination. Parents tend to intervene in their adult children's lives where they think it is necessary, and these interventions are mainly done in the name of their children's own good. For example, parents may control whom their adult children marry and where they are going to live. Bo (2008) and Sun (2011) concluded that Chinese families seek to nourish their children's bodies to enable them to grow up physically but do not encourage and cultivate their children to develop a strong sense of self. Instead, they teach their children the significance of interdependence, so many children develop a sense of shame and are uncertain and insecure about themselves.

Chinese parents tend to pay close attention to children's external world but not the internal one (Fung & Lau, 2010). Children's material needs overly concern parents even today so they strive to provide better food, living conditions, and quality of clothes for their children (Goh, 2011; Fong, 2004). Schooling is perceived as the dominant way to care for their children's internal world, but it is rare that parents pay attention to their children's emotional and spiritual development. Parents are less sensitive to their children's internal world (Fung & Lau, 2010) mainly because they often do not clearly understand their child's spiritual and emotional needs (Bo, 2008; Sun, 2011).

In contrast to traditional Confucianism, Christianity is concerned about an individual's internal world. Faith-motivated Chinese homeschooling families mainly are concerned about their children's spiritual development (Higgins, 2008; Meehan & Stephenson, 1994; Nemer, 2002; Taylor, 2010; Van Galen, 1988). According to Sun (2007), Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers are intensely concerned about their children's spiritual destiny and strongly believe homeschooling enables the parent and child to grow together within the love of God. They believe God will support these home educators to cultivate a loving, moral, and faithful child who will become a useful person to God (Sun, 2007). Christian Chinese immigrant families confront the challenge of deconstructing the parenting tradition of the two-person definition of self, and reconstruct the unit of husband and wife to accommodate their home education practices according to Sun (2007) and Fu (2008). Chinese immigrant homeschooling parents have trained themselves to apologize to their children, if needed. They have also learned to humble themselves in front of their children (Sun, 2007) as opposed to strictly holding on to parental authority. However, the concept of self in Christianity needs to be carefully examined before we can build a deep understanding about Chinese parents' Christianity-based parenting.

Self in Christianity

To understand these three women's self-identity in their Christian faith, it is important for the reader to understand the basis of their Christian beliefs and the authors/speakers who have influenced their understanding of God and the Bible. These

women have been particularly influenced by the teaching of John Piper and several other Christian authors and preachers.

John Piper is highly regarded among evangelical church communities. He is an internationally well-known evangelical pastor, a writer who has published more than 50 Christian books, and currently serves as the founder and teacher of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. He preaches, based on the Bible, that Christians need to get rid of their old way of living (e.g. habits, values, traditions etc.) as a way to let the old-self die and become a new person with new emotions, attitudes, and practices that are centered on biblical values and characteristics. For example, the Bible says, *Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness* (Ephesians 4:22-24 New International Version). John Piper literally interpreted the this Bible message as follows in one of his sermons titled *Put on Your New Person*:

Put off the old person (old self or old man) which accords with the former way of life and which is corrupted in accord with the desires of deceit. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And put on the new person that was created in accordance with God in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Piper, 1986, para 9).

He said Christians must take off the old person and put on the new one. In doing so, they can live a life with new attitudes, emotions, and practices that Jesus called them to. This means that becoming a Christian is an active process of self-deconstruction and self-reconstruction. It is through this process that Christians are called to build the identity in God not in the world, because worldly standards fall short of God's standards

from a Christian viewpoint. The aforementioned symbolic personal designation of

Jesus Christ as Lord of one's life does not automatically make this person a new one.

This person actually has to exercise his agency to put on his new self throughout his/her Christian life development.

In addition to these series of John Piper's sermons focused on the topic *Identity in Christ*, there are conferences and articles that concentrate on helping today's professionals build their identity in Jesus Christ that are published on the website desiringGod.org, including people who have different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

John Piper also has a series of sermons focused on the topic of racial harmony. In one of the sermons under this topic titled "Racial Reconciliation," he uses two biblical scriptures to make his point that human beings share one ancestor and all ethnic groups are created in the image of God. First, *God made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation* (Acts 17:26 New International Version). Second, *God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them* (Genesis 1:27 New International Version). He concludes his sermon regarding ethnic differences with the following statement.

In other words, finding your main identity in whiteness or blackness or any other ethnic color or trait is like boasting that you carry a candle to light the cloudless noonday sky. Candles have their place, but not to light the day. So color and ethnicity have their place, but not as the main glory and wonder of our identity as human beings. The primary glory of who we are is what unites us in our God-like humanity, not what differentiates us in our ethnicity (Piper, 1996, para 10).

In a conference presentation in Atlanta, Piper shared his definition of identity.

He said, “A human being is a creature of God with a nature designed by God to consciously display God’s greatness and his beauty and his worth” (Piper, 2013, Para. 1). He said that human beings have a nature that is designed by God to glorify God by enjoying God. In conclusion, according to Piper, Christian sanctification depends on how much people detach from the old values, traditions, and habits and build a new self with new emotions, attitudes, and practices based on biblical scriptures. Human beings’ primary identity is in God, and ethnic differences should not define Christian’s identity.

Christianity Parenting

Christianity-based child-rearing practices have incorporated common-sense parenting techniques that have been accessible to the public for centuries before the modern psychology movement in 1960 (Chao, 1994; Rosemond, 2007; Smuts & Hagen, 1985). Starting in the mid-1960s, modern psychology-based parenting gradually replaced Bible-based parenting (Rosemond, 2007). Baumrind’s (1971) authoritarian style was deeply connected to both evangelical and Puritan religious beliefs from the 1700s to the 1800s. Both of these religious traditions shared intense concerns for children’s spiritual destiny with a propensity toward harsh discipline. Early American child rearing included the views of original sin and breaking the child's will, and these points of view dominated parental practices and children’s literature for almost two centuries (Smuts & Hagen, 1985).

The concept of breaking a child’s will was inconsistent with Trumbull’s (1893) training techniques, and he stated that it is detrimental to a child to not have a strong will

to work through life's hardships. Trumbull (1893) was a Christian author who advocated for a training-based approach for parenting. He believed that training should shape, develop, and control children's experiences and interactions with the world. This approach presents an utterly different tenet of Christianity-based child rearing than the authoritarian parenting style of previous generations. Through the wisdom he gleaned from raising his eight children one hundred years ago, he believed that the training method covered parental intentional caring for children's emotional (fear, anger), spiritual (Christian faith), intellectual (imagination, reading) and physical needs (appetite, rest). He emphasized that children's individuality (they are their own person), ought not to be taken for granted or neglected because it is part of the parenting process. Parents could learn from the children and could grow with them when their individuality is recognized and taken into serious consideration.

Trumbull (1893) believed that training a children's will was to bring parental influence to bear upon the children, so they could be ready to make intelligent decisions and choices. It is worth pointing out that Trumbull (1893) believed that children have the quality of instinctive faith. Children's moral training included helping them understand the knowledge of God, and parents needed to commit to do so faithfully with love. He strongly supported the biblical definition of love:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Cor. 13:4 New International Version).

Trumbull (1893) and Tripp (2008) both warned parents that they should not use biblical messages to cause children's negative emotions (e.g. fear) toward God in order to control their behaviors. Tripp (2008) also indicated it was wrong for parents to "beat up" their children with biblical words.

The fundamental theology of evangelical Christianity about human beings has apparently remained unchanged over the centuries. For example, human beings are born badly natured (selfish, self-centered). Children are born sinners, and they are expected to sin (e.g., misbehavior). Parental responsibility includes helping children recognize and deal with their sin through love and discipline while minding their own sanctification (Dobson, 2014; Plowman, 2003; Rosemond, 2007; Tripp, 1999; Tripp, 2008,). Christianity positions parents as the children's authority as entitled by God, and children are required to obey their parents as the legitimate authority and one way to obey God (Rosemond, 2007; Tripp, 2008; Tripp, 1999). Namely, children are their own person who belongs to God, and parents are God's managers who help take care of the children (Chen, 2002; 2008). Parents are to exercise their authoritative agency to love, protect, and discipline their children, and children are to honor their parents by obeying their parents. Dobson (2014) called on parents to balance their love and control, and provided the reasons for doing so.

Healthy parenthood can be boiled down to those two essential ingredients, love and control, operating in a system of checks and balances. Any concentration on love to the exclusion of control usually breeds disrespect and contempt. Conversely, an authoritarian and oppressive home atmosphere is deeply resented by the child who feels unloved or even hated. To repeat, the objective for the toddler years is to strike a balance between mercy and justice, affection and authority, love and control. (p. 52)

Christianity values physical discipline as long as it is conducted with a calm spirit that is motivated by love and care towards the children, and it should be used sparingly (Dobson, 2014; Plowman, 2003; Rosemond, 2007; Tripp, 2008; Tripp, 1999). Love is the primary motivation to discipline based on Christian ethics. A very important lesson that a parent needs to teach a child who is about three to seven years old who fails to obey parental instruction and do dangerous things (e.g. run onto the road) is: “I love you so much, I have to spank you to stop your disobedience that will corrupt your heart and prevent me from protecting you” (Dobson, 2014; Plowman, 2003; Rosemond, 2007; Tripp, 2008; Tripp, 1999).

Tripp (2008) argued that human relationships are equal in terms of worth and dignity, and submission to authority does not signify inferiority; it only means role and responsibility differences. Teaching the very concept of authority forms children’s thinking about the world and how it functions within God’s authority structure. It is noble and dignified to have the capacity to obey.

There are many Bible passages about parenting and parental responsibility. However, these verses do not carry detailed instruction regarding child rearing. Therefore, over the past 20 years, biblical parenting books began to fill the gap. These Christian parenting book writers generally believe in Bible-centered parenting which emphasizes parental love, authority, obedience (Plowman, 2003; Rosemond, 2007; Tripp, 2008; Tripp, 1993), and mutual respect (Dobson, 2014), yet, they each take different angles to approach biblical parenting. Interestingly, each author has a different level of

criticism toward modern psychology-based parenting and a different perspective on the literal application of Bible passages in the parenting process.

Rosemond (2007) is a family psychologist who has worked intensively with families and children for more than a decade. He radically criticizes the individualism-based and child-centered parenting practices that are fervently advocated by developmental psychologists. Developmental psychology emphasizes individualism, independence, freedom, individual choice, self-expression and separateness (Brooks, 1991; Chao, 1994; Su & Hynie, 2011). He states that parenting needs to be marriage centered but not child centered, because parenting is designed to be temporary and marriage is designed to be permanent by God (Rosemond, 2007; Tripp, 1999). Rosemond (2007) concluded that psychology-based parenting may work in the short term, but it will only harm the American children's and families' well-being in the long run.

Rosemond (2007) also diligently promotes biblical parenting that emphasizes love, authority, and respect. He trusts in parenting based on common sense instead of the suggestions and diagnosis that is given by a psychologist. Rosemond (2007) appreciates grandma parenting that stands the test of time (for centuries), and most importantly, it clearly discerns what is right and what is wrong. Grandma is a term he uses to refer to the parenting wisdom that comes from extended families, churches, and communities. Additionally, he states that parenting is like leadership. Parents need to take up the role as a leader with authority to conduct powerful discipline as well as to demonstrate powerful love. This leadership keeps both the parents' and child's interests at heart. By powerful discipline, he means consistent parental discipline that is carried out with calmness,

purpose, and authoritative confidence. By powerful love, he means parents live out the love that Jesus Christ demonstrated to human beings when he died to save others.

Rosemond (2007) believes that parenting will be much simpler when parents make it clear and precise so when they say “no” they mean it and vice versa. He shared that even little children have free will and choice, so they need to be held solely and fully responsible for whatever choices they make without excuses. He strongly recommends unforgettable discipline for serious misbehavior (e.g., take away a privilege for a long time). He thinks discipline that cannot be marked in a child’s memory will not have a lasting effect.

Echoing Rosemond’s (2007) statement regarding ageless valuable grandma parenting, Dobson (2014), a pediatrician and father, stated that the scientific community is not the best resource for parenting support. Instead, Christian ethics that have stood the test of time for thousands of years, offers reliable parenting wisdom. He proclaimed that current parenting suggestions and ideas that are produced by well-intentioned pediatricians, psychologists, and university professors are often contradictory to each other. He also criticizes the behaviorism that was represented by J.B. Watson in the early 20th century. According to Dobson (2014), Watson encouraged parents not to show physical affection toward the children in order for them to learn independence and to achieve great things in life. This parenting theory may sound utterly wrong today, but it was very popular among parents in the 1920’s. Dobson (2014) does not deny the significant influence of the psychological study of human behavior, but draws on the theory of reinforcement to make his point of how to cultivate self-control and self-

discipline ability in young children (e.g., start chart). Like Rosemond (2007), Dobson (2014) advocates for commonsense parenting which he claims is deeply rooted in Christianity. He gives four suggestions to help parents build competent parenting when they experience parent-child conflict. These tips include (1) the most significant objective of disciplining a child is to gain or maintain his/her respect; (2) conclude discipline with communication and love; (3) control without nagging; and (4) establish balance between love and discipline.

Tripp (1999, 2008) is another Christian parenting book author, pastor, and conference speaker. His two books *Shepherd Your Child's Heart* and *Instruct a Child's Heart* are very well accepted among Christian parents according to Plowman (2003), and all of my study participants had purchased his books. *Shepherd Your Child's Heart* is the major required reading book in some of the participants' churches' parenting program. Tripp's second book offers practical examples of heart orient parenting practice. Tripp (1999, 2008) centered his parenting suggestions on Bible scriptures in conjunction with theological assumptions and interpretations, emphasizing that parenting should focus on a child's "heart attitude" because he believes that hearts drive behaviors. "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45 New International Version). This type of heart attitude-oriented parenting requires careful parent observation of children's behavior patterns and requires an open, safe, and honest conversation before God (evangelical Christians believe God is living and present among them) about the application of biblical scriptures. Tripp (1999, 2008) criticized behaviorism that focuses on behavior modification and ignores children's "heart attitude," since he believes that

behavior modification based parenting breeds manipulators who know what to say/do to get what they want (Plowman, 2003).

Tripp (2008) creates formative instruction method (use God's words in parenting) that provides parents with biblical ways to help children know and interpret their experiences, the world, and the interaction between these two. It is a way to train children to think about God's words in every life situation. Tripp (1993) believes that children live in "lies" (e.g., secular culture, values etc.) every day and parental responsibility is to point them to the biblical truth that sets them free from lies and to walk toward eternal life. He states that parents should not be ashamed of being the children's authority. The purpose of being the authority is not to hold their children under their power but to empower them to become individuals who have self-control and self-regulation to live freely under God's authority. Additionally, he believes children appreciate instruction that is graciously firm and authoritative and parents are held responsible as the authorities to live out their lives as models to show their children Christ-like love.

Plowman's (2003) parenting techniques draw on Tripp's (1999) biblical parenting book *Shepherd Your Child's Heart*. She goes a step further to put Tripp's heart-focused parenting concept into practical everyday parenting practice with heavy application of Bible verses. Plowman (2003) is a Christian homeschooling mother, a conference speaker, and the founder of *Preparing the Way Ministries*. Her righteousness training approach of conflict management that focuses on children's hearts is organized in the following steps: (1) identify the nature of the conflict (selfish, anger, rude etc.); (2); draw on biblical scriptures to help children understand how they fall short of the Bible's

standard; and (3) role play the right response after reconciliation. She thinks the righteousness training approach not only corrects the outward misbehavior but also does the inward “cleansing.” In this process, children come to know their own heart and their need for God’s grace with parental assistance. They are not only trained to act right, but they are also trained to think right as Christians with this heart assessment that draws from their very own behaviors. She believes that preparing children to think as Christians helps them have wisdom and enables them to govern their own behavior that will glorify God. Therefore, they can then fully grasp the essence of the Christ-like attitude.

In summary, all of these Christian parenting book authors value biblical-based child rearing methods, and Christian theology is the primary foundation of their parenting suggestions. Rosemond (2007) states that if a parent reads the Bible from a child-rearing perspective, then the Bible itself is a parenting handbook, because human being’s relationship with God is a father-child relationship. Interestingly, conflict management skills are a focal discussion point in each of these books which illustrates the fact that parenting essentially is an everyday parent-child conflict “solving” process that prepares a child for adulthood and for better interdependence (Plowman, 2003).

Comparisons between Christian-based Parenting and Confucius-oriented Parenting Practices

Christian-based parenting and Confucius-oriented parenting, as described in the literature discussed in this chapter, both position parents as children’s authorities and emphasize child obedience. The differences are that Chinese parents’ authority is naturally enacted based on Confucian, while the Christian parents’ authority comes from

God. Confucius parenting values children's compliance for the purpose of reaching harmony in both the family and society, while the Christian parenting counterpart values obedience in children as a way to teach them to obey God.

Additionally, there are fundamentally different ideology assumptions regarding human nature between these two values systems. Evangelical Christians believe human beings are born bad natured because of the sin Adam and Eva committed, and love is the ultimate way to solve the problem. This love is demonstrated through loving Jesus Christ and loving others as oneself. Therefore, living a selfless life tends to be highly valued. Confucianism believes human beings are born good-natured (人之初, 性本善) according the *Three Character Classic*, and the way to keep them being good is to correct mistakes they commit that potentially harm the family and social harmony. Therefore, being a rational self and living a selfless life appears to be also highly valued.

Additionally, both value systems are open to physical discipline that is motivated by love in parenting. There is a Chinese saying, spanking is loving (打是爱), although there are no detailed constraints of physical discipline in Confucius parenting. Christian-based parenting has constraints on parents regarding how and when physical discipline should be administered. Dobson (2014) suggests that a three to five year old needs to be spanked when their disobedience endangers their safety. There is no direct and detailed discussion regarding what age range physical discipline is encouraged across the various Christian-based parenting books. However, the children's age range is typically from three to seven years old in the supportive examples that the authors used for their justification of physical discipline.

Given the dynamics and complexity of the living context and influencing forces, Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling families' parenting practices cannot be understood fully without examining their family backgrounds from the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's bioecology (2003) model of human development. However, Bronfenbrenner's (2003) bioecological model is a broader vision of the interaction between the individual and the environment in which the individual is situated. Since the dynamic of interpersonal interaction is neglected in Bronfenbrenner's model, Kuczynski's (2003) bidirectional model of parent-child interaction, therefore, is brought in to guide my study focus on Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mother-child interactions in consideration of their equal agency.

The Unidirectional and Bidirectional Parent-Child Interactions

Unidirectional perspective. A unidirectional perspective of parent-child interactions represents the early conceptualization of parent-child interaction. The theoretical foundation of a unidirectional perspective is traditional sociological and developmental psychology (Goh, 2011; Kuczynski, 2003). It mostly focuses on the causal relationship between parenting behavior and child outcomes, and it is mainly used to understand the parent-child relationship by examining the parent-to-child, causality-based communication dynamic before 1960 (Kuczynski, 2003). This dominant discourse painted the parent as the cause and the child as the effect in the evaluation of parenting efficacy, and children were framed as passive recipients of socialization.

Strauss (1992) described the traditional parenting as sending a fax: the children's socialization is a process of copying parental values and characteristics. Children are

perceived as the product of parenting practices (Kuczynski & Grusec, 1997). This “fax” model parallels the unidirectional model of parent-child interaction, and they both are inclined to neglect the fact that both the parent and child undergo processes of continuing change and development.

Kuczynski (2003) noted that both sociologists and developmental psychologists started to realize that the unidirectional conceptual framework neglects the ever-changing nature of individual development and society. Goh (2011) argued that children are active social agents who play significant roles in shaping and reshaping their own lived experiences and that parent-child relations are ambiguous and nondeterministic and truly interactive. Thus, an interactional and process-oriented perspective ought to be developed to better study parent-child relationships.

Bidirectional perspective. The theoretical foundation of bidirectional parent-child interaction is based on modern sociology and developmental psychology with theoretical roots in social construction theory (Goh, 2011). The bidirectional model views parent-child behavior as a series of discrete reciprocal unidirectional influences through which each response becomes the stimulus for the other. Parents and children engage in continual transformation as each responds to the others’ newly emerging behavior within the ecological system. The outcomes of parent-child interaction are constantly in process (Kuczynski, 2003).

A bidirectional perspective frames both parent and child as social actors who have agency, instead of seeing the child as an unthinking, passive, and static being who is to be socialized by the parent. Agency is the intentional and goal oriented action and the

constructive, interpretive activities of parent-child in the process of interaction. The paradoxical power negotiation between the parent and child is made possible through their distinctive and interdependent relationship in the context. Bidirectionality itself is a defined feature of parent-child interaction, and it is also the product of a close parent-child relationship (Kuczynski, 2003). From a bidirectionality perspective, children take an active stance of interpreting, evaluating, and selecting parental ideas and negotiating the outcomes of parenting. Internalization of values from a bidirectional perspective tends to be a lifelong process through which a person's beliefs, values, skills, attitudes, and motives constantly undergo development and are open to change and reconstruction (Kuczynski & Grusec, 1997).

Kuczynski's bidirectionality perspective includes four underlying components regarding the parent-child relationship according to Goh (2011). First, parent-child causality is inherently bidirectional. Second, the parent and child are equal agents. Third, a long-term interdependent parent-child relationship is the context for understanding parent-child dynamics. Fourth, the unequal power between the parent and child should be perceived as interdependent asymmetry (e.g. child gains power through the parent-child relationship and through the culture in which the parent-child relationship is embedded) (Goh, 2011).

Agency is the core of bidirectionality, and it considers individuals as social actors who have the ability "to make sense of the environment, initiate change, and make choices" (Kuczynski, 2003, p.9). The parent and child are equal agents from the bidirectional perspective, and they are social actors who bring interpretations, intentions,

plans, and strategies into their interactions with others (Kuczynski, 2003). Kuczynski discussed agency from three dimensions: autonomy, construction, and action. Autonomy includes two aspects that involve self-determination and self-protection. Self-determination concerns an individual's motivation to achieve personal control over his/her interaction with the environment, for example, children's commands and requests directed at parents (Kuczynski & Grusec, 1997). Control of environmental outcomes is important in building up an individual's feelings of competency and well-being. It plays a significant role in helping enhance mutual compliance between the parent and child (Goh, 2011; Kuczynski, 2003).

Self-protection concerns a child's motivation to preserve the self from external determination (e.g., pretend compliance or purely to defy a parental command). Self-protection could also be demonstrated through secondary adjustment. It is the way that an individual exercises agency (e.g., resistance) in the context of everyday life without interruption of the day-to-day function of the institution (e.g. perception and evaluation of parental actions). Resistance is the continuing theme across the parent-child relationship. Children actively resist, select, and negotiate parental ideas and construct ideas of their own. Parents who realize the parent-child relationship goes beyond the present may act in a way to promote the achievement of future goals of child rearing in their disciplinary interactions with their children (Kuczynski, 2003).

The bidirectional model of the parent-child interaction conceptual framework helps me take a process-oriented approach to study parent-child interaction and focus on the interactive nature of parent-child behavior. Furthermore, a bidirectional perspective

emphasizes the ambiguous and nondeterministic mutual process of the parent-child

interactive dynamic (Kuczynski, 2003) within a bioecological system. In the following

chapter, I discuss my research method and methodology.

“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.”

~Anais Nin

Chapter 3: Ethnography

Chapter two described the essential differences and similarities of Chinese Confucius-based parenting values and beliefs, in contrast to American evangelical Christianity-based parenting values and beliefs, under the theoretical umbrella of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecology theory. Additionally, the bidirectional perspective (Kuczynski, 2003) was described to unpack the dynamic and co-constructive parent-child relationship and reveal the relational and co-regulated nature of parent-child socialization within a homeschooling and cross-cultural setting.

This chapter includes four long sections to describe the process of conducting this study: (1) understanding ethnography as a research methodology; (2) practicing ethnographic research; (3) analyzing ethnographic data; and (4) the writing and rewriting process as an ethnographer.

Understanding Ethnography as a Research Methodology

This is a micro ethnographic study of three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers’ child-rearing practices in the United States while confronting parent-child conflict. Given careful consideration of my research purposes and research questions, I believe ethnography is the most appropriate research methodology. It guides me to concentrate on exploring the parent-child interaction culture of Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling families in the United States. Specifically, ethnographic inquiry orients me to focus on studying Christian Chinese

homeschooling mothers' everyday cross-cultural parenting practices (e.g. parent-child conflict management).

Culture is the central concern of an ethnographic study (Dobbert, 1982; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Patton, 2002; Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). There are four patterns in an ethnographic study of culture: shared value pattern; intergroup and interpersonal behavior pattern; creation, acquisition, and use of material objects and patterns; and the larger patterns subsumed under the aforementioned (Dobbert, 1982). Culture is difficult to see once an individual examines its logic, just like water is to fish. It is all around the fish and even inside the fish, but the fish never knows it (Foley, Levinson, & Hurting, 2000). Thus, the ethnographer should learn a culture with "fresh" eyes and like a child. The ethnographer needs to make familiar things strange and not to take things for granted in order to gain a deeper understanding of cultural events.

The epistemological assumptions of ethnography include a belief that reality is socially constructed, and there are multiple realities that exist. An ethnographer should not seek to determine the truth, but to reveal the multiple realities that appear in others' lives (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). An ethnographical research approach challenges me to construct multiple realities regarding how Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers negotiate cultural differences in their child-rearing practices and to become conscious of the dangerous single story. In addition, ethnographic methodology guides me to explore the hidden parenting beliefs and child-rearing values that are embedded in family cultures that Chinese homeschooling mothers have been constructing through their daily parent-child conflict management in the United States.

Ethnographic research tends to gain a comprehensive and holistic picture of social groups (Dobbert, 1982; Fetterman, 1998; Patton, 2002). Field notes are the making of the anthropology (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Sanjek, 1990). Ethnographers observe everyday people's lives and then create sensitive, useful, and stimulating field notes by becoming immersed in the field (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Intensive participatory observation of parent-child interactions in the field informs this study.

There are three features of a good ethnographic study: (1) Ethnography is both a process and a product, and there are methods of how to narrate a culture, and these strategies promise a text; (2) Ethnographic texts tell stories that invariably embody qualities of a novel; and (3) An ethnographic researcher takes the reader into an actual world to reveal the cultural knowledge working in a particular place and time as it is lived through the subjectivities of its inhabitants (Dobbert, 1982).

Ethnographic research differs from other research approaches (e.g., lab reports and statistics-based empirical studies) in the following ways: (1) it is intense fieldwork-based research and (2) participatory observation is involved in fieldwork. Namely, the researcher actively participates while observing ongoing activities at the research site (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Patton, 2002). Field notes created from fieldwork are the major constituents of an ethnographic study. Sensitive, rich, and stimulating field notes are crucial to a good ethnographic study. This type of field notes collection requires that the researcher be immersed into the field wholeheartedly with perceptive eyes. "Immersion gives the fieldworker access to the fluidity of other's lives and enhances his sensitivity to interaction and process" (Emerson, Fretz, &

Shaw, 2011, p.3). Coffman (1989) also stated that field research involves “subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situations, or their work situations, or their ethnic situations” (Emerson, Fretzs, & Shaw, 2011, p. 3).

An ethnographer involves all of her senses in the process of conducting a study, which enables her “to recall observed scenes and interactions like a reporter; to remember dialogue and movement like an actor; to see colors, shapes, textures, and spatial relations like a painter or photographer; and to sense moods, rhythms, and tones of voice like a poet” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 34). An ethnographer actively describes what is sensed, instead of “telling,” by drawing on the verbatim captured from field notes. According to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011), field notes not only include the direct record of observation, but also involve the researcher’s writing. Field notes involve “interpretation” by the ethnographer to determine what is to be put down, and what is to be left out as unimportant. It is through this editing process that the ethnographer can “create a world on the page and, ultimately, shape the final ethnographic published text” (p.20). It is also through this very writing away from the field and “behind the desk,” that the researcher conveys insights and understanding about the researched people and culture to the lay reader who does not share the same knowledge as the researcher.

Practicing Ethnographic Research

The purpose of this research is to explore three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers’ child-rearing practices in homeschooling settings and

in a bi-cultural context in the United States. The data of this study were collected through intensive participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and selective documentary.

Recruiting participants. This study took place at the home of each Christian Chinese homeschooling mother in the United States. A snowball sampling (Patton, 2002) method was applied to identify participants. The criteria for participant identification were (1) Chinese immigrant mothers who were self-identified Christians and came to the United States about 10 years ago or longer; (2) their children were born and raised in the United States; and (3) a Chinese immigrant mother who home educated her children. I initially identified Qing's family after meeting her at the Minnesota Association of Christian Home Education (MACHE) annual conference in the Fall of 2011. We got to know each other later on through church activities. I learned from her that there are a number of Christian Chinese homeschooling families in the Twin Cities area.

I shared my research interest with Qing and she gladly agreed to participate in my research. She also put me in contact with three other families that she knew well. These families showed interest in my study and agreed to be recruited as my future research participants by interacting with them in their co-op meetings. However, one mother changed her mind and preferred not to be recruited for the future study after a phone call that I made to greet her family in early January 2014. She shared with me that her children and husband were shy, and my presence could interrupt their daily interaction. I thanked her and respected her decision.

The study was conducted mainly based on my dissertation proposal and the plan that was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Minnesota after I received approval to recruit participants (see appendix A). These families were formally invited to participate in this study by signing the study consent form (see appendix B) after offering opportunities for them to understand the aims of my study and ask questions.

A six-month long participatory observation of the three evangelical Christian Chinese homeschooling families' parenting practices was conducted at each participant's house as agreed upon. Week one (Monday through Friday) I worked with Qing's family every first half of the day starting around 9am and ending around 2pm or for a whole day depending on that day's schedule. Week two I worked with De's family, and week three I worked with Xian's family, and then rotated back to work with Qing's family on week four. Pseudonyms are used across my study to protect participants' privacy.

Semi-structured interviews. Four rounds of semi-structured interviews were conducted at each Christian homeschooling mother's home, which each mother preferred. The three mothers also preferred to have the interviews in Chinese, but they sometimes used English expressions to support the delivery of their ideas. The first interview focused on family immigration background information and religious background such as when each family came to the United States. For example, we discussed why they chose the U.S., how they became Christians, and how their religious faith had influenced their parenting practices.

Both Qing and Xian were very attentive to the questions that were asked in our first round of interviews. Xian repeated every single question back to me throughout the interview to make sure she heard them correctly. I had a very interesting conversation with Qing regarding how religious faith influenced her parenting practices. She paused for a few seconds after I asked the question with her eyebrow slightly squeezed together, and then she slowly spoke to me that she did not agree with how the question was formed. She believed that her religious beliefs were the umbrella that undergirds every other thing, and her parenting was not influenced by religious beliefs, as implied as one of the social forces in the question. Instead, she stated that her religious beliefs were the foundation of everything. I then altered the question to ask how her parenting was impacted by her religious beliefs. Changing the question did not impact the quality of the interview from my perspective as the researcher since it was intended to be a very open-ended question designed to discover the relation between immigrant parenting and religious beliefs. However, it made a difference to Qing, and this “event” partially revealed Qing’s way of perceiving the world and constructing reality.

The second round of interviews focused on each family’s homeschooling background in the U.S. For example, I asked questions about how the homeschooling mother decided to home educate her children, how she managed different cultural expectations for her children’s upbringing in the U.S., what were the homeschooling mother’s child-rearing expectations, and what made a good homeschooling mother. It was interesting to find out that Qing believed that culture was an academic term, and it

was not appropriate to use this term to describe her parenting since her worldview was based on God and not based on culture.

The third round concentrated on gaining information about Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' parenting beliefs and child-rearing values. For instance, I asked about how the parents characterized a good child, a child with filial piety, and an obedient child. The fourth round of interviews focused on exploring the Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers' parenting practices. For example, I asked about what meant the most to the children, and what the homeschooling mother did to make sure they had it; what would the homeschooling mother do when her child constantly disobeyed; and what they believed the most effective ways to parent were based on the homeschooling mother's experiences, and why.

The three mothers had much share about their parenting beliefs, values, and practices. The interviews were very information rich and thought provoking, and it was a significant and enjoyable part of my research. De is a big laugher, and she enjoys sharing her little tricks of how she raised her three boys (e.g., she would scatter the books around the house when she wanted her sons to read). She kept telling me that when I have children, I need to teach the first born one really well, and the rest of the children will follow and look up to the first one.

Xian was an active thinker. She often paused before she responded to my questions and was a quiet laugher. She often would slowly share with me her reflection of the parenting techniques that she learned from the Christian parenting books after selectively putting some into practice. She laughed over the techniques that would not

work, and she gave serious looks when talking about significant concepts of parenting (e.g., her child's heart is more important than the behavior in discipline). She was an active learner of Christian-based parenting, and I was not surprised to find that her parenting values, beliefs, and practices were inspired by currently available Christian parenting books.

Qing's genuine yet negative self-evaluation regarding her parenting practices caused me to have deep concern and I struggled across the process of coding. However, after reflecting on my own growing up experience, I started to make sense of Qing's parenting behaviors. This very self-criticism behavior toward herself and her children — the negativity oriented and mistake correction focused Chinese parenting practice — had been passed down through generations. Her own self-criticism seemed to emerge because that is how parenting was done in the past in Chinese culture. However, this parenting behavior is often perceived negatively in the United States, and it did not work with Qing's children either. Most importantly, her parenting practices went against her Christian faith. In one word, what was a taken-for-granted parenting practice according to Chinese culture became a serious problem based on her current lived culture and religious beliefs. Worst of all, it did not work. Qing's struggle was real and she was not alone. That was one of the factors that motivated me to conduct this research.

All interviews were audio recorded and were conducted in Chinese based on these mothers' preferences. These conversational interviews were transcribed into Chinese text, and were coded in Chinese. The interview conversations that were selected to illustrate my findings were translated into English, and this Chinese to English translation process

was quite challenging at times. I could not find similar vocabulary in English for a few Chinese expressions to deliver the same meaning, so I often had to describe a short Chinese phrase with a few sentences when translated into English. Through this descriptive process, I gained confidence to share the complete meaning of the phrases. In addition, my advisor suggested that I leave the Chinese original expression as it was in parentheses next to my translation. The translation process also helped me appreciate the unique expressions of the two languages.

Analyzing Ethnographic Data

I took a holistic approach to immerse myself in the data as suggested by Patton (2002). Secondly, ongoing data analysis was conducted involving back and forth movement between a part to the whole and the whole back to the part of the data. It was a very messy process that initially seemed directionless and even pointless. The research memos played a critical role in this ongoing process, and it retained my initial interpretation and meaning for future reflection and revisiting. Dialogues with myself and with others through self-questioning and triangulating also played important roles that challenged my initial themes, understanding, and interpretations. These approaches to my data analysis were never a linear process. Instead, they sometimes occurred simultaneously. There were other times when one approach opened up space for the other approach, and it moved on as a circle.

Holistic analysis. In the stage of open data coding, I went through all of the data line by line to reveal a holistic picture of it, and to build familiarity with the whole set of data to gain a general sense of its significance. The data of each family was organized

and filed independently in chronological order in the initial stage of analysis. I wrote rough theme-based questions that summarized a certain behavior (e.g., when the Christian Chinese homeschooling mother pushed for obedience from her children, and when she let go and under what circumstances) in my second round of line-by-line open data coding of each family. In my third round of reading through the whole set of data, I highlighted the selected analytical excerpts and labeled them. In my fourth round of open coding, I kept some of the highlighted excerpts and removed the others as I read line by line of the whole data set and sometimes referred to my initial theme-based questions that I had grouped earlier on. I then pulled out these excerpts and grouped them under categories (e.g., Xiao's battle of wills with her mother over skipping lunch) in my fifth round of data analysis.

Focus coding was conducted line by line to narrow the clusters of labels and categories, and to turn them into themes or assertions. I was open to and searched for additional examples of a similar event that added variations, or exceptions to an emerging pattern as suggested by Emerson, Frets, and Shaw (2011). It was a "circle of thinking" and pondering process that involved moving back and forth between parts and the whole set of data.

Each family's parent-child conflict interaction dynamics were so different in terms of specific parenting approaches and family backgrounds, yet they were also so similar given their shared religious and cultural backgrounds that structured their child rearing. Thus, each mother's parenting practices were examined independently, and I also conducted cross case analysis on parent-child conflict management among the three

families. Data across each family was divided into segments, labeled, and color-coded. However, during the cut-and-paste process to fracture data for the purpose of making new sense and synthesizing it, I realized that I was lacking any common ground to conduct a comparison and contrast of each family's conflict management without situating them in a broader context. Thus, I moved back and forth between parts of the data to the whole set of data and experimented with many different ways to present it

I made an intentional effort to let my data guide my analysis as I examined the many pieces of each mother's parent-child conflict management story after they were categorized and labeled. It is significant to this study that my audience can clearly grasp the parenting practice nuances by feeling each mother's parent-child conflict and understanding their struggles through immersion in her parenting story. It is my hope that my readers can experience moments that they are actively thinking about how would they respond differently or similarly when confronting similar conflict situations, and what this similar or different response means to them. I gradually realized no one could do a better job than these mothers to tell their child rearing stories to help my audience actively interact with their stories. "Yes, I am going to have my data speak for itself." I said quietly to myself. So, these mother's voices were heavily embedded in my interpretation through and across the parenting stories.

In addition to what these mothers had to say about their child rearing practices, the vivid parent-child interaction stories that I observed at each mother's home were heavily present in my findings. Therefore, my findings chapters heavily relied on ethnographic vignettes. I could not present a fuller picture of their parent-child conflict

management experiences as evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers living in the United States without having their own voices and the observed stories in my writing. Thus, I took a storytelling approach to present each family's parenting story.

Keeping research memos. I kept research memos (analytic memos and reflexive memos) to record my initial data interpretations, understanding, and research methodology decision-making (Maxwell, 2013). Looking back at these memos opened up space for me to reflect on these early interpretations and understanding and cultivated insights that led to a deeper understanding of my study. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) stated that the field researcher does not learn everything at once about the concerns and meanings of others. Rather, she builds new insights and understanding beyond her prior insights and understanding through a continuing process (Emerson, Frets, & Shaw, 2011). I kept documenting how the emerging processes and stages unfolded on a regular basis, rather than attempting to reconstruct them at a later point for some final, ultimate interpretation of their meaning. This again revolved around the continuous back and forth movement between parts and the whole of my data that created the analysis circle.

Dialogue with others and myself. I often found myself having a dialogue with the text, and asked myself: "Are there any other ways that I can make sense of these selected analytical excerpts? Am I presenting a single story or multiple realities?" There were other times I would read over and over through a few selected analytical excerpts that I thought were very interesting, yet I was not ready to articulate their meaning and

ask myself: “What does it mean? What’s going on here?” It was through this self-dialogue process, I could present my findings with deep and detailed insights.

Dialogues with friends whose backgrounds were different from my own served as another way to make sense of my study. People outside of my field were invited to review my study, and I needed to articulate to them how I saw a theme. I gained confidence in my interpretation after explaining the process of how I came up with my themes because what I explained made sense to them. At other times, I was challenged by colleagues to dig deeper in my interpretation from different perspectives. For example, one of my friends challenged me to examine how my own living experience in the United States and marrying an American had shaped my understanding and interpretation of the data.

Dialogues with pre-existing literature on similar topics were brought into the discussion of findings and reinforced the trustworthiness of the current study. Conforming and non-conforming findings were taken into account to add to and strengthen the rigorousness of the assertions. Exploring what initially seemed to be different led to a richer discussion and more textured descriptions that encouraged more subtle, grounded analyses in a final ethnography (Emerson, Frets, & Shaw, 2011).

Writing and Rewriting as an Ethnographer

Dialogue is a multichannel social event in a social setting, and it opens up space for various perspectives. However, writing is linear in nature and can only handle one channel at a time. Thus, the writer must pick and choose among the cues available for representation (Emerson, Frets, & Shaw, 2011). Writing is not the final step of a study,

but instead, it is part of the process of doing research. It is often the case that what people write does not match the meaning that they intend to deliver in the initial stage of writing. Through the writing and rewriting process, the author can refine and sharpen the writing to better represent what they mean to deliver the message to the reader.

Ethnographic reality is one piece of a complete puzzle. It is a chapter of a whole story. There is no one exclusive perspective in its presentation. Therefore, there are crises of writing, presentation, and positioning of ethnographical work. It raises dilemmas and challenges for a researcher to present other people's voices with integrity and humanity. Britzman (1991) suggested that the researcher should conduct herself sincerely with full understanding of the context of the material that is researched.

I adapted Erikson's (1986) chart of "linkages between data and assertion" to frame the structure of the findings and text. The general assertions were undergirded by the sub-assertions which were supported by adequate events that came from field notes excerpts, interview comments, machine recordings, and site documents. Thus, direct quotes about crisis events and critical moments were applied to construct the narrative of the findings. Tensions and contradictions were also adequately addressed as important parts of the study. For example, Qing mainly demonstrated her parenting practice through her regular negative response toward her daughter, Xiao. However, one morning she strived to reason with Liu (her second youngest) gently over a series of conflicts that involved Xiao whom even directly pointed out that she had picked up and actively practiced Qing's negative attitudes with her siblings. It was through the excerpt sharing that the complexity of parent-child conflict tension was illustrated. Ethnographic

vignettes were the foundation of my study findings because these excerpts allowed me to represent the stories as they occurred at the study site.

Emerson, Frets, and Shaw (2011) stated that ethnography is “the peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one’s own experience in the world of these others” (p. 14). With Erikson’s (1986) “linkages between data and assertion” method in mind, I had many ideas about how to organize my writing to represent the experiences of the three Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers’ parenting practices while confronting parent-child conflict. When I started to write my research, my initial concerns were how much context I needed to present to help my readers see the story as it was: “How should I organize the themes that make the best sense?” It was not until I started to write that I understood that my initial thoughts of writing did not work well. Each family’s profile and their typical activity schedule each day were too lengthy to hold the readers’ attention and serve as the context. Thus, I took a storytelling approach, and constructed consistent stories with vignettes. However, the selected excerpts seemed too long as well. Through this practical writing process, I came to understand how to write in a way that made sense to me and to my reader. In the writing process I also needed to sharpen and refine my excerpts. I kept practicing to sharpen my descriptions and to make each sentence serve its purpose through dialogues with myself and with the text.

I experimented with different tone, structures, and methods to write before the current version emerged. As suggested by Emerson, Frets, and Shaw (2011), ethnographic reality is interpreted reality, and it is the work of second thought and

presentation in several ways. Thus, it is linguistically constructed and subject to change. Writing and rewriting helped me construct this ethnography study.

Research Positionality

I am an evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant. Because of this shared background with my participants, I made an intentional effort to not let my personal experience of becoming a Christian and marrying a Christian White American interfere with my data interpretation. I withheld my own story regarding these experiences, particularly because this study is about parenting stories of my participants, and I am not a parent yet. However, I caught myself often drawing on my own resources (experiences and shared knowledge) to make sense of the data.

For example, Qing's parenting tended to focus on encouraging her children to stay away from negative behaviors. In particular, every morning they would read a character book that primarily focused on deconstructive negative behaviors. I drew on my understanding about the firm and strict aspect of Chinese parenting and my own experience growing up in China to make sense of why Qing value these books so much in her children's character building. Firm parenting is considered as a way to love children based on Confucius ideology. Therefore, firm parents tend to correct children's deconstructive and negative behaviors from a parental perspective to make sure they are on the right track. With this cultural knowledge, it was easier to understand why Qing parented the way she did. Negative child behavior is a serious matter, and she was trying to be proactive to prevent these behaviors by reading these books to her children.

Another example is how Qing taught her second daughter, Xiao, about the consequences of disobeying God by read a storybook named Death through the Bible. Although I am also an evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant, and I know the story that Qing read with Xiao is described in Bible. I am also aware of disobeying God can have serious consequences. However, I strongly disagree with how Qing used the Bible story as example to share with a 6 year-old girl that the consequence of disobeying God is death. I realized my attitudes toward this observed event in my data analysis. The line between reserving and openly recognizing my own experiences as I conducted my study analysis remained a bit unclear which may have potentially caused me to be inappropriately biased.

Ethnographic research is profoundly concerned with who we are, how we became this way, and where we might go from here (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Patton, 2002). In the next chapter, I describe each Christian Chinese homeschooling mother's negotiation of identity position and perceptions. Following that, I introduce the context of how they reached their current understanding regarding their identities. I particularly focus on each Christian Chinese homeschooling mother's child rearing practices, and discuss what approach they took to work through parent-child conflict based on their identity perception and worldview. I respond to research questions one in Chapter 4, and research question two in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. I reflect on research question three throughout the chapters.

Chapter 4: Faith, Identities and Home

A fundamental part of my study is to introduce the reader to each evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling families' background before talking about the faith-based identities and home construction. Family portfolios are used to present each family. Each family portfolio includes stories regarding the couple's background, family members, how they became Christians, and the reasons for homeschooling. De's acculturation is included in her family portfolio because she appeared to struggle the most between the Chinese and American cultures.

Qing's Family Portfolio

Couple background. Qing talked quietly with a little smile when I first met her and her husband. She and her husband are both Chinese from Mainland China. Qing immigrated to the United States in 2000 shortly after their wedding so she could be with her husband who was still in graduate school at Water State. Shortly thereafter, she applied to the same university as a student majoring in mathematics for a master's degree. They then moved to a Midwestern state with their first child after graduation for a job opportunity. Her husband works in the Internet technology industry.

Christian background. Qing and her husband became Christians a few years after immigrating. In addition to Christian friends' tirelessly sharing the gospel with them, a miracle happened with her first-born child, Xing, contributing to her faith in Jesus Christ and becoming a Christian. During Qing's last trimester of pregnancy at a routine checkup, her doctor told her that there was a possibility that she may give birth to a child with a disability. She prayed to God saying, "This is something humans cannot do

anything about, only you (God) can do a miracle.” The baby was born perfectly healthy. Qing took it as a miracle from God and soon became a Christian.

Homeschooling background. Qing taught at an elementary, middle, and high school as a substitute teacher in the United States after graduate school. When her first child reached school age and was about to give birth to her second child, she decided to home educate them which corresponded with their planned move from a southern state to Minnesota. She decided to continue homeschooling after the move since it worked well for her and her children. In one interview, she shared that she admired homeschooling families’ life qualities (e.g. family members are very close, parenting is very God centered, children are very quiet, yet very responsible, smart, and polite). “It will be great if my children turn out to be that way once after I home educate them.” Qing shared quietly in one of the interviews that her husband neither supported nor was against homeschooling their children.

Family members. Now Qing has four children. The oldest three are girls and the youngest one is a boy. Xing was 11 years old, Xiao was 6 years old, Liu was 3 years old, and Qiu was about 5 months when I started my data collection. Qing and her husband have almost no support from family back in China. Qing lost her parents as a young adult shortly after she went to college in an eastern part of China majoring in Journalism. “My mother was a sweet and gentle woman in my memory. I loved to go shopping with her and learned to dance with her when I was little. I did not have a chance to develop a deep connection with my mother. When I became mature enough to be able to do so, she passed away.” Qing claimed that she did not have great connection with her siblings (she

has two brothers living in China, and they are much older than her). She and her husband do not have any family members and/or relatives living in the United States. Her husband's mother passed away recently. Her father-in-law came to visit for a few months while I was conducting fieldwork with Qing. Across my fieldwork with Qing, her social network was mostly from church, the homeschooling co-op, and other friendships the family made after immigrating to the United States.

Xian's Family Portfolio

Couple background. Xian and her husband are both Chinese. Her husband is originally from Hong Kong, and Xian was born in the southern part of China. Her whole family moved to Germany when she was little because her father decided to go to graduate school there. "I used to speak German better than Chinese, and now my German is not as good as it used to be," Xian shared one day with a sad tone. Her whole family moved to Singapore when she was a middle school student. Xian did her middle and high school education in Singapore, and met her husband there. They both went to Germany for college, and came to the United States for graduate school in 2005. Xian holds a master's degree in Education from Harvard, and her husband works for a Fortune 500 company. "Family is always my priority, not my career," Xian shared in our interview about her background, "so, after I graduated from Harvard, I applied for jobs close to where my husband was."

Homeschooling background. Xian turned down a job offer when she found out she was pregnant with her first child, Jing. "My second child came right after the first. I then decided to be a stay-at-home mother. Teaching them is a natural behavior, because

of my educational background. I like to teach, and my husband trusts me. He says

‘You like to teach; go ahead then,’ Xian shared with a big laugh. My parent would start to worry and they would ask, ‘Why are the children not attending school yet? What if they get delayed (in education)?’ Xian responded to her parents, ‘Okay. I can send them to school, but they already started reading books now. The schools are still teaching ABCs. Then they would not say anything. They know the children can read books now,’ Xian shares, quietly with a little smile on her face.

Christian background. Xian became a Christian before her college entrance exam in Singapore; however, she did not really go to church after that. She truly started to study the Bible and know Jesus Christ after her and her husband’s relationship ran into difficulty when they were in graduate school in different states in the U.S. ‘We reached a point that we could not communicate,’ she says with a peaceful tone. ‘When we both started to go to church, and study the Bible, we found out that we could still communicate. I learned that my pride is the root reason that I have been seeking God for years and years, yet did not come to believe in Him until these past years. My bad relationship with my husband did not change a bit, yet my heart started to feel joy after truly knowing God.’ Xian shared with a big smile on her face. Xian says calmly, ‘I do not have a great relationship with my mother, but I do with my father, so I always want to build a good relationship with my own daughters. My bitterness toward my mother has been reduced and our relationship has been gradually improving since I became a Christian.’

Family member. Xian and her husband now have four girls. Jing is the oldest, and she is 8 years old; Tiao is the second oldest, and she is 6 years old; Zhen is 3 years old, and Qi is almost 1 year. Both Xian and Qing's family attend the same Chinese Christian church in Minnesota. Xian's parents come to visit her each year. Her cousin's family lives in California, and they visit each other every other year. Xian's cousin often Skypes with her, and they chat about the children and church life. Xian's mother-in-law often comes to visit them too. "When they come, I have more time to be with my children, and my husband can relax a bit. However, I do not feel tired, and I feel competent caring for my family, so I do not have a preference if they are here with us or not," Xian shares quietly with confidence.

De's Family Portfolio

Couple and Christian background. De comes from Mainland China, and her husband is a White American. He went to teach English at a university located in the eastern part of China with a missionary team in the 1980s as a new college graduate, and De became a Christian through this missionary team. De eventually received her parent's blessing, and was able to marry her husband after years of struggles and battles with her parents who, back then, had no knowledge about people from other countries. In addition, the Chinese government's attitude toward Westerners in the 1980s was not stable. They fled China in 1989 shortly after the Tiananmen Square protest because the government started to become sensitive toward the Western population.

Homeschooling background. After her husband asked her to home educate their children, De admitted with a concerned look on her face, "I did not dare home educate

my children. I cannot and was afraid I would teach them wrong. In addition, I am international...Now, looking back, it's such a nice decision. I would not change my current happiness (teaching my children at home and being a good helper to my husband) with ten times or hundred times more career success than I initially imagined myself to achieve." De shared with a quiet smile on her face and paused there for a few seconds and looked like she was preoccupied with her memories of family life in the past years.

Family members. De has three sons. Her oldest, Jake, is 19 years old and a college student with a double major. De even called me once after my data collection to invite me to go to his recognition party for an award her oldest son would be receiving from the Christian college he was attending. De always had a big smile on her face while talking about how he turned down scholarship offers from two other very good universities but chose to attend his current university. Her second oldest, Zack, was 15 years old and preparing for his SAT. The youngest, Sam, was 13 years old and in the 9th grade. "I butt heads the most with my third one because we are so much alike," De says with a big laugh. "People say you fight the most with the one (child) that is like you the most," De continues sharing with a smile on her face and concluded, "That's so true."

Acculturation. Of the three Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers in this study, De had acculturated to the United States the most, mainly because her husband is White American. She was also able to compare and contrast the most between Chinese and American cultures in terms of behavior, talking and thinking. "There are times I cannot remember how to express certain things in Chinese, yet I do not know how to express it in English," De laughed and she continued, "However, it's OK, I am who I

am,” De shares with a smile still on her face in our interview. De also struggled the most living between the two cultures.

It is interesting, however, that she suffered the most because of her violation of Chinese family culture. One day before she left to help her very sick father back in China, she admitted with her eyebrows tightly squeeze together. “You know, when I go back to visit my family in China, if my husband says or does something wrong, it’s easy for my family to forgive him, because he is international, but not me. Oh, it’s hard for them to pardon me if I say or do something wrong (inappropriate to local cultural norms).” De also shared that “I feel I am neither Chinese nor American, you know,” She paused for a while with a little smile on her face and said, “Oh, I can say I am Chinese and also an American. That’s better, (and it’s) too negative to say neither Chinese nor American.” De sounded so happy that she figured out a better way to express her identity, her way of thinking, and doing things.

Evangelical Christian values served as the foundational principles of how these three Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers made sense of reality (who they were, where their home was, and the values they had for her children). Therefore, it is important to understand their deep perceptions about life to put their parenting practices into perspective. It is also important for the reader to understand how deeply their evangelical Christian values shaped their parenting practices.

Who I am and Where Home is

Each of the Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers identified herself as God’s child and creation, and her purpose of living was to “glorify God as a way to fulfill His

purpose of creation.” This identity recognition seems to be the basis of how they made sense of living, and they often referred back to it across my interviews and fieldwork. For example, Qing responded sincerely with a soft tone and eyes wide open in our interview at her home, on the question “Who are you?”: “I am fearfully and wonderfully made (a direct quote from the Bible). I am the creation of God, chosen and adopted by Him.” This was a common theme among the women. Another mother, Xian, responded to the same question and she shared that she is “God’s child,” and she only wanted “to be His child because there is nothing better than that.” De seemed a bit surprised when I asked her the same question. She repeated my question, laughed while saying, “I am who I am (我就是我嘍).” Yet, in our subsequent interview questions, she mentioned five times that “human beings are God’s creation” and three times that she is “God’s daughter and the princess of the King of King.”

In addition, these three mothers believed that there is an old self and new self, that is separated by before and after becoming Christians. Therefore, before they became Christians, they saw themselves as ethnically Chinese (the old self), whereas after they became Christians, they saw themselves as having a new self with a spiritual new life, and they identified themselves as “God’s children.” Their new self as Christians tended to have a serving heart to serve others, and the old self often wanted to be served by others. Each mother discussed their constant battles between their old self and new self in their everyday lives. They were trusting that God would help them gradually remove the sinful traits (e.g., selfishness) of the old self and lead the new self to grow stronger if they have a good relationship with God.

In our first interview, De shared, slightly exaggerated one day at her home while we were chatting, that when she lives in her old self, she often feels that everybody needs to serve her. She said when she is self-centered and complacent, her old self is coming out. Xian also shared that the hardest part of homeschooling was to let the old self die (not to be self-centered). When asked, “What are the most challenging parts of homeschooling” in our second interview, she said that her self-centered plan for her children made everybody unhappy, and she gradually learned to let go of her will and become more attentive to her children’s actual needs. Qing taught her daughter, Xiao, during the character book reading about the co-existence of the new self and old self. She said that doing good deeds could help the new self grow stronger and the old self grow weaker. She encouraged Xiao to do good deeds.

However, behind this shared belief of who they were after becoming Christians, each of these Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers had their own unique stories and interpretations of how they reached their current understanding of their new and old identities. Here is Xian’s description of how she made sense of her identity in our interview after I asked her how she reached her current understanding about her identity:

I know I am God’s child. After becoming a believer, my identity (as Chinese) is no longer important to me. Being Chinese, it’s great (smile). I used to be influenced by common sense that I am Chinese. I do not want to be a banana (a metaphor used to describe a Chinese with yellow skin but white heart, a negative term that is used to describe Chinese who are very assimilated into American culture and a symbol of betraying your own culture). Now, it doesn’t matter, banana or not. I just want to be God’s child (and know that) I have a special position in this world. I gradually learn that being Chinese is not my nature. My nature is a human being who is created by God, loved by God and redeemed by God, right? It’s just God saved me, and I am the one whom He put to be born in China. Of course, I have special attachment to China, after all, I was born there, (but) this is not my nature. I can speak Chinese. That’s what God give me. It is a

special (pause), how should I call it (pause)... special skill. It's used for God's purpose. That's not my nature, my nature is that I belong to God, (and) I am God's child.

Xian shared her thought process regarding how she rationalized her given identity (ethnic Chinese) and chosen identity (child of God) to articulate who she really believed she was. Her rationale was seeing her ethnic Chinese features as skills—resource characteristics (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006)—that could be used for God's purpose as God's child. According to Xian's narrative, her ethnic identity as Chinese was only a visible feature, and her nature was being God's child. Her identity as God's child was a psychological recognition, and it was not as visible as her ethnic identity. However, her old struggle of not being “a banana” (yellow on the outside and white on the inside) revealed her pride of being Chinese and being God's child. This self-identity also could be seen as a third space in order to avoid the dilemma of choosing to be Chinese or American. She continued to share how she rationalized her physical being in the world.

I also know where my home truly is, not the one on earth, (but) the one in heaven. Of course, my physical being is here (on the earth). It doesn't matter if my body is here (on the earth) or living with God (in heaven); eternity has started. My obedience to God is not demonstrated through doing one visible good deed; there are times I just agree to whatever God says. For example; God says people should leave their parents, and unite with their partners. I agree with whatever God says. Then I know my home is where my husband is. Because I agree and follow what God says, my home is wherever my husband moves to. China, and my experience in China, if people ask me (if I am Chinese), (I will say) I am Chinese. I mean it sincerely, I am truly Chinese, and I feel like I am too...but (I am not the Chinese) with all the passion of being a patriot and despise other countries like I used to (big laughter). I was born in China, that's my culture. I speak Chinese in my growing up process, and my parents are Chinese. (I) like Chinese food, and it's one of the ethnic groups that God created, and I am one of them. I will serve God there if that's His plan, but if God wants me to leave there (China) and never go back, I will not go back, and that's fine. (If you ask if I will) miss being there, (I) will, just like I also miss being in Germany, where I had good friend whom I won't see again for a long time or a lifetime.

Xian made sense of her identity under God's sovereignty. Her identity as God's child was on top of any other identity. She rationalized her other social behaviors and physical being based on the Bible. Her experiences of living in different countries was considered a phenomenon—a visible aspect of living that looked very different, but it did not impact her view of life and her thinking about the purpose of living. She believed that God's Word did not change along with environmental changes, and that it essentially changed her family and her way of thinking. In particular, it changed her subjective perception that the world's reality was the essential factor that shaped her identity.

Here is Qing's narrative regarding how she made sense of her identity as God's child in our interview after I asked her how she processed her identity transformation.

What is my identity? My identity is his (my husband's) wife, children's mother. What if my husband abandons me, my children leave me. If my identity is built up on these things, I change along with the changes of the environment I am situated in, once these things change, I am done and become nobody. This is something (as God's child) you have to experience yourself. Once you experience it, you know it's real that you are God's daughter. But if you do not, then it's just knowledge in your mind. I truly know. (if you ask me) Why? I had thought about it, and the answer is: I have the peace in my heart because I know I am the daughter of God. The Heavenly Father loves me, and loves me forever. God is love.

Qing looked beyond her current physical being and social roles to make sense of who she truly was. She sharply pointed out a possible and practical yet imaginative lived situation: if she built her identity based on her current living space and context, then once these contexts changed as life changed, she was more likely to lose herself, lose connection, and become nobody. Her narrative revealed her understanding about the nature of the ever-changing world, and it also seemed to reveal her lack of feeling secure

and belonging. However, she had peace knowing that she was God's daughter and had this spiritual identity at heart.

De chatted with me regarding her experiences with race and discrimination in her early years of immigration starting in 1989. "It was a really serious problem back then." She recalled that one time when she went to Wal-Mart with her husband, a white woman swore at her, and she did not understand what she was saying, but her husband did. "What did you say?" he shouted at this woman. De later asked her husband what the white woman had said to her. "It's not worth it to know," he told De and never shared with her what the woman had said. She experienced race discrimination in subtle ways over the years, but she said, "I reach the point that I do not really even care what other people have to say, I am the princess of the King of Kings, and I am treasured in His eyes. Why should I care how people view me when they can't even go to heaven? I find my identity in God's world, not in people's eyes." De said with a serious look that her identity recognition provided a safe space to be without secular struggles. Here is how De made sense of her identity when I asked her how she processed her identity transformation. She shared this experience with a soft and uplifting tone.

My identity is established in Jesus Christ. Before (pause), before I had an identity crisis. I lived in United States for a while and did not feel like I belonged here, so (my husband and I) went back to China. (However) we were treated like guests and like outsiders. We returned from the United States, it's like I did not have my roots transplanted (in the United States), yet my roots in China were already pulled out. My heart became empty all of a sudden, and I was very miserable. (We) went to an international church on Sunday in Shanghai while visiting there a few days before coming back to the United States. In the church, people from all over the world, (e.g.) European, North American, Korean, and Chinese like us were returning from abroad. (I felt like I was) in heaven all of a sudden and felt like God is telling me that I am neither American nor Chinese citizen, but the citizen of heaven. Wow, the music, the joy, and the feeling of peace, settled in

me. My root is planted in heaven, and nobody can take it away. Since then (short pause), me (short pause), because (short pause), nobody can take it (identity) away. This is God. That was the day of Easter. Oh, I was so touched. Oh, just like what Zhiming Yuan (a Chinese pastor) says, lose the earth (but) gain the sky (heaven). Since then, every time going back to visit, (I have the) solid identity, and the conviction that makes me very satisfied. This satisfaction cannot be obtained from anywhere else in the world, because I am the citizen of the creator of the universe. I sometimes tear up thinking about this. God, you love me so much.

De experienced God when she had an identity crisis shortly after immigrating to the U.S, and going back to China. Her identity as a citizen of the universe's creator comforted her, and her conviction of being God's child helped her go through unfair treatment with a peaceful heart as an immigrant in the U.S. In particular, her faith in God took away her secular identity (American/Chinese) struggle.

In conclusion, the identity recognition stories and experiences varied among these three mothers in space, time and context. However, they all recognized themselves as God's children, and it was their ultimate identity according our interviews. Interestingly, across my fieldwork, these three mothers all directly and indirectly identified themselves as Chinese at some point in everyday interactions. Their identity, in fact, was really not fixed, but context based, and it was subject to changes in their given space and time frame. Most importantly, identity can be subjective. Who these mothers essentially perceived themselves to be deep down in their hearts was the major factor shaping how they lived their lives and raised their children.

Where is Home

A well-known saying is "home is where our heart is." For these three Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers, home was not necessarily where the physical building

was located. The places they perceived as home were deeply connected with their identities. How they processed and positioned their identities reveals what they truly believe and value as mothers and human beings considering the given social context, space, and time frame. Here is Xian's narrative regarding how she made sense of "Where is home?"

I used to think Will city (China) is my home. Things started to gradually change after immigrating to the United States and working on my Master's (degree). I became a Christian, graduated, (married) my husband and built a home together in May city (United States). My thinking (where home is) started to change. I realize that Will city is no longer my home after becoming a believer of Jesus Christ, and I do not recognize the road (going home). I left Will city at a very young age, and even though I am very close to my grandma, I'm still a guest. I feel my identity changed after becoming a believer of Jesus Christ. The moment that touched me the most was knowing that Will city is not my home anymore, and it happened one time during a visit back to Will city. It's when I took my first born baby, Jing, back to Will city. That's the first time I deeply know that it's not my home anymore. My home on this earth is where my husband is.. Now I no longer say my grandparents' house is my home, but where my husband lives. It had already changed and I realized it then. In addition, I went to (grandparents) home visiting with the gospel (telling them about God), and they resisted it. Jesus says family members become the enemy regardless of how close you are to each other.

Xian's marriage to her husband, having children, and living as a Christian who shared the gospel with family members, and her experience of being rejected by other family members, all contributed to her recognition of her transformation about where home is for her. Home to Xian was where her husband was in this world now, with the conviction that her ultimate home is in heaven. In traditional Chinese culture, it would be natural for a married woman to consider home (to be) where her husband is located. The nuances are that Xian took the earthly home as where her husband is, and her ultimate home is in heaven. Her faith in God was so real to her to the point that she considered her grandma as a spiritual enemy even though she was very close to her emotionally.

Here is how Qing made sense of “Where is home?”

I know I just live in this world temporarily, I’m meant to suffer in this world because I am burdened with sin. My sin makes me miserable. All that happens to me, including the way I do things, the change of thinking, and the conflicted way of doing things. All the changes and conflicts after my immigration to the United States and then going back, is because I live in such a sinful world. However, I know that’s not why I live in this world, I live for getting to know God and for the home in heaven. All I am suffering now is temporarily and light, the very short and light suffering according to the Bible, for the eternal glory. The time (living) in heaven is so much longer than the time we (live) in the world, almost invisible. There are times that we feel like the things in this world mean a lot to us. Once I think about this identity (in heaven) I have peace and joy. It’s not like your situation changes and then you have peace and joy.

Qing’s process of where home is was heavily based on her faith after she became a Christian in the United States. It did not connect with her recognition of changes that occurred after immigrating to the United States in 2000 due to her earlier identity crisis after the passing of her parents as a young adult in China. She never visited her family again in China because she did not have very close connections any longer in China. Therefore, her thinking and reflections about who she was and where home was tended to be based primarily on her living experience and spiritual development after immigration. She also tended to have less of a sense of connection and belonging in the world given her lack of an extended family support system.

De learned to transplant herself in the United States after feeling that her roots as Chinese and home in China were pulled out, as shared in the earlier excerpt above. Along her life journey of having a family and children in the United States, and her life path of going back to school, working after graduation, and quitting her work to homeschool her

children, she learned to solidify her identity as God's child and viewed her ultimate home as being in heaven.

All three Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers pointed out that their identity in God was eternal. It never changed with changes in their living environment, and also could never be taken away. Their ultimate home was perceived as being in heaven, and their home on earth was considered temporary. It is worth pointing out that De and Xian had opportunities to visit their families in China many times, and their psychological experience of going back home to China and then returning to the United States may have triggered their active thinking and processing about who they were and where they perceived their home to be in a more concrete way compared to Qing.

God-Centered Worldview

In addition to talking about the identity construction of these three evangelical Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers and where they perceived home to be, they shared details about their worldview as human beings. I also talked about the specific concept of self in Christianity. Again, it is important for the reader to build deep understanding of these mothers' Christianity worldview to better understand their parenting practices. These mothers attended evangelical Christian churches where the preaching is centered on biblical scriptures, and the Bible is encouraged to be lived out literally. They share Christian truths on authority, so the authority structure within a household is that Jesus Christ is the head of the family, and the husband is the leader of the family.

Parents hold authority over their children (Plowman, 2003; Tripp, 1999, 2008), and that authority was put in the children's lives by God to love, guard, and protect them. These mothers also recognized the lifetime battle they faced between the secular self (old self) and the spiritual self (new self). The secular and flesh-based old self is considered to be destructive and detrimental because it is a selfish and self-centered nature (Piper, 1986, 1996, 2013). These three mothers' goal of living was to become more like Jesus Christ, who lived a selfless life and sacrificed for the others He loved. It is an ideal and the highest living standard, meaning that they love others as themselves in God's name.

One day in our interview Qing answered the question, "How do you live a Christian life?" with a big smile, saying, "When people ask you why you are so much like Jesus Christ, then that's right, and that's the idea of living," After I asked her "Who would she want to be if she had a choice?" De answered with a smile, "I want to be a person who glorifies God. Namely, the self needs to become less and less, and Jesus's life is demonstrated more and more through my life. People can see the holiness of Jesus Christ through me."

Xian described her experiences of letting go of herself in our interview after I asked her "What does it mean to let go of self?" She said, "God's ultimate purpose is to turn me into Jesus Christ. Jesus says if you want to follow me then you have to lose yourself, and carry on your cross. Self has its will, and this will often go against God's will. What I need to do is let this self die and connect with Jesus Christ through His death." Xian shared her answer quietly, paused for a few seconds and continued.

I used to think letting go of self is to make some sacrifice as a price to follow Jesus. It's like sacrifice something very precious to follow Him (God). In fact, I

was just letting go of something really bad that I thought was precious and held onto tightly. Like self, we all think self is very precious. The fact is self is very filthy, and it's worthless to keep self. (Once you know this) then you are willing to let go of self and follow Jesus. It's like choosing between death (Xian's narrative in my other interview explaining that a living person actually is dead if the spirit is dead, meaning they do not have Jesus Christ's life in them) and life. Of course I choose life.

These three Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers wanted to live a selfless life and become like Jesus, who lived a life in the sinful world and completely obeyed God without sin. How this rationalization shaped each mother's parenting practices over conflict management in the homeschooling setting in the U.S. is discussed in the following chapters. In the following section, I discuss these mothers' values and hopes for their children's lives through their parenting efforts, and how they helped their children make sense of their identities through everyday interactions.

Parental Expectations to Children

Each of the mothers in this study was very concerned about building values and self-identities in their children through their homeschooling and parenting practices. Of utmost importance to these three Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers was that their children recognized God, loved Him, and lived to glorify Him, and most importantly, to learn to build their identity in God. De saw her responsibility as a parent "to always put the light in front of them. It's up to God to open their spiritual eyes; we pray for them. One day, God will open his spiritual eyes, and he'll see Jesus Christ. All we should do as parents is put the light in the life, and point them to the light."

However, identity recognition is very subjective, and it is a process and product of self-negotiation with the environment along with children's natural development. Parents

exercise their agency to guide their children's identity construction whereas their children actively interpret, evaluate, select, and negotiate based on their parental influences (Kuczynski, 2003).

De shared that her boys identified themselves as Americans. However, she believes that they are somewhat Chinese too. For example, her oldest son Jake loves Chinese food, and he cooks Chinese food in his campus apartment in college. Interestingly, even though De wished that her sons would recognize their Chinese heritage at some point, she often referred to them as Americans in her everyday interaction with them while referring to herself as Chinese. Identity again becomes a subjective recognition and construction. It matters the most who the person thinks he/she truly is. De's children's convictions of themselves as Americans seemed to protect them from having an identity crisis in the process of growing up.

Qing was the most concerned about her children's identity construction, which was triggered by her own observation that her children had difficulty fitting into their American peer groups. "They have American peer friends. But, their connection is very limited. It's hard to truly fit in (交流很有限, 很难真正融入)." However, Qing maintained hope in God. Here is Qing's narrative of how she helped her children build their identity in God in our interview.

I chatted with Shi Mu (the pastor's wife of the church she attended) yesterday, and she shared that immigrant Chinese children often do not have a clear understanding of their identity. However, having a clear understanding of identity is very important. I do not separate the secular identity from the spiritual one. For children, their identity, does not matter if they are Chinese or American. God has the best plan and wishes for them. This identity (in God) decides the rest. I am still learning how to help my children establish their identity in God. The good news is there are lots of Bible verses (talking about identity), for example, 'I

am wonderfully and fearfully made'. (I) teach these (verses) to them when we read the Bible together. I want my children to learn why they live in this world and (know) the purpose of living is to glorify God. They still would be confused about their identity and who they are. They themselves would often say, 'I am American (children's self-identification), he is Chinese, grandpa is Chinese, and so we do things differently.' I am still learning, and I cannot teach them what I do not know or have not experienced before. I will be very open and honest and tell them that Mom does not understand; let's learn and share together.

Qing seemed fully aware of the differences between teaching her children to build their identity in God and her children's actual confusion of who they are based on their interactions with others. This confusion can be traced back to the children's awareness of their differences as demonstrated through their interactions with Chinese from the Chinese communities and churches and Americans from American communities and churches. In addition, Qing's everyday parent-child interaction indicated that identity is focused on identifying either as American or Chinese. For example, Xing mapped out the evolution of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America and posted it on her bedroom wall. After a musical toy map of the United States displayed the pledge, Xiao repeated it, and Qing helped her to memorize it saying the pledge after noticing her doing so. However, while they were learning Chinese together, Qing would say, "We are Chinese; we should learn Chinese well." Qing's lack of consistency in her teaching may have contributed to the children's sense of confusion as well. Here is Xian's narrative regarding how she helped her children build their identity.

They are who they are (pause). Okay, they are Chinese and were born in America, so they are America-born Chinese. I just think they will be different among the other children. They are little now, and they may not notice that. They will feel they are different when they get older. You know, their living environment and things they get exposed to are different, plus our heritage is not American. It's anticipated that they may feel they are very much different from the others when

they are out. However, that's not necessarily a bad thing. That's something they have to overcome. The ultimate solution is to guide them to build their identity in Jesus Christ as I have been doing. It's not like we are Chinese or American, but we belong to Jesus Christ. That's the reality they need to accept. It's not necessarily a bad thing to let them feel they are not like others. God is life, and there are dead people without God. You know, their spirit is dead, and their life has no meaning regardless of what they do or achieve in this world. They are empty eventually without God. My prayer for my children is that they know God and truth when they are young. Knowing God's words and knowing what they are supposed to do; knowing why they live in this world, enjoy being with God.

It is interesting that Xian did not think her children sensed any cultural and ethnic differences at their current age. She believed that their ultimate way to make sense of their identity after they realized their differences in a foreign country as an immigrant would be to build their identity in God. God became their way of knowing and being, so that is what Xian was striving to teach her children.

These three Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers all wanted to help their children build their identities in God as God's children, yet they also recognized that it was beyond their capacity to control whether their children truly recognized God and had faith in him and were able to build their identity in Him. Thus, it was these mothers' stated hope in their prayers. They believed that their responsibility as parents was to teach their children God's words and lead their children to God as the source of their identity. Both Qing and Xian indicated that their children's identities were not simply Chinese or American. This statement itself directly reveals the real potential struggle of their children's identity construction given the dual cultural living context as they grew up or in the future. De's children did not have such a concern because their dad is American, and they identified themselves with their dad.

In Chapters (5, 6, 7), I illustrate how each mother's worldview is enacted in her everyday parenting practices revolving around conflict management in a homeschooling setting as she is immersed in a bi-cultural context. I take a storytelling approach and organize each family as an individual unit to share a holistic story of the ways that each family's parent-child conflict is negotiated and managed.

Chapter 5: Qing's Everyday Parenting

How parents manage parent-child conflict over time on a regular basis in their everyday interactions tends to demonstrate their true parenting practices, and illustrates their values and beliefs (Kuczynski, 2003). In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I present how each evangelical Christian Chinese family worked through conflict situations embedded in everyday parent-child interaction in the homeschooling setting in the U.S. I use a process-oriented approach to examine their parent-child interaction stories from a bioecology perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 2001) with careful consideration of an equal parent-child agency (Kuczynski, 2003). I organize each family's story as a unit to share a holistic story of that family's conflict management practices.

Each family's story is situated in a micro context with a snapshot of that family's daily activity schedule. I then present stories based in ethnographic vignettes of that family that illustrates their parent-child conflict management. I summarize each family's story including their challenges and difficulties situated in everyday life that may contribute to making sense of the way they deal with parent-child conflict.

Qing's parenting practice is illustrated through three patterns: (1) push for obedience and discipline immediately, if needed; (2) negotiated obedience; and (3) let go without pushing for obedience. Qing's family schedule is important for the reader to understand to situate her parenting in a broader context before I unpack her parent-child conflict management practices. The events are explicated in present tense- a narrative style that help the reader enter into the daily practices of these mothers and their children.

A Typical Day of Qing's Family

Breakfast. It is 9:00 in the morning, Xing goes to the kitchen, pulls out breakfast items, and puts them on the dining table. Xiao gets the bowls and puts them in a line in front of each seat. Xing pours some cereal into each of her sisters' bowls that were sitting in front of them (the grandparent's bowl and mother's bowl were left empty and sitting on the other side of the table) with one hand holding the box, and the other hand holding the opening of the box to manage the amount of cereal that she put into each bowl. She then pours milk into each sister's bowl. Qing is washing the front part of the baby chair for Qiu. "Come here, pray, and eat (过来祷告吃饭了)," Qing says to her girls while starting to feed Qiu the banana flavored baby food in a little jar with a green plastic baby spoon. She says "ah" while opening her mouth, and Qiu looks at his mother and imitates her to open his mouth with smiles with both hands waving up and down while the spoon is approaching. Qing is smiling too at this point while baby-talking to Qiu "ahah" with her head slightly moving left and right. Another day, Qing is feeding Qiu the baby food and he does not like the mix of apple-blueberry flavor, and Qing sneaks in one spoon of it while feeding him the banana flavor that he likes. After a while, Qiu seems to realize the tricks his mother is playing, and he waves his hand and knocks the spoon out of his way, and Qing laughs with her head slightly tilted back while saying "no-no"!

"What are you guys eating? Oatmeal? (你们再吃什么呀, 燕麦粥么)," Liu asks while sitting on the sofa watching the family sit at the dining table having breakfast. While feeding Qiu, Qing instructs, "Come here and eat (过来吃)," Liu follows her mother's instruction and comes to sit at the dining table. "Did you guys pray before your breakfast?" Qing pauses for a few seconds and looks at her girls, and continues, "Let's

pray.” This is often a rhetorical question Qing often asks to indirectly remind her girls to pray. The girls start to sing the prayer song while looking at each other and their mother. “God is so good, God is great, thank you for the Monday breakfast on the table, Amen, amen, a--men.” This is a song that Qing made up, and the lyrics change based on the meal and the day. “Mom, I am full (妈妈, 我饱了),” Liu says while looking at her mother, still sitting at the dining table after having some cereal. Qing responds with a firm tone while looking into Liu’s eyes, “Finish all of the cereal, and use the spoon to eat (把所有的 cereal 都吃完, 用勺子吃”). Liu starts to eat with a spoon according to her mother’s instruction. Xiao also quickly moves back to sit at the dining table and tries to finish her breakfast.

Clean up. “Go brush your teeth, wipe your face and comb your hair (去刷牙, 洗脸, 梳头),” Qing notices that after breakfast Xiao is wandering around the living room holding her pink handbag with the Bible inside, and she asks her to refresh herself. Xiao is about to head to the bathroom after hearing her mother’s instruction; however, Qing stops her by asking, “Why do you have to take the handbag along (你为什么拿着那个去)?” Xiao stops with a smiling face to look at Qing, hoping she can get by with taking her handbag along. Shortly after that, she goes to the bathroom with her handbag and comes back with it. Qing sees Xiao’s hair on the left is sticking out a bit, and asks her to comb her hair again, and Xiao shakes her head while looking at her mother and seems to forcefully push herself back to the bathroom to comb her hair. Another day when she is about to comb her hair, she pulls some of her long hair from the back to front and makes herself look scary while making scary sounds and walks into their bedroom. “Get off the

sofa, go wash your hands and brush your teeth after finishing your breakfast,” (下去，吃完了去洗手，刷牙) Qing says, with a quick and sharp tone, after coming in the living room and seeing Xiao reading a book with her shoes on the sofa.

Qing often asks her children to clean up after breakfast, and she often looks like she is hoping her children will go do it themselves after she keeps reminding them; however, that is rarely the case. There are times when Xiao and Liu fail to listen to their mother, and it often makes Qing look like she is on the edge of losing her patience. She reminds her daughters again with a firmer voice by listing all the tasks they need to get done together. “Brush your teeth, wash your face, comb your hair, and then go to read your Bible (刷牙，洗脸，把头发梳了再去读).” Qing repeats her request for the second time with a firmer tone while looking directly at her children quietly until she sees them walking from the kitchen to the bathroom.

After the girls leave to clean up, Qing often starts to clean up around Qiu’s baby chair since lots of food often drops on the floor while eating his breakfast. She then cleans the breakfast dishes. Sometimes, she asks Liu for help if she happens to see her around. “Liu, come here, let’s clean up together (Liu,过来，我们一起来收拾一下).” “Mama, I want to do the dishes (妈妈，我想洗碗).” Liu responds promptly and volunteers to help do the dishes while walking toward her mother. Qing sounds happy and slightly surprised that Liu offers to help and she takes it right away. “Oh, you want to do the dishes? Come here (哦，想洗碗，那过来吧).” Qing gets a stool for Liu to stand on so she can reach the sink, and she is showing Liu how to do the dishes while standing beside her.

Qing often assigns Liu and occasionally Xiao to vacuum the dining room, but she is not so successful with assigning Xiao to do it. One day, Qing asks Xiao to vacuum the stairs. “Me?” Xiao asks with a tone sounding like “Why me?” Qing senses that and responds to her question, “The rest of your sisters already did (others parts of the house). Take the vacuum here, and I will show you how.” Xiao gets the red little vacuum, plugs it in and starts to vacuum from the top stairs to downstairs.

Learning activities. Qing comes into the girls’ bedroom, and she looks toward Xing who is sitting on her bed working on the history subject, and asks, “What did you read?” Xing answered without lifting her head, and with her eyes focused on her book that she was reading, “The ninth chapter.” Xing is fairly independent with her study, so Qing works with her only when she needs help. Qing checks her assignments for all the subjects (e.g. history, math, Chinese, piano, geography and writing) that she has been working on at some point. Before September (the school time), Qing tends to read a Bible storybook with Xiao and read character-building books with both Xiao and Liu, and sometimes with Xing too. During my first visit in September, Qing gradually adds Chinese and math to the existing learning activities for Xiao. Qing also has Liu practice some simple learning tasks, for example, Chinese strokes, and coloring. Usually around 1pm (after lunch) Qing works with Xiao on her reading, Chinese and math. The afternoon is free playtime in Qing’s household.

Qing’s Everyday Parenting Conflict Management Stories

“It’s the most difficult stage of homeschooling when you have little ones,” De often says to me with a smile when I run into her with Qing’s family. Qing’s newborn

baby boy, Qiu, was about 5 months old when I first visited her family in the summer.

There were mornings when I came into Qing's house and her energy level looked really low, "Qiu did not sleep very well last night," Qing would explain apologetically. She seemed to struggle to maintain her energy level to attend to her girls.

Parent-child conflict interactions in Qing's household sometimes include negative responses such as criticizing, yelling, and sometimes shouting at her children. In addition to her lack of sleep, potential financial challenges, lack of extended family support, or deep connections with others may also contribute to Qing's frequent negative parent-child interaction. Since these are broader contextual factors that may contribute to Qing's conflict based parent-child interaction, I mainly focus on discussing the actual triggers of Qing's negative interaction with her children across my data collection.

Qing seems to prefer having a comparatively clean house while teaching and parenting her four children. Therefore, cleaning up the dishes after breakfast becomes her morning priority, so the most frequent trigger of parent-child conflict is when the children do not put away their belongings. The second major trigger of parent-child conflict is a child's disobedience. Qing works with the middle child, Xiao, the most during the morning learning activities, and she is also the one Qing battles with the most. The third trigger of parent-child conflict is less visible, and it comes from Qing herself. Her strong sense of being uncomfortable and unhappy about herself after being upset with her children, and these negative feelings toward herself complicate and reinforce her lack of confidence and incapacity to teach and parent her children. These self-concerns become her burden and a source of frustration which both consciously and unconsciously turns

into parent-child conflict interaction. It becomes a vicious cycle along with her efforts and struggles to make changes.

“I am really annoyed when the house is messy.” The parent and child both are powerful and vulnerable within their intimate and interdependent relationship (Kuczynski & Grusec, 1997). Qing is very conscious of the negative impact of her negative emotional responses (being sarcastic, yelling, and occasionally shouting) toward her children, particularly toward Xing who is comparatively older and quieter. Qing has been concerned about Xing’s quiet personality, so even when she is mad at the younger ones, she often turns around to talk with Xing with a much softer voice. In the following selected field notes excerpt, Qing specifically apologizes to Xing, even though the whole “event” did not directly involve her while having eye contact with all her children.

Xing, I am sorry that I lost my temper this morning. I am very annoyed when I see the house is messy. Do not move the stuff that belongs in the basement upstairs, and do not move stuff that belongs in one room to another one (Xing, 妈早上和你们发火, 对不去, 我一看到家里这个乱啊, 我就很烦, 你们以后楼下的东西不要搬到楼上来, 这个屋子的不要搬到那个屋子).” Qing apologizes to her children at the dinner table before lunch gets started. She takes a quick glimpse of her children, pauses for a few seconds and then continues, “I feel like you guys have too many toys. Should we put some away? Could you find a way to do it?” Qing asks while looking at her children again quietly. Xing, Xiao and Liu all look back at their mother without saying anything. They seem to not know how to react to their mother’s apology. Qing suggests that her girls start praying for lunch after a short silence.

This happened during the first week of visiting Qing’s family after school started in September. Qing just has breakfast dishes done, and she heads to her bedroom to nurse Qiu in the hope that he will fall asleep. She then walks into her girls’ closet to pick up their clothes that are scatted on the floor after Qiu falls asleep. Qing’s girls share a

bedroom, with Xing sharing a bunk bed with her younger sister, Xiao. Xing sleeps on the upper bed, and Xiao sleeps on the bottom bed. Liu's bed sits against the closet wall and faces the bunk bed. Xing is sitting on her bed working on her math at this point. Xiao is sitting at a study desk that is attached to the right of the bunk bed drawing some pictures. Liu is coloring while Qing is cleaning up the closet. The closet is not very big but holds three girls' clothes.

Soon, Xiao is called into the closet, and Qing lifts a dress on the hanger in front of Xiao, and says, "This is too little for you now; I remember I hung it here. Did you take it down?" "It's mine," Xiao responds with a slight low voice. "I know it's yours, but it's obvious that it is too little for you now; do not move it from where I put it, okay?" Qing says while aligning the clothes with Xiao's body to get her to see that the piece of the clothing is too little. Qing finds a few more dresses that were messed up by Xiao during her cleanup process, and she says to her with a irritated voice, "I put this away nicely. Why did you pull them down? (这些我明明放得好好的, 你把他么都扯下来干什么)?" She pauses for a few seconds, and then seems to realize that Xiao might not know how to put them back since the capacity of the basket is overflowing, so she pulls out a plastic bag and shows Xiao the bag while telling her that she can put clothes there in the future if she cannot put them back to where they should be. "Remember it in the future (下次记住了)," Qing taps the bag while instructing Xiao who is looking at her mother and nods her head firmly.

Qing comes back to her girls' bedroom to sit down beside Xiao who is drawing pictures (Xiao loves drawing) after she finished picking up and organizing their clothes in the bedroom. Qing looks at her drawing for a few seconds and then she notices Liu's cheek and lip is so dry that it has started to peel a bit. "Go put on some lotion," Qing says to her. A pile of pencil dust, which has come out of the pencil sharpener, distracts Qing's attention at this point. "Ouch!" Qing exclaims. She often uses the word ouch to express her irritated surprise. "Who did that? (谁再干这个事情)" Qing asks with a sharp and irritated tone. "I do not know," Xiao responds quickly while looking at her mother. "You guys did this?" Qing turns to ask Xing and Liu with a lower voice. "No, this is the dust of a colored pencil," Xing responds with her analysis. Qing's attention shifts to Xing now, and she asks Xing, "What are you doing now?" Xing turns her attention back to her work right away without responding to her mother's question. "Do not let me keep reminding you to study your Chinese," Qing says with a slightly irritated tone. She lifts a piece of drawing paper from the floor, turns to Xiao and asks, "You still want this?" Xiao looks at her and nods her head quietly. "Put it away." Xiao takes the piece of paper, and puts it under the paper she is

currently drawing. Qing notices a sock lying on the floor near the window where she is sitting right after handing the drawing paper to Xiao. She picks it up while saying, "A dirty sock should not be put here; put it in the laundry box. Xiao takes it over and puts it into the laundry hamper in the closet. "Is this yours?" Qing picks up another little item from the floor, and shows it to Xiao. Xiao looks at her mother while walking toward her to get it. She then heads directly outside of her bedroom into the hallway, then living room, and puts away what her mother just gave her.

Qing gets up and walks quickly toward Xiao a few seconds later to see where she put the item with an irritated look. She then notices a puzzle box with all the puzzle pieces scattered on the hallway floor that connects the girls' bedroom to the living room and kitchen. Qing seems to lose her temper completely now. She forcefully throws the puzzle pieces together in the hallway while asking Xiao, "Who brought these over here?" Xiao responded quickly with a slightly low voice, "I do not know," she says while sitting onto the floor, starting to pick some pieces up and holding them in her hand. Qing calls for Liu, when she appears at the door of the girls' bedroom, "Liu, come here." Qing asks forcefully, "Who brought this over here?" "I do not know," Liu responds with her innocent tone while looking at her mother. "You don't know; she also doesn't know," Qing shouts and she sounds really irritated and mad while she keeps throwing the puzzle pieces toward the hallway. Xiao is crying at this point, and Liu takes a few pieces of the puzzle and walks back to her bedroom immediately. Qing quickly follows her to her bedroom, and she seems to want to see where Liu put the puzzle pieces. Her crying voice emanated from her bedroom shortly afterward.

Qing is dumping out all of the different items from a clothes hamper onto the living room floor and starts to organize them by asking her girls to pick up their belongings. She talks with them in a much softer voice now. I try to talk with Qing after seeing that she is calmer. She shares with me that her Dad was an alcoholic. When Qing was young, he would ask her to clean the house when he got home drunk and felt the house was messy. She says that she feels like she is still living under the shadow of these memories, and a messy house annoys her a lot. She believes it is a curse and it still impacts her today. She needs to pray to God and trust Him to help her. "I feel so much

like my dad when I get angry.” Qing shares quietly one day in our interview. She is especially self-criticizing when she becomes angry with her children.

Qing recognizes that losing her temper with her children has negatively impacted them. In my interview with her one day, she says, “It must hurt them badly.” However, her way of processing the root reason (“it’s a curse”) a messy house annoys her to the extent that she loses her temper toward her children, sets the tone and pattern of how she responds each time to the messiness of the house that is perceived to be caused by her children and they may not even be aware of it. The “curse” seems to be something that is beyond her control, and it takes away Qing’s agency to make fundamental changes or even take responsibility for her negative emotions. Her hope is that God will help her. However, she makes a few prayer requests, asking her friends to pray for her to desire God more because she does not feel she has the proper perspective lately. This indicates that she actually can potentially reach a hopeless point to have a breakthrough of her negative communication cycle with her children which is triggered by a messy house. However, her hope in God is not hope when she does not even desire God.

The battle of wills between Qing and Xiao. The second big factor contributing to Qing’s negative interaction with her children is Xiao’s disobedience. Qing often does not have positive communication with her other two girls when she is having conflict with Xiao. Qing recognizes her children’s personalities while being aware of changes that may occur while growing up. She shares with me that Xiao is a very social and extrovert person who clearly knows what she wants. “She sometimes speaks to my heart,” says Qing with a smile, and acknowledges, “The love notes she sneaks into her dad’s pocket

before he takes off to work touches my husband a lot. Her prayer impresses me very much too. There is one time, I say to her, ‘walking in the Spirit, not walking in the flesh.’ She remembers it right away, and she prays with this sentence in our prayer later on.”

However, Qing believes Xiao does not have a strong sense of rules and often does what is pleasing to her. According to Qing, Xiao needs to work on obedience. Qing’s understanding about Xiao is reflected in the way she interacts with Xiao during three typical daily activities: reading Bible stories, studying (Chinese and math), having lunch, and doing chores. Xiao does not like any of these activities so it produces conflict.

Qing values reading with her children, and she shares that it is a shame that many Chinese parents have no concept of reading with their children. She often starts their reading activity with Xiao using a book titled “The Bible Story.” It is a fairly thick book with a light yellow hard cover, and she reads every morning after she finishes breakfast dishes and puts Qiu to sleep. The book lists a few content-based questions at the end of each story for the reader to discuss. Xiao was doing fine reading the Bible story to her mom and answering the questions during my initial visits. Qing often reads question by question to Xiao, and Xiao responds to them. Qing then corrects her answer if she gets it wrong.

One day, Qing and Xiao are about to finish their questions and answers with the Bible story reading activity when Qing half closes the book and says to Xiao, “Daniel did not eat that thing, not because it does not taste good, but because God did not want him to eat it. He did so to obey God.” She pauses for a second, and continues, “What can a child do to obey God? She pauses a bit longer looks at all her girls, and then she answers her

own question saying, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because that’s the right thing to do” (a Bible verse that Qing often shares with her girls). Qing looks back at the book for a bit, and makes up sentences based on the sentences she just read to her girls. She reads this made up sentence out loud to Xiao by occasionally referring back to the book with a smile, “Xiao, I see you are helping take care of Qiu. God is so pleased because that’s the right thing to do.” Then Qing turns to Liu, and says while tickling Liu’s back, “Liu, I see you are helping prepare breakfast, God is so pleased because you are doing the right thing.” Liu is giggling so hard with her belly against Qing’s lap, and her body moves forward and backward a bit because of the tickle. Qing also turns to Xing to recognize her study. They all laugh together.

Xiao starts to show resistance to reading the Bible storybook as time goes on. She often shows passive-aggressive behavior during the reading process. One day, Xiao keeps kicking the bottom part of the chair she is sitting on while reading with Qing. Qing ignores her initially and then pays attention to it after seeing no sign that Xiao would stop it herself, “What’s with the attitude?” Qing asks rhetorically, pauses for a second, and continues, “Read with a good attitude; otherwise read it again.” Xiao is reading with a crying voice at this point. Qing seems to ignore her negative emotion, and continues to listen to her reading. She asks Xiao to stop to respond to her made up question based on the content. “He gets somebody to help. What are the shared characteristics among these people?” Qing asks, pauses for a second, and seems to know that Xiao may not respond to her question, so she answers her own question. “These people all love God.” Qing truly recognizes Xiao’s negative emotion at this point, and asks, “What’s with the

attitude?” She pauses and continues, “You may go to get a cup of water, and then you can have something to drink while reading,” Qing suggests so Xiao can get away for a little bit. Xiao does not take the offer but sits there quietly, and they resume the Bible story reading with a similar struggle.

Xiao tries very hard to cooperate with her mother on the Bible storybook reading even though she has struggled a lot in the past. She exercises her agency to show her unhappiness continuing the reading by kicking the bottom of chair and reading with a negative emotion (crying, murmuring), fast reading, and moving her upper body around even though she is still sitting on the chair. Xiao makes it through the Bible story reading with Qing’s strategies to deal with the constant demonstration of uncomfortable and unwillingness to read. However, this morning, Xiao looks like she just cannot do it anymore. She just quits before even getting into any of the story.

As usual, Qing and Xiao are heading to the girls’ bedroom to read the Bible story. Qing notices that Xiao is struggling to find the page that she is going to read after both are sitting in the blue chairs in front of the bedroom window. The page marker (an arrow shaped sticker) she has been using is gone. Qing takes the book from Xiao and asks her to get another marker while flipping the book to help Xiao find the right page that she is supposed to be reading. “What color, Mama?” Xiao asks before she picks the marker from the study box that is on the wood shelf against the wall near the window. “Whatever color you like,” Qing responds with a slightly impatient tone. Xiao picks a light yellow one and takes it to Qing, and then she turns around and gets directly onto her bed right next to where she and her mother sit while saying, “I have a very bad headache” with a

low voice. Qing pauses for a bit and then suggests, “Would you like to read another book instead then?” “No, my headache is really bad,” Xiao responds while lying down. “We are going to the Christian Resources Center to borrow some books about fish,” Qing looks at Xiao quietly for a few seconds and seems to be brainstorming about outside activities that they are going to do to cheer Xiao up, and also sounds like she is trying to test if Xiao is really sick. “Today?” Xiao asks with an excited voice and lifts her body a bit. “Friday,” Qing responds while attending to Qiu whom is walking into the bedroom where his mother is. Xiao skips reading but ends up working on her Chinese and math later in the morning.

Qing comes to the conclusion that Xiao may not really have a headache, and instead she just does not want to continue reading the Bible storybook that she dislikes very much. Qing often reasons with Xiao by telling her that she needs to learn to work on things that she does not enjoy doing, and she will often run into real life situations like when she pushes Xiao through her Bible story reading.

Another morning, Xiao exercises her agency to avoid reading the Bible storybook by choosing a different book that she likes better. She approaches Qing who is finishing doing the dishes in the kitchen and asks, “Mama, are you ready to read a story with me (now)?” She pauses while looking toward Qing, and Qiu is crying in his bedroom at this point. Qing does not respond to her but continues to finish cleaning up. Xiao continues, “Mama, which one should we read today? We read obedience yesterday.” Xiao says while walking out of the kitchen into the living room where the spinning bookshelf is, and chooses a few character books, a book series that focuses on talking about children’s

negative behaviors (gossiping, fighting, lying, lazy, whinny and disobeying parents)

by Joy Berry. Qing walks directly into Xiao's bedroom and sits down with her to read the Bible storybook after finishing the dishes. It seems she did not hear or remember what Xiao was suggesting, but routinely goes to the Bible storybook directly. Qing goes to check on Qiu in her bedroom which is right next to the girls' room and comes right back to continue listening to Xiao read the Bible story. She occasionally stops her to ask content-based questions while looking at Xiao, such as "Stop. What is this paragraph talking about?" Xiao does not respond, and Qing answers her own question, "Everybody that complains, is dead." Xing comes in the bedroom to get another math exercise book and gives Qiu back to Qing (Xing picked Qiu up from her mother's bedroom a while ago because he was crying so hard). Qing takes him back to her bedroom saying, "Let's go to bed now." Xiao's mind wanders from the book, and she looks away from the Bible storybook the moment Qing walks away. Qing comes back a few minutes later and continues to ask Xiao, "What happens to those people who complained?" "Dead," Xiao responds immediately with an impatient tone. "Is the consequence of complaining serious?" Qing continues to ask while looking into Xiao's eyes. Xiao keeps quiet, so Qing continues, "Do you think they would still complain if they knew the consequences were that serious?" Qing pauses for a bit, seems to know that Xiao will not respond to her questions, so she continues, "So, is that okay to disobey God? Is that okay to disobey parents?" "No," Xiao responds quickly.

Qing continues to push to make the point that the price of disobeying God is death, and it is not okay to disobey parents since they are the authority that God put in

children's lives, even though she is in and out of Xiao's bedroom where she is reading the story. It is a serious and even scary Bible story to read about as a child. Qing lacks sensitivity to Xiao's reaction to the story, but jumps to emphasize the consequences of disobeying and makes it applicable to real living situations (it is not okay to disobey parents). This is very problematic. The fact is that Qing is not fully aware that what she is teaching may cause a sense of fear and insecurity in Xiao. The next morning Xiao shares her fear with Qing at the breakfast table. Qing comforts her quietly by sharing that God is also merciful and a loving God. Qing tells Xiao not to be scared. Qing's teaching tends to focus on the justice aspect of God (the consequences of disobeying is death), and she focuses less on the love nature of God until Xiao shares her fear when only hearing about the consequences. In addition, it is unclear to Xiao how the two aspects of God's nature work together in real life based on Qing's conversation with Xiao, and her fear is likely to remain. This Bible message is consciously and unconsciously used to "beat up" the child according to (Tripp, 2008) and Trumbull (1893).

Xiao manages to participate in all the morning reading activities the next day until Qing pushes her nonstop agenda. Xiao asks with a low voice after they finish the Bible story reading, "Mama, can we read the character book now?" Qing prompts her to go get the character book, and Xiao picks one titled "A Book about Teasing." Both Xiao and Liu get onto Qing's lap while listening to her read. Qing reads in English and then translates it into Chinese after each sentence. "You go do some studying. Then we'll come back and read more," Qing suggests while finishing reading the character book. "I am tired, Mama," Xiao says with low voice. "There's nothing to be tired from; we just

read some books (没什么好累的, 我们就读了点书),” Qing responds dismissively.

“But I am very tired now,” Xiao sounds and looks frustrated with her eyebrows squeezed together while pulling at the edge of her dress shirt. “I know, when we are tired, we still can push ourselves a little bit.” Qing recognizes Xiao’s physical tiredness while insisting that she still can continue to study. “I am tired,” Xiao insists while lowering her head, sounding hopeless. “Let’s pray together, and ask God to give us strength to do what we are supposed to do,” Qing suggests. Liu bumps into Xiao’s head while they both lower their head and keep sitting on their mother’s laps to get ready to pray. “Say sorry,” Xiao snaps at Liu. “Sorry,” Liu says immediately after Xiao’s command. Qing disciplines the girls while noticing the little conflict between Xiao and Liu, saying, “We have to prepare to pray (我们祷告的时候要有祷告的样子,)” and then suggests what to pray for, “You pray for not complaining, even if you are very tired, okay? Let’s begin.” Liu starts to pray for something I cannot hear clearly. “...very obedient (很乖),” Qing praises her, and then turns to Xiao and says, “Pray to God for being able to obey and not complain even if you are very tired.” Xiao is trying to get off Qing’s lap when Qing says this, and Qing continues, “You need to learn not to complain even if you are tired.” Xiao walks toward her bed, takes off her shoes while standing in front of her bed. “What are you doing?” Qing asks impatiently. “Going to sleep (睡觉),” Xiao says clearly; while looking toward Qing, she seems to want to see how Qing will respond. “Just like the Israelites (people who complained in the Bible story they read about the day before), what do you do once you feel tired?” Qing asks sarcastically. “Study,” Xiao answers quickly with frustration while walking back to her study desk that is attached to the bunk bed and next to the

window where her mother sits. “Is that right to complain?” Qing asks. Then she notices that Xiao does not have her shoes on, and she asks her to put her shoes back on. Xiao cries for a little bit while working on her math problems.

Qing ignores her and goes to the bathroom, which is right next to the girls’ bedroom, shortly after putting Xiao to work on her math. The moment she leaves, Xiao asks Liu if they can play together, and then they play for a while until they hear Qing flush the toilet. “I need to go back to class,” she says to Xiao while quickly moving to sit back at her study desk. Qing asks quietly while she sits beside Xiao in her blue chair “What are you doing? How many math problems did you solve?” Xiao does not respond to her, but Qing does not seem to care about the response. She continues to ask her a third question. “Xiao, do you feel better? You, in fact, do not feel that bad (after pushing yourself a bit when you are tired), right?” Qing sounds like she proved her point to Xiao: that she can push herself a bit even when she is tired and will not feel that bad once she does so. “But my foot hurts a little bit,” Xiao responds quietly while looking at her mother. “That’s okay; you are using your hand for your study,” Qing does not sound like she is reasoning with Xiao anymore, but more like she is engaging in a battle of wills, with the assumed knowledge that Xiao may not necessary have hurt feet at all.

Qing’s teaching about the consequences of complaining from the Bible storybook and praying, as a parental regulation based on her religious beliefs does not seem to be working well with Xiao. They quickly fall into a new round of a battle of wills. Being sick seems to be a way that Xiao uses to take a break from what she does not enjoy doing and cannot take it in anymore. On week seven of data collection, the morning when I

walk into Qing's household, Xiao is lying on the sofa. Qing shares with me while

looking at Xiao with an unsure look, "Her belly hurts; it has been going on for days,"

I offer to share my breakfast (oatmeal combined with fruit). She takes some while half lying on the sofa. She gets up and walks to the spinning bookshelf to get some books while listening to Qing exclaim in a sarcastic tone, "Oh, you are up, and you can walk now." Xiao takes a character book (a book about snooping), and then lays quietly back on the sofa. Qing sits beside Xiao and looks at her quietly. Liu comes into the room at this point and tells Qing that she wants to listen to the story. Qing takes over the book Xiao is holding onto and reads to them. When Qing is about to get to the end of the story, Xiao gets up from the sofa, and walks to the bookshelf again. "Why, you are up and walking? You look better. Are you still hurting? Qing seems to ask rhetorically, sounding a little sarcastic, and then she continues, "Drink more water." Xiao responds while lying back down, "I am still feeling hurt a little bit." When it is getting close to lunch time, Qing is busy in the kitchen preparing lunch while asking Liu to feed Qiu after putting some bone marrow into the bowl on the dining table. "Can I have it also," Liu asks. "Yes," Qing responds quickly. "Oh, the marrow tastes so good," Liu exclaims at the dining table. Xiao extends her head over the edge of the sofa to check what is going on. "Mama, Mama," Xiao says quietly. Qing does not seem to hear her, so Xiao turns to ask Liu, "You guys did not have classes?" Liu also does not seem to hear her. Xiao looks toward her mother, younger sister, and Qiu after receiving no response from them. Xing comes to Xiao at this point from her bedroom, and she looks into Xiao's eyes quietly for a few seconds and walks away. Her look seems to indicate that she does not think Xiao is really sick.

Qing's pushing through strategies with Xiao's Bible story reading fails to work when Xiao claims to be sick. Xiao does not often claim to be sick, but there is a long time period (three weeks from my record of field notes, but I go to the family every other week) that she declines to eat lunch after reading and studying with Qing's support by telling her mother that she is not hungry.

Battle with Xiao regarding her lunch. I approach Qing to share with her that I notice Xiao has been skipping lunch for a while, and ask her if she knows the reason(s). Qing shares that she does not know why. "She has been a picky eater since she was little. She knows clearly what she wants to eat, and what she does not want." In week five of data collection, Xiao starts to tell her mother directly that she does not like the meal on the table, and she starts to leave more in her bowl uneaten after each lunch. (Chinese usually have meals with bowls instead of plates.) Qing often does not take her own bowl for the meal. Instead, she often eats what the girls leave in their bowls after encouraging them to take a few more bites by feeding them. (Liu occasionally has leftovers too, and she imitates Xiao according to Qing.) Qing seems to know that Xiao and sometimes Liu will not finish their meals, and often collects both Liu and Xiao's bowls with leftover food, and then calls the girls to sit beside her as she feeds them.

Xiao completely skips lunch later on, and she often tells her mother she is not hungry when it is time for lunch. Qing loses patience to feed her every meal, so Xiao is given chores (feed Qiu) or homework (work on Chinese or math problems) at the dinner table when it is lunchtime. Qing prepares much more for breakfast each morning to compensate. One morning at around 9:00 a.m. Qing bakes lots of waffles, and Xing has

toasted bread with coconut oil and chocolate, in addition to milk, apples, and pears.

When it is lunchtime around 1:00 p.m., Qing checks to see if the children are hungry.

Xiao shakes her head and says “no” while walking away from the dining table. “Not hungry? Do chores if you are not hungry.” Qing asks Xiao to feed Qiu as she did two weeks earlier. This time, however, she also gets Xiao a bowl of rice noodles she just cooked and asks her to eat while feeding Qiu. It turns out that Xiao feeds Qiu while Qing feeds Xiao. “Have a meal yourself if you can,” Qing says gently while putting another spoonful of noodles into Xiao’s mouth. Liu sees Qing is feeding Xiao, so she also requests to be fed. Qing ignores her and Liu starts to whine with a little smile. “You want other people to come to help you right away and drop what they are working on once you need help. Why don’t you think of letting your mother have a complete meal (without interruption) at least for once?” Qing shouts at Liu and seems really irritated all of a sudden. She softens her voice a little bit when she sees Liu tearing up. “You have your meal yourself when you can, and you can ask mother if I can help you after I am done eating.” Liu is about to cry when Qing asks her to say “Yes, Mom.” She repeats after her mother with a crying voice. Everybody becomes quiet at this point.

Liu’s playful whining pushes Qing to lose emotional control, and she starts to explode. That is the time Qing feels that she has her children under control. “They only behave when I get angry (非得我发火她们才老老实实的),” Qing says after she explodes at the girls. Yet, she also knows this control is temporary with the price of hurting their feelings or maybe even emotions. However, Qing believes that when she is

nice and quiet to her children, they are not very obedient. This becomes a vicious cycle in her parent-child interaction.

On another day, lunch is ready, and Qing asks Xiao with a sarcastic tone, “Xiao, you are not hungry again, right? (你又不饿了, 对吧)” “Uh-huh,” Xiao responds positively. “Then you watch over Qiu,” Qing says quite sharply. “Okay,” Xiao agrees. “But what should we do with the (dark chocolate) cake?” asks Qing. She sounds like she is setting Xiao up. “Didn’t you already say that we will have it at the evening meal?” Xiao asks quickly. “I have to rethink that,” Qing says while having her meal. Xiao walks away and comes back soon to Qing with tears in her eyes. “What’s wrong?” Qing takes a quick look at Xing and asks, “Nothing,” Xing responds with a low voice. Qing looks back at Xiao and asks her “What’s wrong?” Xiao explains that Xing said something to her that was not nice. “What are you going there for? (你到哪里干什么)” Qing asks with a scolding voice. “I didn’t go there first. I just followed her (Xiao) in.” Xing raises her voice and emphasizes it with a two-hand tap against the top of the sofa where she is sitting. “Why did you get in there?” Qing turns to ask Xiao while getting her a bowl and feeding her a spoonful of food. Xiao looks at her with tears and eats the food. Qing prompts her to sit in front of her lunch bowl to finish her food. “Do not pick on her, pick on her, pick on her,” Qing’s voice gets louder and louder. “Ai,” Qing sighs with frustration after realizing that she is becoming very upset again. The dining room is quiet at this point. “Xiao should be feeding Qiu,” Xing murmurs while seeing Xiao sit down at the dining table “You let her finish her meal, and you go to feed Qiu, okay?” Qing says to Xing with a softer voice. “Okay,” Xing responds positively while walking quickly

toward Qiu. Qing takes Liu's bowl and prompts her to come over so she can feed her.

Liu moves quickly from the spinning bookshelf to her mother. Qing shoves one spoonful of noodles into Liu's mouth, gets up to reach the other side of the dining table to position Liu's bowl to the spot where she usually has meals and asks her to sit back down to finish her food herself. Liu looks at her and moves quickly to where her mother wants her to be. After Xiao and Liu both finish eating, Qing cuts the chocolate cake for the children, and the moment Xiao gets close to her mother to get cake with her plate, Qing says to her with a soft voice, "You should ask for permission before you leave your seat in the future." Xiao nods her head and has cake with a big smile.

Qing and Xiao's battle of wills over lunch makes Qing feel impotent and frustrated. This frustration escalates to losing her temper, and at the same time, makes her feel even more frustrated because deep down in her heart, she knows that losing her temper is not the way to discipline her children. Qing shares her feelings in our interview when she is self-criticizing her negative emotions toward her children, "It's not what God would like (神不喜悦的)." Qing also is concerned about her battle of wills with Xiao. Xiao's consistent refusal to eat lunch makes Qing feel defeated, and yet, at the same time, her concern about Xiao increases. She starts to feed Xiao again with a strong sense of incompetency of managing her.

Trumbull (1893) stated that parents are never going to win battles with the children over the dinner table. However, if parents make sure there is no food accessible around the house except for the meal that is offered at dinner time, then there will be no

battles. According to Trumbull (1893), Qing appeared to pick the battle that she is destined to lose.

Qing's expectations toward her children and her efforts to make changes.

Qing hopes for a very close relationship with her girls, one in which they could share everything. In addition, she shares,

I hope very much that my children could honor me, honor parents. I make mistakes when I make subconscious efforts to do so, meaning, (my) children must obey and listen to me. This is not completely right, and then I learned late that this is not good, like I lose my temper (because they did not obey me). I want them to just obey God. For example, (I want them to) learn to pray and read the Bible themselves. They could think of God's words once they run into difficulty later on. Once they follow God's words, then they for sure will honor me. That's for sure.

Qing is uncertain and insecure regarding how much to push her children for obedience but she recognizes that as a parent, she can make mistakes. This uncertainty and insecurity have pushed her to explore alternative ways to discipline and put more faith in God. She sees believing God as the solution of her parenting "problem."

Qing has an ideal picture of her relationship with her children and her children's relationship with God. Yet, she has a very negative self-picture. She shares with me that she is a very negative person who often looks at people and things from a negative perspective. However, she is hopeful in God. "It does not matter what kind of person I am, but it matters what kind of God I am putting my trust in (不在乎我是什么样的人, 但在乎神是什么样但神)."

In my interviews with her, Qing self-criticized 16 times regards her losing her temper. However, she also managed to make changes throughout my time of collecting data. She was very aware that a messy house was a major trigger for losing her temper.

She reorganized the girls' bedroom, living room, and dining room a few times in the eight weeks that I visited. Qing seemed to realize the need to restructure the girls' study space after a few weeks of staying in their bedroom for learning activities. She moved the girls' study space from their bedroom to the dining room table and put their study toolboxes in the living room, next to the dining room. A piece of cardboard separated the dining table space so the girls would not interrupt each other. Qing occasionally still took Xiao in the bedroom to read her Bible story. Starting from week seven, the girls were sent to the bedroom for quiet time, and Xiao read the Bible story herself.

Qing also made intentional efforts to respond to her children's disobedience without losing her temper. Here is an excerpt that illustrates the parent-child interaction dynamic when Qing managed to not lose her temper when her children pushed her:

One day, Xiao is crying while approaching Qing. "What's wrong?" Qing asks and takes a quick glance at her, and then resumes cleaning. Qing realizes quickly that Xiao won't stop crying without her further attention, and she gets closer to her and asks again, "What's wrong?" Xiao explains while continuing to cry, "Xing and Liu did not let me get up there to play," "Oh, she does not let you?" Qing says while walking with Xiao into her bedroom where all the girls are playing. Xiao explains again while standing at the bedroom door confronting both Liu and Xing with her mother, "I want to get up there and Liu says I can't," Liu responds, "It's too crowded," Qing says to Xiao, "She says it's too crowded," but Xiao continues to explain while crying, "Xing also does not let me get up there." Qing looks at Liu, "You need to share; you cannot say something not nice like that." "Come, say sorry to her," she continues while rubbing her hands together and body tilting forward. Liu jumps from the cabinet onto the bed and stands next to Qiu's cradle, looking at Qing in silence. Qing asks her to say sorry to Xiao by repeating after her. "Xiao, I am wrong, I should not say what I said." Liu is about to cry at this point and Qing says to her gently, "Do not cry, it's okay. We make mistakes. Mother also makes mistakes. Let's come to God to admit our mistakes and repent. You ask her if she would forgive you." Qing talks so to Liu while tapping Xiao's back to prompt her to forgive Liu. However, Xiao does not seem ready to forgive her at all, and she keeps crying.

As usual, Qing tended to initially ignore Xiao's negative emotions until she realized that she was not going to stop without her response. However, Qing took time to "investigate" what was going on with a gentle voice this time and avoided disciplining Xing as she had usually done when Xiao reported to her mother that she was not being nice. Qing's discipline focused on getting Liu to apologize to Xiao and to comfort and reason with Liu when she was tearing up. She encouraged Liu to go to God and admit her mistake and repent based on her religious beliefs.

Qing sighs while imitating Liu to drop her two hands forcefully with a frustrated look, "Ai, who would make an apology like that? You need to change your attitude; otherwise you need to say sorry again." Qing looks at Liu quietly, and Liu seems to get irritated by her mother mimicking her apology. "I didn't even get mad. Why do you get mad first?" Qing says to Liu, and she responds loudly, "I am not." Qing looks into Liu's eyes and responds, "I can tell you are mad." She pauses for a few seconds, "You look like you are mad." Qing rubs her hands palms together, and folds her shirt sleeves a bit higher. Liu walks forcefully forward to get through the bedroom door where Qing is standing and wanting to get out with obvious anger. Qing stops her by extending her arm to catch her, and Liu turns around and goes to the closet of her parents' bedroom, and slowly closes the door and turns on the light. Qing says, "That's right; you stay there to calm down."

Qing tolerated Liu's disobedience and kept reasoning with her with a gentle voice. She asked Liu why she got mad when her mother, as the authority, was not mad yet. Qing appeared to be uncomfortable putting herself through this situation that she did not have control over while the disobedience seemed to escalate and it was clear that would not stop anytime soon.

Qing turns to talk to Xiao, who stops crying at this point and says, "You need to forgive others, and she learned from you when you are not nice to her in the past. This is the consequence." Liu comes out from the closet and she tries to get past Qing again. Qing stops her by trying to grab her, and she lies to the floor to avoid her mother's hand, and then she goes back to the closet, and turns on the light this

time. Xiao says to her mother while crying quietly, "I learned it (not being nice) from Xing, and Xing learned it from you." Qing responds with an awkward look, "That's right, we are all sinners, and we all need to repent. Mom needs to learn more too in the future." Liu comes out again and Qing asks both Liu and Xiao to forgive each other, and they hug while sitting on their mother's bed. "Xing hurt me so much when she hugged me the last time." Xiao says after hugging Liu. "Yes," Liu agrees with what Xiao shares. "That's why that person has to confront God and parents if she does wrong against the siblings, and they are responsible for what they did. What you need to do is try your best, okay? (别人做错事情, 那是她和神的事, 和爸爸妈妈的事, 你自己好好把事情做好就可以了, 好不好?)" Qing says this while holding Xiao on her lap and pulls her bangs backward, and Xiao nods her head quietly. Liu is sitting beside Qing watching her mother bond with Xiao.

Qing was hoping to solve her children's conflict by encouraging Xiao to volunteer to forgive Liu without an apology. She told Xiao that the reason Liu was not nice to her was because Xiao had not treated her nicely in the past. Xiao applied her mother's logic and traced it back to the root reason why her siblings were not nice to each other, and she concluded that it was because Qing was not nice to them, and they all learned from her. Qing agreed with Xiao awkwardly, and she stated that it was because they were all sinners. At this point, Qing and her children were all vulnerable with each other, and Liu reconciled with Xiao.

Qing seemed to know the religious routine and language well concerning how to discipline a child who was disobedient; however, she tended to apply it loosely or maintain it as knowledge when reasoning with her children. For example, Qing did not push Liu to apology to Xiao strictly based on the religious repentance structure that was preached at church and discussed among other Christian families. Another example was when both Liu and Xiao reported to her that Xing hurt them while hugging them during

their conflict reconciliation. Qing did not discipline Xing, and she used her religious beliefs to ask them to do their best and leave Xing's problem to God and the parents.

When trust becomes an issue. Trust between Qing and Xiao was a theme that seemed to emerge since my second week of data collection with Qing's family. It set the tone for Qing and Xiao's everyday interaction. Qing knew that Xiao did not like to do household chores, but she often called on her to do chores when needed. However, Qing did not push Xiao to do it but talked sarcastically with Xiao with whatever she was doing. Qing's sarcastic tone distanced Xiao and potentially reinforced their mutual mistrust in the long term. Here is a vignette with a series stories collected from the field that illustrates the dynamics of parent-child mistrust.

It's a Monday morning. Xiao and Liu are dancing and giggling wildly in their bedroom. Qing just finished the laundry, so she asks both Xiao and Liu to come to help her fold it. Xiao's face drops and does not look like she wants to do it. Qing says sarcastically, "When you are dancing, you are giggling so hard and happy, and you do not feel well again when you are called to do a chore." Xiao is quiet at this point while watching Qing take the clean laundry and walk toward her bedroom. A while later, Qing walks into the kitchen and notices Xiao is playing a computer game, and she says sarcastically while quickly walking back to her bedroom after quickly checking on Xiao, "Xiao, you are energetic again. You become energetic once you play computer."

The next morning, both Liu and Xiao are lying on the sofa in the living room. "They do not feel well," Qing shares with me after I came in. She gets a package of Chinese herbal medicine and combines it with some warm water to make a beverage for both Xiao and Liu to drink. Qing asks them to come drink it at the dining table which is next to the living room sofa. Xiao responds while making an effort to get up, "Mama, I cannot get up." Liu is lying there without responding to her mother. Qing comes from the dining room to pick up Xiao and place her where she usually sits at the dining room table. Liu seems to want to cry for a moment, given her facial expression, while watching her mother pick up Xiao. Qing comes to pick Liu up and place her where she usually sits at the dining room table. There are two big slices of peeled avocado sitting right in front of her. Qing asks her not to eat it while situating her onto the seat. However, Liu gets off the chair, goes to pick up a spoon from the kitchen drawer, climbs back onto her seat, and starts to eat the avocado. Qing says with frustration while throwing the

spoon she got for Liu onto the dining room table, “Do not eat it as it is. You are sick. We need to separate it, then eat” (she meant to separate the avocado for Xiao and Liu, but Liu is already starting to eat it). Qing seems irritated by what is going on.

Qing appeared to be irritated and confused. She picked Liu up from the sofa and put her in the dining room chair with the assumption that she could not get up from the sofa herself just like Xiao. However, Liu quickly moved her off the dining room chair to get a spoon for the avocado that Qing told her not to eat. Qing was confused because she started to wonder if Liu was really sick

As the girls are having their breakfast, Qing speaks quietly and says, “You cannot go to the Pretty Park this evening if you are not feeling well, and you also cannot go to the State Fair tomorrow if you are still not feeling well.” Qing says this while looking at Xiao. Liu and Xiao keep quiet. Qing shares with her friend over the phone later that Xiao and Liu are not feeling well. “I am not sure if it’s true or not. You know, there are times that Liu just imitates what Xiao does. However, when I told them if they are not feeling well, then they cannot go to the State Fair, they did not protest. They may truly not be feeling well.”

Qing claimed that she looked at issues and people from a negative perspective. In addition, she stated that Xiao was not a very obedient child. Two disruptive characteristic forces motivated her to question Xiao about many things she had been doing. When truth telling was an issue between Qing and her children, it tended to set a negative tone for the rest of the communication during conflict in their everyday parent-child interactions.

In traditional Chinese culture, *jiao* (training) and *xun* (guide with scolding) are common parenting methods (Chao, 1994). Many parents still apply the scolding aspect of *xun* to keep their children on the right track. Of the three families, Qing’s family experienced the least acculturation given their family life course and living arrangement

after immigrating to the United States. It is not a surprise that Qing struggled when trying to adopt God-centered parenting (parents are loving and caring and the children are obedient) while letting go of the ingrained Chinese parenting style (mistake correcting and scolding) that had been passed down by her own parents. Qing's parenting appeared to be *xun* oriented (guide with scolding), and she tended to correct her children's misbehavior in everyday parenting. For example, the character books she read with her children each morning all focused on correcting the children's negative behaviors (e.g., teasing, lying, disobeying) even though no such a behavior was observed. However, Qing may not be aware that she was teaching her children not to lie by using examples of people lying, and her children may end up learning to lie. She wanted to have more control over her children, so she would lose her temper when they disobeyed. She ended up losing control over them after she became frustrated over her lack of emotional control, which she felt God would be displeased with. Qing strove to make changes, and hoped for a family that was God-centered with quiet and obedient children. The following chapter illustrates Xian's parenting practices.

Chapter 6: Xian's Everyday Parenting

A typical day of Xian's family schedule is presented to help the reader situate the parent-child conflicted interactions in a broader context. Their schedule includes stories about: breakfast, quiet time, Bible message sharing, pray time, Bible scripture reading, academic studies, and lunch time. The stories are narrated in a present tense form to help the reader enter into their daily life experiences.

Xian's Family Typical Day

Breakfast. Xian often has breakfast with Jing, Tiao, Qi, and also Zhen if she misses having it with their daddy earlier. Sometimes, the girls have breakfast themselves while Xian is occupied with other things (e.g., changing Qi's diaper, packing lunch for her husband). She catches up on her breakfast after sending her girls to have some quiet time (copying Bible verses).

Quiet time (Bible reading). Jing and Tiao often leave the dining room and head to the living room for quiet time after they each finish their breakfast. Zhen participates in the quiet time whenever she feels like doing so. Qi is too young to be part of it, so she often plays alone somewhere or is with Xian. Xian mostly uses this time to do some cleaning. Xian lets go of everything she has been engaged in doing after Jing and Tiao's quiet time is finished, and then joins them for Bible message sharing. Sometimes, Xian sends Jing and Tiao upstairs for their quiet time. Xian says, "Upstairs, each take a room," Jing and Tiao each get a Bible and run upstairs.

Bible verse reading and sharing together. Zhen is encouraged to be part of the Bible reading, so she can keep quiet while Xian focuses on sharing Bible verses with both

Jing and Tiao. Sometimes, Xian has her children share what they read about, and then Xian shares what she read about. Starting in my week 5 visits, around September 30th; Bible sharing is mainly substituted with watching a video “Off the Road Encounter,” a documentary video talking about a family that goes on a missionary trip to the Middle East. Xian explains to her girls that mostly Muslims live there, and after the video watching; Xian asks both Jing and Tiao to identify the countries that the video mentioned from the world map. Other times, they read Bible related books together for their sharing time.

Pray time. Prayer seems to be the most difficult time because it requires everybody to work together at the same time. Xian often says to the girls, “Think about it, and do not get distracted, or remember, when we pray, we do not want to be distracted by other things.”

Jing often start the prayer after everyone gets in the circle on the living room floor. She prays, “Heavenly Father, (pause), thank you for the new day. (She is going to finish her prayer, but Xian often reminds her to use what she read about in the morning to pray, so she adds more). Please help me have a gentle heart, and please also help Qi not to scream.” Then Tiao prays for a productive study day, and “We will not work till Daddy comes home.” (Xian also reminds her to use her reading to pray, and Tiao adds one or two sentences more in her prayer before ending it.) Tiao and Jing have a similar prayer each morning with different additional prayers coming from the reading their mother reminds them of. Zhen occasionally prays too, but mostly she is just required to be present. Xian often ends the prayer.

Copying Bible verses. Copying Bible verses follows the prayer time in the living room where the girls' study desk is located. Xian sometimes asks Tiao write the verses upstairs when she knows she will have a difficult time concentrating in the living room while also timing her, "Two minutes." After about 2 minutes, she calls Tiao to come downstairs and warns her she will get a special assignment if she does not come immediately. A similar story happens to Jing too. Xian says to Jing while noticing she is not completely focused on copying her Bible verses one morning, "Jing, Mom really wants to arrange more fun time for you, but you waste time like that. I am so afraid to do that."

Academic study. Jing and Tiao often take turns having piano lessons or piano practice. They also take turns working on Chinese, and math until lunchtime. There are Sometimes, they run the schedule a bit differently. One day, Xian tells the children that they can go out to play, but Jing and Tiao have to take turns staying in to practice piano. Jing and Tiao argue about who will practice first, and then Xian lets them do the "paper, rock, scissor" game to make the decision. They jump right into the game. Tiao wins and she uses her "scissors" to pretend to cut Jing's "clothes" and runs to the piano. Tiao goes out to play and calls Jing back inside when it is her turn to practice piano.

Lunch. Xian asks the children what they want for lunch, and cooks mostly what the children ask for. Xian put dishes on the table, and she then grinds Qi's food with a little blender. Qi cannot wait for her food to come, so she starts to cry loudly. The rest of the children are all seated, but Zhen has already started to eat when Xian comes back from preparing Qi's food. Xian asks, "Zhen, you need stop eating, so we can pray and eat

sooner.” Tiao and Jing also have their hands together and eyes closed, Zhen puts down her food and looks at her mother. Xian looks at her and asks her to put her hands together to pray. She slowly does so while looking around but does not close her eyes.

Afternoon. Children get about a half hour of play outside. Both Qi and Zhen take naps shortly after playing outside. Xian then reads a chapter of a book with both Jing and Tiao. They may also work on their academic work if there is any time left.

Everyday Parent-Child Conflict Interactions Management

Xian’s parent-child conflict management is illustrated by three patterns: (1) pushing for obedience and discipline immediately, if needed; (2) facilitating negotiation for obedience; and (3) letting go without pushing for obedience. Xian’s parenting practice have been profoundly shaped by her religious belief. Therefore, it is important for the reader to gain a deeper understand of Xian’s specific Christian values behind her parenting practices before illustrating the parent-child conflicts.

Teaching children to use God’s Word as a mirror to see themselves. Xian strives to teach her children the way to think, know, and do everyday life based on God’s Word (the Bible). Two significant principles she teaches her children are to love each other and serve each other. Here is an expert that illustrates Xian’s reasoning behind her teaching about loving and serving in our interview follow-up question, “Which of God’s words have you been teaching and how?”

Like serve each other, you know, when they fight with each other, it’s mostly because they think they were not served well. Love each other. Loving each other is not about being fair. Sometimes, two children fight for a toy, the most common issue. Two children fight for one toy. If you are disciplined from a perspective of fairness, then okay, who came first? The one who came first gets to play. The one who came second sits and waits until the first one finishes playing with that toy.

However, if you discipline from a loving perspective, and then this is a two-people problem. Right? If you love your younger sister, then if that's possible, then you let her play first even though you got it first. If you love your older sister, if that's possible, then you can wait for a bit. This is the love principle. Okay, you need to love each other. When they fight, that's for sure they do not love each other. You know, when one loves the other, and then it won't even be a problem. I used to think that it's fine once my children stop fighting after I separate them, and I learned later on that separating them does not solve the heart problem. They can stop fighting physically, but if they harbor bitterness inside, then the problem is not solved.

Xian strives to help her children understand that the Bible closely connects to every aspect of their daily living, and it is not theory and knowledge about life. Here is her response regarding my interview question, "How do you help your young children experience the connection between real life and the Bible?"

I often teach the Bible with real life situations they have been confronting, for example, the fights among sisters. Did you notice the other day that Zhen had a piece of chocolate? She was willing to share it, but she gave Jing a bit more and Tiao was upset. You know, there is a similar story like that in the Bible. So I can use the Bible to reason with Tiao. I want her to see inside herself, and know that she needs a Savior. If she just learns the Bible as knowledge, then she will end up just having lots of theories in her mind.

"The heart is where my discipline focuses." Xian focuses on training her children's hearts with God's words, She tries to reinforce the verse, "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45 New International Version). She believes the heart is the resource from which everything originates. Her heart-focused child discipline was heavily influenced by both Tripp (1999, 2008) and Plowman (2003) who advocate for heart oriented biblical parenting. Xian often lets her children have deep inner fights between what they want and what is right to do. She thinks this kind of memorable experience of struggle helps them see who they truly are and what they need. That is also

how she believes training her children should be, as illustrated in the following conversation.

I don't always intervene when there is a fight. I often just remind them of God's Word. I let them think about it by themselves. I let them use God's Word as a mirror to see themselves, and let them see what they are lacking. So the problem is not whose turn it is to play with the toy; the nature of the problem is a heart problem. What I can do as a parent through God's help is to help them see they're, in fact, very selfish, right? When they are fighting for the toy, they are very selfish, or they say, "It's mine, I do not want to share," their hearts are, in fact, very selfish. I let them see themselves through by God's words (e.g., love each other, serve each other) as a mirror. Then they know they have a problem. Of course, the ultimate solution is their relationship with God, and God solves it. I do not have a way to change their hearts, and turn them from a selfish one to a selfless one. It's just through our teaching and parenting methods, through which God lets them see that they need a Savior. Because they find that their hearts are, in fact, very dark, and they need a Savior. This is the way of thinking we often teach at home. So they can know themselves and others better. With God's Word at heart as the compass, they know when they are off track, and they know if Daddy and Mama are off track (big laugh). So the focus of discipline should be on their hearts.

Xian believes that their morning Bible reading, sharing, and copying Bible verses is not a waste of time. She believes God will use His words to teach her children in everyday situations. She shared that she can see that her oldest two have interaction with God's words when they have a conflict. For example, I observed one time when Xian made her children confront their hearts' desire and make choices with a strong sense of discomfort. The children struggled very much in the process, but Xian believes that it was a good love exercise that illustrated her child-raising ideology.

It's lunchtime, and the girls are all sitting at the dining room table waiting for Xian to serve lunch. All the girls want the leftover eggs that Xian boiled in the morning for breakfast. Xian asks calmly and looks like she is waiting for as long as it takes her girls to figure out a way to solve the problem before starting lunch: "Two and a half eggs need to be divided among three people. Who wants the little half one?" The three girls look at each other in silence, and nobody wants the little half one. Xian suggests with a slightly sarcastic tone, "You may go for a fight (the one that wins gets to pick)," Both Jing and Tiao agree that Zhen should have the

little half since she is the youngest one. Zhen dislikes the idea and says, "I want the whole one." Jing asks Zhen with a suspicious tone, "Did you say you wanted to have an egg this morning? That's the morning's egg, and now it's noon." Xian disagrees with Jing's logic of trying to decide who should get the whole egg. "Why not just boil another one,"the fights went on for about five more minutes before Xian asks, "Are you happy fighting for having the one whole egg? Who is willing to have this little half one?" Tiao takes it, "Okay." Then Zhen changes her mind and looks back at her mother. Xian gives her the little half. Xian puts the whole egg on Jing's plate quietly without any comment. She seems to know that Jing will not be as happy as she originally thought she would to have the whole egg finally put on her plate. Jing senses the discomfort, and she invites Tiao who is sitting right next to her to have the first bite of the whole egg, and then she starts to eat her egg with an awkward smile.

Here is another story that illustrates how Xian lets both Jing and Tiao have an intimate interaction with heart-felt discomfort over their struggles when they refused to reconcile after offending one another. One nuance is that Xian pointed out the invisible consequence of the behavior this time. It was obvious that Xian wanted to have her children clearly experience a struggle of their heart's desire and the consequences without pushing for the everyday routine of praying that is usually the prioritized activity each morning.

One morning, Tiao and Jing fight with each other over sitting close to Xian while she reads a Bible-related book to them on the sofa. "She pinched me," complains Tiao to her mother with frustration. Xian reasons with Jing quietly, "Is that kind, loving, or self-serving?" Jing moves to lie down on the floor, bending her body to face the sofa. Xian reasons with Jing and knows she is upset, "Jing, you only have two choices: either God is right, and you are wrong. You know you are wrong. You want sit over here?" Jing gets a pillow and lays down five inches away from her mother and Tiao.

"Look at yourself, that you always fight. You pinch me, and I push you back. Are you loving each other?" (Pause) "Jing, are you still listening?" Xian asks and she seems to just want to get Jing to continue thinking Tiao reports, "She is sleeping," Xian asks Tiao, with a firm look, "She is responding. Have you ever seen a person who is sleeping and can still nod their head to respond?" "No," Tiao responds with a low voice. Xian is nursing Qi while she resumes reading with Tiao saying, "She is unloving, because she is mad." Xian explains the book story

to Tiao, and Jing stands up and goes directly upstairs. Tiao continues reading while watching Jing go upstairs, "If you do not care about one another, you are missing out of a lot of joy. You know?" Jing comes back with a pillow and dolls and lays back down on the floor. Xian reasons with Jing again by saying, "You are miserable not because someone stood against you, but it's because your heart is against her heart. You can continue like this and it will get better or worse," and then she challenges them to pray together. Xian turns to ask Tiao, "You feel sorry for what you did?" Tiao starts to explain what Jing did to her. Xian asks Tiao and Jing to think again about what she said: "You do not have to feel sorry for what she did, but do you feel sorry for what you did? People are hurting because they feel unloved. You want other people to continue to hurt." Xian says this while prompting Tiao to reconcile with Jing, but Tiao is not willing to do so. Xian calls Zhen to come pray after a few seconds of silence. Zhen responds, "No, I want to read a book." Xian says while walking into the living room, "You guys go to do your things till you feel you can pray together." When Xian leaves, Tiao says to Jing while reaching to kick her leg, "You have to say sorry." Jing responds with a low and upset voice, "Do not kick my leg again," but Tiao insists with a crying voice, "You have to say sorry." Jing and Tiao start to kick each other and Tiao keeps telling Jing that she has to say sorry.

Xian first identified the nature of the conflict as a heart problem (self-serving), and she then drew on God's authority to encourage Jing to reconcile with Tiao: God is right. When she realized that her methods were not going to work (Jing moved away), she quietly scolded both Jing and Tiao for not being nice to each other, and she then circled back to identify their heart problem again (not loving each other, stating that "your heart is against itself"). Xian decided to "skip" the routine prayer time because she believed God would not listen to them when the reconciliation (repentance) was not achieved in the current conflict.

Xian comes back to the living room and asks Jing to practice piano. Tiao stands up from the sofa to get her Chinese textbook and to get ready to work on her Chinese lesson. Xian says with a low voice to Tiao, "You can start with math today," pauses for a second, and continues, "Put a flag (bookmark) where you are at, so you do not have to search for it each time." Xian comes close to Tiao's study desk to check on her work, and she asks Tiao, "You feeling comfortable, Tiao?" "No," says Tiao, who then starts to explain about how Jing wronged her.

Xian replies, “You have to repent before God, and it’s her (Jing’s) problem that she did wrong. (pause). I said you need a flag.” Xian walks away from Tiao’s study desk to attend to Jing who is practicing piano. Then Xian says to Jing, after correcting her finger position, “If your heart is not right toward God, everything will be wrong and frustrating. It’s no use that you practice piano.”

Xian’s parenting not only focused on training her children’s hearts, but also her children’s God-centered worldview. She let both Jing and Tiao move on to the routine academic studies with the unsolved conflict at heart, and she used the conflict to point out that whatever they do is meaningless, wrong, and frustrating if their hearts are away from God by refusing to apologize to each other. It appeared that Xian interpreted everything in life with Godly messages: “Obeying God is important.”

Obeying is a big deal. Xian believes that obedience is strength of character (Tripp, 1999, 2008) that is equally important to both the child and adult under God. She thinks human relationships become problematic due to the lack of an obedient character. She expected her children to obey her while at the same time she obeyed God. Xian shared that obedience means a child’s willingness to listen to and follow his or her parent’s instructions, knowing that obedience is the right thing to do. In one interview, she explained this perspective.

Obedience is very important. It’s God’s commandment, not like they have choices when to listen to (parent) and when to not (laughter). This connects them to their relationship with God. They need to accept this authority. I am their authority that God put in their life. I am supposed to discipline them, and they are supposed to listen to me. They do not obey God if they do not listen to me. This is a big deal, and it’s not like a little thing.

However, Xian did not always push for obedience on everything her children did. There were three major themes in Xian’s conflict management with her children in their

everyday interaction activities. These themes are illustrated in Xian's responses

toward her children's misbehaviors. The first focuses on the conflict events when Xian pushed for obedience and took time to discipline right away; the second one focuses on the conflict events in which Xian negotiated through reasoning to get her children to obey. The third focuses on the conflict events that Xian permitted her children to get by with a behavior, without pushing for obedience. There were also several occasions when Xian showed all three responses during one conflict event as it evolved. The following section is organized based on these three themes.

When Xian pushed for obedience and took time to discipline. At times, Xian responded to her children's misbehavior differently and three patterns illustrate her decision to push for absolute compliance without negotiation. These occasions include the following situations: (1) prayer, Bible teaching, and sharing time; (2) when the children knew what they were supposed to be doing but did not follow purposefully; and (3) health and safety related issues.

Bible sharing and teaching. Xian's priority each morning was to have Bible devotion time (Bible sharing and prayer) with her children, and she believed that was the way her children communicated and built their relationship with God. She believed that it is the parents' responsibility to immerse their children in God's words. She shared the following beliefs:

These are all opportunities that they can experience God. I mean, you teach them God's words, so when they run into situations, they can think with God's words. They also are able to discern what's wrong and what's right. I believe they know what's truth because they must have had experience before when they chose to follow their own will to satisfy the immediate need and not obey God. They then

suffer, and (their heart) falls into bitterness and darkness. This is also what God tells them. Then they gradually learn by themselves that they should obey God.

With Xian's faith and child rearing values in mind, it was easier to understand why she pushed for obedience when her children misbehaved during faith related activities. Bible message sharing was really for her two oldest girls, and their full participation was required. Therefore, their misbehavior was not tolerated. Here is an excerpt that illustrates how Xian chastised Tiao when she was distracted from the Bible sharing activity one day in the family living room.

"What is lacking of wisdom?" Xian asks, pauses for a few seconds, and then continues, "Jing, think about what would you do when you lack wisdom?" Xian asks with her Bible at hand. Jing responds, "You should ask for it from God," Xian affirms her while looking at her children, "That's true, we have a generous God, and why not ask him?" Then she continues to read the Bible message. "It's more blessing to give than to receive. God gives generously, and he will never let you ask for a long time and provide you a little bit." Jing is lying across the study desk while listening to Xian. Tiao went to pick up Qi. "Do not get yourself distracted," says Xian softly and continues to share her thoughts about wisdom. "You should always ask from God, and it's foolish not to ask. Would you rather be foolish or wise?" Xian asks with a rising tone and looks directly into Tiao's eyes after seeing her carrying Qi around. "Wise," Tiao responds with a low voice while letting go of Qi. Xian asks "Is it wise to get yourself distracted like that?" and then pauses for a second before continuing to reason with Tiao, "The way you are behaving shows that you do not want God's words. Do you believe that God is a generous God?" Tiao nodded her head quietly. Xian asks, "How do you ask for things from mother?" as she looks away from Tiao and continues her Bible teaching. "Mother, give me this, and give me that". Jing responds smiling. Xian continues with a soft voice and gentle look after Tiao sits down and pays close attention to the ongoing Bible verse sharing. "Yes, it's the same, if you ask for wisdom, and He will give it to you. There are people who do not understand how to ask for wisdom from God, and then they just don't. That's it."

Xian became serious and controlling over Tiao's behavior when she saw Tiao was not completely listening to her Bible teaching after reminding her quietly and gently the

first time not to get distracted. However, she did not appear to be controlling or dominate her, She returned to her normal tone and facial expression to continue her Bible message sharing after she saw Tiao sat on the living room floor to listen to her quietly. Xian exercised parental control to regulate her behavior, and to keep her focused on what she believed was good for Tiao.

Prayer time. Xian approached prayer seriously with her children each morning, and it was a priority after the children's personal quiet time of reading the Bible and praying and Bible message sharing time. It did not seem to bother her that she had to call her children a few times to get their attention to come into a circle in the living room. Xian often showed understanding that her children, including the oldest two, may need a little extra time to refocus after participating in quiet time and Bible sharing time. However, she became very serious when prayer time was about to start and Zhen failed to come to the prayer circle. (Zhen is not required to participate in quiet time and Bible message sharing time because of her age. But she is required to be part of the prayer circle without saying a prayer.) Zhen would often tell her mother that she had something else to do like her homework, play a bit more, change her diapers after hearing her mother call for prayer. When it became very clear to Xian at this point that Zhen knew the expectation, and she just would not do it, then Xian pushed for immediate obedience.

As usual, Xian calls on her children to come into a circle to pray in the morning. Both Jing and Tiao get into the circle on the living room floor, and Zhen is absent. "Zhen, come to pray," Xian asks firmly. Zhen replies while moving even slightly further away from the circle, "I want to play a bit more." Xian looks into Zhen's eyes and says quite firmly, "No, Mama only needs to call you once and you need to come when we pray." Zhen seems to sense her mother's firm tone and she comes into the circle with a little smile. However, Zhen does not sit still but keeps moving her body. Everybody is holding each other's hands so Zhen's moving

becomes somewhat of a disturbance. “Stop moving so we can pray,” says both Jing and Tiao at the same time. But Zhen responds while lifting her hand up high above her head, “I want to pray like this,” Xian calmly responds while looking firmly at Zhen, “Zhen, you can pray like that when you pray by yourself. When we pray as a group, we lower our head, have your knee down and eyes closed, okay?” Zhen smiles and arranges herself the way her mother wants her to be. After they finish praying, both Jing and Tiao complain that Zhen touched their eyes during prayer. “She touched mine too,” says Xian while looking toward Zhen, “You cannot do that, and do not do it in the future, okay?” Zhen nods her head while lowering her head with a little awkward smile on her face.

Zhen exercised her agency to challenge the prayer expectation that Xian had set up. Xian exercised her agency to patiently reason with Zhen and make the expectation clear each time she pushed the boundary. On another day, after again experiencing resistance from Zhen to come into the circle to pray, Xian encourages Zhen to practice obedience for the second time. Xian looks at Zhen and says, “Zhen, come here,” Zhen does not seem to want to obey, and stays where she is and trying to explain what she is doing in by saying “but, but” while looking at Xian. Xian cuts in firmly, “You cannot say ‘but, but, but’ or ‘no’ when I call you.” At the same time she gives a quick and cold look at Tiao who is copying her mother’s words in Chinese while smiling. Tiao stops when she senses that her mother does not appreciate it. Xian continues with a firm voice while looking into Zhen’s eyes, “You need to obey when I call you once.” Zhen now walks toward her mother. Xian asks her to practice doing that one more time, “Okay, let’s do it again. When Mom calls you, you come right away.” Xian has Zhen go back where she was standing, and calls her again to practice obedience with Zhen.

Xian did not tolerate her children’s disobedience when it was clear that they knew what was expected, but they just would not do it. She put away what she was engaging in

right away to take time to discipline when these situations occurred. She reasoned with Jing until she was very uncomfortable and was fully aware of her morning responsibilities after her irresponsible behavior with Xian's temporary absence. It seems that Xian's purpose was very simple, and she wanted Jing to remember this uncomfortable moment after failing to do what she was expected to do and to remember to never do it again.

It's in the middle of the morning. Xian notices Jing is not doing anything after she finishes her phone conversation with her friend. "You look at me," Xian demands with a firm, yet calm tone, and she continues, "The morning time is your study time, and I am not supposed to be the one to come to you and ask you (What you are doing?). It's you that's supposed to be the one that comes to me (when you have questions)." Jing senses her mother's firm tone and she is walking away from the kitchen toward the living room where her study desk is located. Xian stops her, "Jing, I did not finish yet (pause). Look at me. Do you truly not know if you should be working on a Chinese or math assignment?" Xian repeats to ask Jing similar questions for a while before Jing starts to explain. "It's not like that." Jing seems to get very uncomfortable, and she sits upside down on the sofa so Xian asks her to sit up straight, and continues her reasoning, "Now it's almost 11am." Jing interrupts, "Then I should go (work on my study)." But Xian gets back to the conversation, and continues her reasoning, "This is more important. Jing, do you know you need to brush your teeth and clean your face each morning?" Jing nods her head impatiently and seems to have had enough of her mother's lecture.

Xian does not let it go easily though. She continues, "What about study?" Jing's passive facial irritation becomes verbal at this point, and she makes the unwilling and unhappy sound "uh" with almost a crying voice. Again, Xian asks, "Jing, is what you are doing right?" Xian finally stops questioning Jing when both Zhen and Tiao come to Xian for help. One last time, Xian asks Jing. "Do you know what you should be doing now?" Jing nods her head and lowers her face. "You may leave," Jing picks up her Chinese textbook from the sofa and slowly walks toward her study desk.

Xian purposely made this discipline lesson a memorable one for Jing, so she would not repeat the same mistake in the future. Xian appeared to be practicing Rosemont's (2007) belief about memorable discipline. He stated that discipline that does not remain in a child's memory is not discipline. Xian was fully aware of Jing's deep

displeasure with the confrontation and discipline-based and agonizing questioning,

but her purpose was to have this strong sense of discomfort marked onto Jing's heart and mind. In doing so, she would remember to do what she was supposed to be doing independently in the future.

Rest your eyes/posture correction. Xian often asked her children to rest their eyes after study. Jing loved reading fiction, and she read whenever she had break time, but Xian wanted Jing to rest her eyes after her piano practice even though Jing insisted that her eyes were not tired in the following exchange.

I will have you do chores if you continue (reading) at break time. You can go help Mama do the dishes," However, Xian's threat does not work. Jing still holds onto her book and keeps reading. "It's problematic that you use your eyes like that. Go look outside or think about something to do with Zhen," Xian encourages with a smile. However, Jing does not seem to mind. It seems Xian is losing her patience, and raises her voice a bit saying to Jing, "Your eyesight will turn bad, and it will never recover." Jing responds with an upset voice, "My eyes do not feel tired." But Xian retorts while quickly walking away to attend to the laundry room, "Do you think Mom is lying to you? If it weren't not so important, Mama wouldn't keep telling you." When Xian sees Jing still reading on the sofa, she asks again with a firm voice, "Jing, is it right to disobey Mama like this?" Jing slowly lifts her head toward her mother. "My eyes won't get bad," to which Xian responds, "It's too late when you truly know it." Jing gets up reluctantly from the sofa and walks away into the kitchen.

Xian suffers back pain, so she intentionally makes sure that both Jing and Tiao have the right sitting posture while studying and practicing piano. She often repositions their backs saying, "If you continue to sit like shrimp, you will get back pain soon." This posture correction was embedded in their everyday studies. It seems that Xian did not mind continually reminding her girls about their sitting posture and resting their eyes. She physical corrected them as a way to show that she cared about their health.

Negotiated obedience. Xian's everyday parent-child conflict management

approach featured reasoning, and she seemed to be able to pinpoint the critical aspects that triggered conflicts. Xian tended to engage in conflict resolution with her children to facilitate their reconciliation as a way to encourage them to obey. It is important to understand Xian's conflict resolution and reconciliation style and her interpretation of situations before proceeding to specific conflict cases.

I often noticed when there was a conflict, there was an apology framework that the children used to ask for forgiveness after they were ready to reconcile as in the following conversation: "I am sorry, I should not (specific wrong doing against the others). Would you please forgive me?" The person making the apology waits for the response of the person she was making the apology to. If the response is "Yes, I forgive you," then they hug each other. Here is Xian's response to the application of this apology framework.

This is a commonly used method among Christians (evangelical Christian). (I am not sure if it's mentioned in (Christian parenting books) *Shepherd Your Child's Heart and Growing in God's Way*. I think this is a Biblical principle. Once you do a wrong against others, then you need to admit your sin, admit your mistake and try (your) best to save the relationship. Restoring a (broken) relationship is a biblical principle. I know there are times they just walk through the procedure, particularly Zhen. But I want them to cultivate a habit that they can actually use later on when their heart changes. In fact, even if it is just a procedure, they can reach reconciliation through this procedure. I mean, they are willing to hug each other, particularly the oldest two. I think mostly because they learn God's words every day, and they, in fact, can truly forgive and let go of the conflict after hugging each other, they experience the process of reconciliation and know that's what they want, and they do not want to harbor bitterness and carry on life like that. Xian shares that people have conflict relationships because their relationship with God is bad in the first place, and God's relationship with human beings is a love relationship. Human beings have the capacity to love each other because God's love lives in their hearts.

Xian believed that both Jing and Tiao had already constructed a Godly understanding about reconciliation, and they felt and experienced the benefits of doing so as human beings who have a relationship with a loving God. She believed that people have problematic interpersonal relationships because their relationship with God is broken.

I observed that Xian's children could often reach reconciliation after conflicts with Xian's intervention. However, it did not always go very smoothly, and Zhen often helped negotiate the conflict with her sisters.

After lunch, Xian is cleaning up in the kitchen. Zhen and Qi are playing in the living room, and Zhen is lying on Qi's body, and she bursts into a loud cry. Xian runs into the piano room to check what's going on. She takes Zhen to the basement door where children usually go for a time out. Xian asks firmly, "Do you want your sister to treat you nicely? Would you want to be pressed onto the floor like that?" "No," Zhen answers with a low voice. Xian asks calmly, "What happens if somebody presses you onto the floor?" Zhen responds while looking at Xian and quickly looks away, "It will hurt." Xian asks, "What should you do when you hurt somebody?" Xian implies that Zhen should make an apology to her younger sister Qi after reasoning with her. Zhen walks to hug Qi, but Qi starts to cry really loud the moment Zhen approaches her. Zhen gets confused and starts to cry as well. Xian walks over to Qi and picks her up from the floor. Zhen apologizes with a crying tone while standing beside Xian, "Qi, I am sorry, I should not have put my head on your body. Will you forgive me?" "Come here and give her a big hug," Xian says, but Qi does not want a hug at all. She cries and pushes Zhen's head away. Xian says to Zhen, "She is kind of scared of you now, Zhen. Let her go now," and Zhen walks away. Xian takes Qi with her to the kitchen.

Since Zhen is only 3 years old, when she offends her sister, Xian often makes sure that she fully understands her offense specifically before asking her to apologize as an offender. In this case, Qi was too young to understand the process of reconciliation except the hurt that Zhen caused. So she cried loudly when Zhen got close to her to

apologize as Xian requested. Xian guided Zhen to finish the full procedure of making an apology to Qi even if Qi did not seem to want it.

Each conflict had a different dynamic even with the same offender and same mediator. Following is an excerpt that illustrates how Zhen and Tiao managed to reconcile after Xian's facilitation of reconciliation failed to work initially. Tiao appeared to need some time to process her negative emotions toward Zhen after she hurt her. Zhen did not appear to be clear about the consequences of her behavior. She was irritated when her "unconscious" behavior brought her a consequence. They eventually reconciled through a hug and kiss with Xian's intervention.

Zhen is playing with Tiao, and they are chasing each other and lying on the floor. Zhen runs over to sit on Tiao's right upper belly after she's lying down. Tiao cries like she's really hurt, and is lying there apparently in pain. "You hurt Tiao really bad," Xian said to Zhen. Zhen looked confused and responded, "I did not do that on purpose." Xian told Zhen to go apologize to Tiao, but Tiao turned her back to Zhen while listening to Xian explain, "Tiao, Zhen did not mean to hurt you." "Yes, she meant to," says Tiao in an upset voice while getting up and rubbing her hands together. Xian explains more while she continues to ask Zhen to make apology to Tiao, "She did not know what she did could hurt you that bad," Zhen is not happy now, and she says, "I did not mean to hurt you" in a loud and unhappy voice. Xian's continued the instructions, "You got Tiao really hurt, Zhen. You did not mean to but you hurt her. Go ask for forgiveness." Tiao gets up and leaves the room where Xian is putting away laundry "She left," says Zhen with a confusing look. Xian responds, "You should go chase her and say you are sorry," but Zhen does not follow this suggestion. Tiao comes back and joins the play. She seems to forget what happened to her. Xian reminds Zhen to make the apology to her, and Zhen says, "I am sorry, Tiao. I should not hurt you that much. Will you forgive me?" "Yes, I forgive you." Tiao says with a big smile while hugging, and kissing Zhen's back.

Sometimes, Zhen and Tiao both refused to forgive each other. Below is an excerpt that illustrates the dynamic when two children refused to forgive each other, and Xian

tried hard to reason with each one separately to help them get over their intense

hostile emotions toward each other.

Xian sets up a time for cleaning up and hears Zhen crying. Xian walks toward Zhen while Zhen is walking towards her, too. Xian tells Zhen to have a “time out” when they meet each other in between the kitchen and living room. Zhen looks upset and walks toward the fireplace and stands there. Xian turns and talks to Tiao. “She hit me,” Tiao said, the moment her mother turns to her and calls her name. “I clearly saw you hit her,” Xian reasoned calmly, while she looked at Tiao. “She hit me. Is she supposed to hit me then?” Tiao asks in an upset voice. “Are you supposed to hit her? I am concerned about this,” Xian responds with a very calm and reasoning voice, “You should go calm yourself down first.” Tiao backs off to sits in front of the little door in the living room.

About 2 minutes later, Xian says, “Tiao, you can come out (from your time out)” and watches Tiao walk toward her. Xian asks, “What was happening a while ago?” Tiao responds so intensely with a crying voice, “She hit me. She hit me first.” Xian asks, “Is it the right thing to do if she hits you and then you hit her? (pause) If she hits you, you can talk to her.” When she sees Tiao is still looking upset, she asks, “Do you want to think about it more yourself? Didn’t we learn about self-pity this morning? Ah, I have to clean all of these, and I have four children, and none of them are obedient. Does self-pity come out from love, joy, and peace? Or does it come out of anger and bitterness? We read the sentences regarding self-pity, and you said, ‘I like it’.” Xian sees Tiao calm down at this point and she asks her if she wants to pray upstairs. Tiao goes upstairs with a less intense feeling about the fight.

Xian sent both Zhen and Tiao for a time out after observing their intense hostility toward each other. Tiao was irritated, and she aggressively defended herself for hitting Zhen, so Xian asked her to use a time out as a way to calm down. However, when she was called out the second time, Tiao’s emotions were still very intense and defensive. Qing applied the message they had just learned in the morning to reason with Tiao, and gently encourage her to pray. Xian appeared to have sympathy toward Tiao who was so emotionally intense.

Xian asks, “Zhen, you come here.” “Coming,” Zhen said with a little smile on her face. It seems that she has forgotten about what just happened while approaching her mother. Xian says again, “Zhen, what happened?” Zhen

responds, "Tiao hit me and then I hit her back." Xian asks Zhen, who did not respond to her mother's question, "Is it okay that she hits you and you hit her back? What were you doing before (the fight)?" Xian asks Zhen this second question when she realizes that she probably won't get any response from her. Zhen finally responds, "I was playing." Xian continues, "Were you supposed to be playing at that time? What are you supposed to be doing?" Zhen responds in an embarrassed voice, "Cleaning up." Xian reasons, "You often leave your toys behind, and it's often that your older sisters help you put them away. Aren't you supposed to be helpful this time?" "en" (like Yes in English) "Should you hit your sister? Would it be okay if I feel unhappy and I hit you?" Zhen realizes she is wrong after Xian's detailed reasoning, and she really wants to leave, so she starts to walk away a couple of times. "Come back," Xian demands when Zhen is trying to leave. (Tiao is trying to tell her mother that she finished praying, You may come down). "Did Mother tell you that you may leave when Tiao was coming downstairs? Zhen, you should think about if you should say sorry to your sister. Think about it carefully." (They do not apologize to each other, but end up all reading on the sofa together.)

Zhen quickly forgot what happened, but when Xian called on her to reason with her regarding her aggressive behavior, she came to understand that she had done something wrong against Tiao. Xian appeared to be really good at asking Zhen detailed and specific questions to help her think through her misbehavior. Tiao and Zhen eventually were able to do activities together peacefully without being hostile toward each other. Xian left them alone without pushing them to apologize. However, there were several occasions when they both refused to apologize, and they fought right in front of Xian. Xian had to take Zhen to a private room for a private conversation to help her understand that she needed to apologize. Tiao and Jing also fought but their conflict dynamic was more subtle and intricate. Here is an excerpt that illustrates Tiao and Jing's conflict resolution with Xian's facilitation.

Tiao and Jing are fighting to hold a book that her mother is reading with them on the sofa. Xian sends both of them to time out. They each pick a place to stand quietly. A few minutes later, Jing asks, "Mom, can I come out now?" Xian agrees to let her out quietly, and asks twice for Tiao to come back as well. I notice that

Xian does not say anything, but Jing starts her apology saying, "I am sorry. Would you forgive me?" Jing is asking Tiao, but Tiao does not look her in the eyes, and she does not want to forgive her. Xian cuts in the conversation saying, "What you do want Tiao to forgive you for? You need to be clear." "I should not pinch you," Jing adds, and Tiao says "It's not you pinching me that gets me, and these two sisters fall into a fight again. Xian has to intervene, saying, "Okay, you both did wrong, you both were 'me first.' Is that kind?" They both are quiet, sitting on both sides of the sofa where Xian is sitting, and after a few seconds pause, they hug each other.

Both Jing and Tiao understood that they needed to forgive each other, and for the most part, they were able to do so with Xian's intervention. However, at times, it took them longer to think through and then reconcile with one and other. There were also times when the children dealt with their own conflicts when Xian was occupied with other events. Here is an excerpt that illustrates the dynamic of how Zhen used biblical forgiveness that Xian had taught them by reasoning with Jing who was not willing to forgive her sister after their conflict.

Jing is complaining to Xian that Zhen hurt her, and Xian asks Zhen to apologize to Jing. Zhen goes to Jing right away to apologize. She starts, "Sorry, Jing, I should not have hurt you, and would you forgive me?" Jing shakes her head while walking away toward the blackboard where her mother is sharing the mail from the World View about their donation to children suffering from the Iraq conflict. Zhen says to Jing after she refuses to forgive her, "If you do not forgive me, then the Heavenly Father won't forgive you either," while also walking toward Xian and Tiao to the little blackboard.

Xian often facilitated her children's conflict reconciliation through calm reasoning with each one who was involved in the conflict. Although the dynamic of each conflict was quite different, Xian's reasoning was very similar. She often used questions (e.g., Is that kind? Is that loving? Is that selfish?) to engage her children actively to check

their hearts, and they often were able to think through by themselves with the principles “love and serve each other” after Xian’s quick reminders.

When Xian did not push for obedience. Obedience is a strength of character, and Xian valued it very much because it related to her children’s capacity to respect the authority God put in their lives (Tripp, 1999, 2008), and according to Xian, it eventually connected to their own relationship to God. Xian expected her children to obey at once when she made a request. However, she showed understanding when her children could not listen very well because of reasonable distractions (e.g., birthday) or physical tiredness (nap). Here is an excerpt that illustrates how Xian tolerated Zhen without pushing her to be obedient when she was physically tired.

On the way back home from grocery shopping after lunch, Zhen is really tired because she skipped her nap. Xian checks if Zhen is still awake with a smile, “Zhen, are you tired?” Zhen says absolutely, “No, I am not.” A while later, Zhen asks, “Mama, can I sleep now?” She is tired now because she insisted on going grocery shopping with her family without her routine nap. Xian replies, “No, you cannot. We are just two minutes away from home.” Zhen raises her voice and asks again as she starts whining, “Mom, can I sleep now?” Xian responds, “Let Mom think about it, okay? What’s in your hand, Zhen?” Xian asks in a curious voice trying to change the subject to keep Zhen awake. “It’s the green (could not hear clearly),” Zhen responds seriously while starting to cry. Xian continues to engage her in conversation while trying very hard to not laugh, “You sure it’s green, I see that it is red.” Zhen says absolutely “It’s green.” “Why don’t you ask your sister to take a look at it to see if it’s green or red?” Xian suggests. A few seconds later, Zhen seems to figure out her mother is trying to trick her sister to keep her awake. “I dislike you, Mama.” Xian pretends to be surprised, “En, why?” Zhen plays along, “I do not want to tell you.” Xian responds, “You think about it then.” “I want to throw you out the window.” Xian burst into laugh, and then asks “Why?” Zhen says loudly, and she sounds really mad, “I do not want to tell you.” “If you throw me out of the window, and when daddy comes home and cannot find Mama, he will be really sad.” Xian’s car starts to pull into the garage, and she quickly parks the car and comes to get Zhen to put her in bed.

Xian tolerated Zhen throwing a tantrum and not talking nicely when she knew Zhen was really tired without her routine nap. Additionally, Xian tricked Zhen to get her to stay awake until they got home, and her sister understood the trick. Even when Zhen threw a big tantrum. Xian appeared to understand quietly why Zhen was misbehaving, and she did not push Zhen for obedient behavior.

Xian often put Jing, the older one, in charge of Qi while Xian was cooking, doing dishes, or doing the laundry. Both Jing and Tiao mostly did not mind taking care of Qi, but attimes they were so engaged in playing, and they would refuse to help their mother out. Xian often did not make the older ones take care of the younger ones.

Xian is putting away the dishes after lunch, and she calls on Jing to take care of Qi. Jing does not want to, so Xian puts Qi on the living room floor where both Jing and Tiao are building a house. Xian quietly moves away after placing Qi, and she is trying to close the kitchen gate so Qi won't get back into the kitchen where she is cleaning up. Tiao holds Qi while pushing the gate open forcefully with her back, and she squeezes over the kitchen gate and puts Qi into a diaper box in the kitchen. "Ah, you just put her onto the boat, and then left. Aren't you concerned she might drown?" Tiao keeps running away, and Xian stands in the middle of the kitchen, and laughs at her. She picks up Qi while putting the dishes into the dishwasher.

Xian did not seem to completely count on her older children to take care of the younger ones even though she would have appreciated it if they did. She happily managed to do the household chores with Qi's presence if her older two children did not want to watch Qi.

Mixed discipline method. Xian's discipline of her children does not always fall into these three patterns. Sometimes she pushed for obedience, and then negotiated for obedience and then just let it go, whereas other times, she negotiated with them for

obedience, and then pushed for obedience and then she let it go. Here is an excerpt that illustrates this mixed discipline strategy.

Xian lets her children play outside since it's a sunshiny day. She goes to set up two chairs by the road, and asks Jing to dribble the basketball around as part of their physical education. She asks Jing about three times while she is busy setting up a pretend kitchen in front of the house's main entrance area again for cooking a meal. She instructs Jing, "You go read your Chinese text for ten minutes, and then come out to play." Jing shows she really does not want to do it, and groans. Xian continues, "I did not ask you to come out to just play; if you do not want the physical education class, then you go read for 10 minutes." Jing is walking to dribble the basketball but her mother stops her, saying, "No, now you go read inside." Xian goes inside with her to make sure she is doing her reading. Xian comes out with a Chinese literature book and is helping Jing with dictation. Xian reads a sentence from the text in Chinese and Jing writes it down without looking at it. Jing put what she hears down, at her study desk, and then comes to the window where she can hear her mother read another sentence for her. After about 10 sentences, Jing starts to come out for her sentence, and Xian says with a smile "You do not have to come out for it." Jing is smiling as well, and asks what is the next sentence, and goes back inside. The third time, when Xian sees Jing is about to come out, she says louder, "Jing, you do not have to come out," but Jing goes ahead and comes out with a smile. Xian says to her without a smile this time that if she comes out again, then Xian will add one more lesson to her task. "Ah, Mama" Jing pouts, showing her unhappiness and walks slowly back inside while slightly stomping her feet.

Xian appeared to take it seriously when Jing purposefully disobeyed after a few requests. In this case, Jing fails to listen to Xian for her PE class, and Xian sends her back to study Chinese lessons and discourages negotiation. Xian gives Jing warnings when she keeps coming outside for her dictation work, and Jing learns not to push the boundary further. Jing seems to know when she can push a little bit and disobey, and when she just has to follow her mother's instruction.

"Faith guides me when it comes to how I discipline my children." Xian shares that she does not have a fixed idea of how she would respond to her parent-child conflict. She stated that she often follows the leading of the Holy Spirit which guides her child

discipline differently each time. Here is the description of how Xian follows the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discipline her children.

The Holy Spirit helps me work with my children with flexibility. There are times He will guide me to put up with my children and there are times He guides me to seriously discipline my children. I just do not know when and how He guides me to do what. For example, there is one time Jing threw a tantrum on our trip to play at a park. She was very little. Like 3? You know it's not easy to plan a trip with a young child. We had everything ready and left the house and drove on the road. However, she screamed hysterically in the car, I do not remember exactly the reason, maybe because of playing the music, or something like that. Wa! She was screaming and mad. Then, I drove back home and did not go (big laugh), It's a big deal. It's a big sacrifice to me because of all the preparation. I felt that (dealing with Jing throwing a tantrum) is more important, you know what I mean, so I came back home. It's a loss to me, and of course it's a big loss to Jing. So she never did similar things ever again. Sometimes you just want her to remember. I felt the need to discipline her seriously back then, so I drove back. However, there are times I need to put up with them with similar matters. I can't clearly predict when I will have what response. There were times they also threw tantrums when they are little, but knowing that they were truly tired. I still gently talked with them.

Xian made an effort to apply her faith to explain her everyday parenting. She claimed that the Holy Spirit guided her everyday parenting instead of specific parenting methods. This seemed to be a similar disciplinary case when Zhen threw a tantrum in the car as described above. The nuances were that Zhen had a legitimate reason to throw a tantrum (lack of sleep from a tiring grocery shopping trip, so her mother tricked her to keep her awake), but, in contrast, Jing did not seem to have a legitimate reason to throw a tantrum. Instead, it appeared to be a willful outburst toward her mother when Xian was taking her on a trip for fun based on Xian's description above. Xian applied her religious beliefs to explain her different reactions to her children's tantrums.

“The nature of the problem human beings face is the same regardless of age.” Xian demonstrated an interesting contradictory understanding about young children. She claimed that many of the biblical scriptures were not hard to understand even for a three-year-old. She often disciplined Qi with the belief that Qi understood basic biblical concepts such as love. Here is an excerpt that illustrates how Xian made sense of how young children come to understand faith.

When I was a new believer, I learned that the church I am currently attending has Sunday school for two-year olds. I thought quietly to myself, ‘What do they teach a two year olds that they can understand?’ Later on, I learned they actually can understand. Jing understood the gospel perfectly well when she was three years old. In fact, much of what the Bible teaches is not hard to understand. There are times they (who?) truly want to listen to God and they just can’t do it. So they are miserable. Problems children confront everyday may look very different on the surface but their nature is the same.

For example, Jing wanted to have ice cream before lunch one day, and then she threw a big tantrum because I did not give it to her. She became very frustrated after I reasoned with her. I thought she was frustrated because she couldn’t have ice cream before lunch, and I learned later on that it was because she felt she was terrible. She wanted to obey God, but she couldn’t. Then I shared with her that we are human beings, and human beings are just like that. That’s why we need a Savior.

Xian applied her religious beliefs to help Jing make sense of her real life struggles, and then make sense of why humans need a Savior. Jing was the example that Xian used to make her point that little ones understand the gospel. Xian shared the gospel with Jing through real life struggles, and she then became a Christian.

To Qi, she does not understand if I talk about Jesus Christ with her. However, she already has problems inside. For example, she throws tantrums. You just saw at the dining table that she was not happy to let me feed her. She grabbed both spoons that I use to feed her. When I used the third spoon to feed her, she also grabbed it. You see, that’s (pause), she has pride inside. She wants to do what pleases her, right? Yet, she could not manage it well with the spoon by herself, and she also does not want to listen to the authority that God put in her life to

protect her. She often scratches other people's faces when she gets mad. This is sin, and her heart is the same. You see what I mean. It's the same problem from my perspective. What she needs is the same, and she needs Jesus Christ. It's only that she won't understand reasoning, but she knows love. When she scratches other's faces, I will tell her seriously 'That's wrong,' and she also understands that.

Xian drew on her faith to interpret Qi's inner problems (pride, willful behavior) to understand her need for God and a Savior. She believed that humans' problem (e.g., pride) was the same regardless of age. It was not surprising to see Xian discipline her one-year-old, Qi, with her understanding about Qi's recognition about love and adult disapproval in mind. Xian often clapped her hand with Qi's hand in the middle to tell her "You cannot scratch your older sister's face." However, interestingly, Xian also used age as an excuse to protect the younger ones and discipline the older ones when there was a conflict between Zhen and Tiao, and Zhen and Qi.

"She is so little, and she does not know anything." It was interesting to notice the pattern that no matter what conflict specifically occurred, the older children were always somewhat more responsible for the conflict. Xian often turned around to tell her older children who had a conflict with Qi, "She is so little. She does not know anything yet," and at the same time, Xian would discipline her youngest, Qi, with a serious look while clapping her hand to tell her what she did was wrong.

At the age of three, Zhen demanded a lot of independence. Xian understand that Zhen needed considerable attention and guidance. Zhen was too young to be put her into an academic study routine and too old to be constrained in one place and or one activity for a long time. It was a challenge for Xian to pay enough individual attention to her

while balancing the attention given to her oldest two and the youngest one. Zhen often ended up playing by herself or wandering around. That was when conflicts between Zhen and Qi, or Zhen and Tiao often occurred.

Qi grabs one piece of the toy Zhen was playing with, and Zhen does not want her to play with it so she takes it away. Qi then picks up another piece, and Zhen goes to get it from her hand. "Zhen, you can't treat your sister like that. She does not know anything, and you are a big sister," Xian says to Zhen. Zhen responds angrily, "No, I am not. These are all mine, I found them," and she takes all of the toys with her.

Xian told Zhen she was a big sister to Qi, and she needed to treat her younger sister nicely while telling her Qi was too little. When there was conflict between Zhen and Tiao, Zhen then became the one who was too little to know anything. Age seemed to play a significant role in Xian's child discipline. Ho (1971) stated that Chinese parents believe children under six years old have not reached the age of understanding yet.

Zhen cries while walking away to look for Xian, "Mama, Tiao says I am a liar." Tiao explains to her mother tensely what happened, and Xian explains, "She is so young. She is just three. She often does not know what she is talking about. Should you talk to her like that?" Tiao points at the figures and explains to Xian, "She says this one is this one's father." Xian explains calmly with a soft voice while looking at Tiao, "Yes, this is George W Bush, and this is George H. W Bush. They are son and father. I told her that." Tiao smiles and tells Xian that Zhen also says this one is this one's father while pointing at some other figures on the poster. Xian smiles at Zhen and Tiao and then walks away to the kitchen.

Age was a big factor that Xian paid close attention to during her parenting practice, and she disciplined her children differently based on their development level of recognition. In addition, to care for her children's spiritual needs (faith training), Xian also started to be observant of her children's emotional needs.

“Children can get very emotional with things that adults do not think too much about.” Xian used what the Bible teaches as a way to make sense of reality, and it was also the way she helped her children understand the world through everyday parent-child interaction. Her girls, particularly the oldest two, were taught to live under the principles of “love and serve each other.” With Xian’s loving training, both Jing and Tiao demonstrated their high capacity of self-control, and they often resolved their conflicts quickly with or without Xian’s intervention. This maturity disguised their true age to me, as I took this unusual behavior as normal until one day, when Tiao’s long crying spell struck me and helped me realize that she was only a 6 years old. Here is the excerpt that illustrates the dynamic of Tiao’s rare crying for a long time.

After lunch, as usual, Xian sends both Jing and Tiao out to play because it’s a sunny afternoon. Tiao finds some screws from the neighbor’s house that she likes very much. Xian suggested while looking at Tiao, “You like playing with screws so much, (pause); I can have you play with Daddy’s.” Tiao replies, “I just like these that I found.” Xian leans back and sees Tiao’s beloved quilt sitting at the other end of the sofa and half jokingly and half seriously asks, “I like your quilt, so can I take it away because I like it?” while reaching over to get Tiao’s quilt. Tiao burst into crying while also reaching over to get her quilt. Xian seems shocked that Tiao would cry that hard all of a sudden, so she lets go of the quilt to let Tiao hold onto it. Tiao snuggles the quilt while still crying loudly on and off for a while. Xian moves on to help Jing with her math while Tiao is still sitting on the sofa holding tight to her quilt. She stops crying after a while.

Tiao is helping Qi put on her blue flower girl dress on at this point. She smiles at Qi who is also smiling while waiting Tiao to finish dressing her up. She cries for a few seconds with a dry voice while helping put on Qi’s headband. Jing turns around from her study desk to yell at Tiao “Tiao?” with a tone that seems to be saying, “Why are you still crying?” Qi looks at Tiao’s either smiling nor crying face at this point, and she seems confused, then she shows a big smile while looking toward Tiao after a little confused time. Tiao bursts into laughter looking at Qi all dressed up.

Xian rushed out of the house to pick up Zhen who attended a church-founded preschool nearby. On our way to the church, Xian turned to me and asked, “Do you think I am too strict with the girls?” I told her, “You know I wouldn’t make a judgment on your way of raising your children, right?” I laughed. However, Xian with a concerned look, responded, “I know, but I sometimes feel I am too strict with my girls,” I realize that Xian is still concerned about what happened to Tiao and her surprised look when seeing Tiao burst into crying. I sense Xian’s need for me to share some thoughts on what just happened, so I shared honestly with her my true reaction to Tiao’s crying. “You know what? It’s a surprise to me watching Tiao cry on and off for so long. Her last crying time actually reminded me that she is 6 years old. I realize that I forget her age and I have taken her as a little mature person for so long until I saw her crying like a child.” Xian responds with a little awkward smile on her face,

Oh, what you said makes my heart ache. Children can get very emotional with things that adults may not think too much about. One day, the girls were playing in the back yard of the church when Tiao accidentally killed a little frog because she held onto it too tightly. She was crying so hard, and my husband wanted me to say something to comfort her. I did not know what to say, and felt like they would be fine after crying a little bit.

Xian recognized her incapacity to attend to her children’s emotional needs, yet she was aware of such a need from her children through genuine curiosity (actively thinking and reflecting on it) in their everyday lived experiences. Xian was an active thinker, and she was also a very calm parent who reasoned with her children clearly and precisely. I was often amazed at how well her children listened to and obeyed her instruction, yet I often wondered where the space for the innocent aspects of a child was

once they were trained to know and apply truths about life. When is the child allowed to be a child without thinking too much about what's loving and unloving, kind and not kind, and right and wrong?

On my last day of data collection with Xian's family, Xian wanted to debrief with me about what I observed in her house, just to get an idea about how she was doing generally. I had been very cautious during the data collection process not to provide any evaluative feedback or comments to my studied families. Xian sincerely asked, "Well, it's the last day, and I am not really looking for your evaluative feedback, just your thoughts on how I am doing." Xian seemed to see through my thinking or she was just so used to me not telling her the principles, yet she was still very interested to hear my reaction to her teaching and parenting practices.

Since it was the last day, I responded honestly. "I appreciate your effort to raise such wonderful children. You know, they are respectful, smart and very obedient." I said genuinely, "Most importantly, they know some hard truths about life that even many adults do not necessarily know or they know but just could not live it out, for example, being grateful; reconciling with people whom you have conflict with; not harboring bitterness or other negative emotions in your heart." I shared with Xian that I always remembered the moment she told her girls that bitterness in their heart is dangerous. It would eventually drag them down by getting bigger and bigger and making their lives miserable. "I sometimes feel these hard truths about life and reality make your two older girls so mature, almost too mature at their ages. I wonder where is the space for their

childhood innocence?" I said this genuinely and paused there with concern that I may have said too much. (Silence) Xian looked like she was processing what I just shared.

"What is innocence?" Xian asked sincerely. "You know, the time a child can be a child, living carefree," I said while smiling awkwardly with the recognition that there is no perfect parenting. There is always something an outsider can point out that is problematic.

Xian's lived experience shaped how she viewed herself and her parenting values and beliefs. Xian's parenting was based on her personal understanding and experiences of connection with the Bible. She strove to teach her children to use the Bible as the way to know, think and do things, and the Bible scriptures were considered the reality of life. In addition to her education background, her growing up experience as an only child who had lots of time to read and think, her travels across the world, and her calm yet uplifting personality made her well equipped to be an active thinker and attentive observer as a parent. Xian had the most control over her children of the three mothers in this study. The interesting nuances are that Xian taught her children from a positive perspective (e.g., "how to love"), whereas Qing taught her children from a negative perspective (e.g. "how to not hate"). It was a different approach that produced different parenting outcomes. A third parenting perspective is illustrated by De whose parenting practice is illustrated in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: De's Everyday Parenting

The following description of a typical day for De's family schedule situates her parent-child conflict interactions in a broader context. De's schedule includes stories about Bible devotion time, breakfast, academic study, Sam's trumpet practice, and lunch. De's three patterns of parent-child conflict management are (1) push for obedience and discipline immediately, if needed; (2) facilitate negotiation for obedience; and (3) let go without pushing for obedience.

A Typical Day's Schedule for De's Family

De is perceived as a successful homeschooling mother in both Chinese and American church communities. Her oldest is already in his second year at a Christian college working on a double major with competitive academic standing. Her two younger boys are teenagers, and they also are doing very well based on test scores. The boys have designed their own academic study schedules with De's approval, and these schedules often are adjusted to accommodate sudden life events. "Our life is different each day; there are different things we need to attend to. I am not a teacher, but more like an administrator or "taxi driver," she shares with a big laugh. Here is a snapshot of what her family's daily schedule looks like.

Bible devotional time. De shares that her boys' morning priority is to read the Bible in their rooms with a big smile. "It's a habit that's hard to change". She seems very satisfied and happy about this habit for her boys.

Breakfast. Someone is working on remodeling the kitchen, so breakfast mostly is eaten in the living room where the dining table has been moved. De often eats Chinese

style breakfast (porridge with pickled vegetables) while her two teenage boys, Zack and Sam, have bread, peanut butter, and milk. All family members have a chore chart and they take turns cleaning up the table, loading the dishes, and unloading it after it is done. Unlike Chinese tradition, where the sons would get a glass for the elder person (Mother), it was interesting to watch Sam and Zack often just get two glasses for beverages and it seems that they do not get a glass for De. It is possible that De does not notice because she often does not need a beverage with her meal.

Academic study. The boys often take turns showering and then go to study in the basement instead of in the kitchen where they would normally study. During the time period of kitchen remodel, the upstairs is often occupied by lots of coming and going kitchen items. One day, De shares in English with a big laugh: “My tumor (De used this term to describe the difficulty to change her bad habits) is tardiness, and my family’s biggest issue is being messy.” Zack already takes college courses online, and he often works on the family desk computer with background music in the corner of the dining room where the computer will be relocated after the kitchen remodel is finished. He often does not take breaks until he is done. Sam usually studies sitting on the rocking chair in the living room near the front window. The boys usually keep their own schedules and study very independently. Sam occasionally needs help with math and science, but often works on his academic work (math, English literature, history) non-stop until he finishes them. De proudly shares, “They make their own schedule; they do not want my help,” while showing me Sam’s study schedule. After the school starts, De adds Chinese lessons to each boy’s schedule, and they have one Chinese lesson with the neighbor family’s

boys each week. Sam also goes to the homeschooling co-op with his mother every other Friday where he takes speech and stewardship classes. De leads a geography bee study group after the co-op, and Sam is also part of it. Zack takes speech class at church once a week.

De admitted with a sad tone, “I spend the least amount of time with Sam, because I am too busy,” but with a “it is what it is” look. “Our homeschooling mothers do not just stay at home with our own kids. You see I have a lot of projects going on... not sure if I will fail my third one,” she jokes with a big laugh while seeming to have a strong sense of inner confidence. “I also had the most difficult time with him. (She means Sam loves to argue with her over nuances.) We are so much alike. People say the child who is like you the most, fights with you the worst.” De is often in and out of the house running errands to Menards to help the kitchen remodel workers. Even after the kitchen was done and school started, she often took her boys to outside activities in the afternoon after they finished their academic work.

It is a busy time for De as well while the boys are working on the academic work. She prepares her Chinese lessons, prepares for leading a church Bible study small group, and attends to household chores. If anything pops up as a priority; the whole family will work on it as a group. De laughs loudly and also loves to talk, and her boys know that. “My sons often ask me why I have so much to say,” De shares with a big laugh. One day, she dropped Zack off to hang out with a friend’s boys while she attended a translation project meeting to translate a series of children’s Sunday school materials into Chinese. (The American church where De had attended for 10 years developed these materials.)

Zack was driving, and left the car running after parking the car in this family's driveway. "You leave the car on?" De realized the car was still running after walking away from the car a bit. Zack answered with a subtle smile and went back to turn the car off, "Yes, I thought you were just going to say 'hi' to the family. Are you going to just say hi?" De ignored his question until he turned the car off. She explained that she also needed to talk with the mother about what time to come back to pick him up. The two mothers chatted for about five minutes.

Trumpet practice. Sam often practices trumpet after he finishes his academic assignments while waiting for lunch to be ready. Zack also works until lunch is ready. Sam sometimes gets bored waiting for lunch so De pushes him to go play outside, but they often do not want to play outside.

Lunch time. De usually cooks a separate Chinese meal for herself after she finishes preparing an American style lunch for her two boys. The food that eventually sits on the table is often a combination of the two cultures. She cooks pakchoi for herself, adding the leftover hotpot and kimchi. She tells me that her boys do not like kimchi (fermented vegetables with lots of ingredients). "They think it stinks and never want it. But I enjoy it very much. I am okay not having any in the morning as I promise them. But they have to put up with me at lunch." De tells me this whenever she has kimchi as part of her meal.

Setting up the table is fairly interesting. The boys, who are responsible for setting the table, often just have glasses for themselves since De usually has tea after lunch but does not drink a beverage during lunch. They also do not set a plate for De unless she

makes a special request. "I need a bowl," De says to her youngest son Sam who is responsible for setting the table. She says that twice since Sam does not respond to her request, but then says, "You do not have to keep saying that; I am taking out a bowl for you." De turns to me, "They often ignore me because they think I talk too much. But I am 52 years old. What I do?" She says it in English and laughs at herself.

Lunch usually starts around 1pm. Sam and Zack's routine is to listen to the audio story that comes from the biggest evangelical website *Focus on the Family*. "These are really good stories, and they love it." De shares this with me, she pauses to have a bit of her food, and continues, "We used to read a story together at lunch time, and found out it does not work that well particularly when they are older. So we change to listen to a story. They love the stories still even though they are older children now." The afternoons are usually quieter. Zack continues to work on his online courses, and Sam works on his science or whatever work is left that needs to be done. When Zack needs go to church for his speech class or guitar lesson, Sam takes his work with him and goes along.

De's Everyday Conflict Management Stories about Parent-Child Interaction

This section mainly focuses on illustrating De's conflict interaction patterns with her two boys Zack and Sam based on their personalities and birth order. There were three patterns demonstrated in her conflict management process. The first pattern is pushing for obedience, De used this method more with Zack (the second oldest son) since she felt he was a very obedient child. Therefore, her expectation toward him was to obey what she had to say. Yet she also seemed open to negotiation if Zack could make a strong case for himself for not obeying. The second pattern is negotiating for obedience. De tended to be

willing to negotiate and reason with Sam (the youngest son) since she did not seem to have much authority over him, with the exception of when she felt he deserved to be pushed to obey. The third pattern is letting go without pushing for obedience. De said she has been practicing “letting go of” her oldest son, Jake, during the year, and she constrains herself from getting into his life too much. De also shared her self-reflective responses toward these conflicts.

Conflict with Zack involving electric guitar and fantasy football. Zack was in his last year of high school, and De’s conflict with Zack mainly revolved around Zack’s desire for an electric guitar and his plans to substitute his Chinese and guitar lessons for fantasy football, which De strongly disagreed with. It was a shock to De that Zack wanted to drop Chinese and guitar lessons for fantasy football, and De knew that Zack already had a few guitars, so it did not make sense to her for him to get another guitar. She quietly believed that he was just being greedy, and his desire went against the family’s consumption values which were to get what you need, not what you want. Their conflicts evolved and reached a peak the week De’s husband was gone with Sam to a mini camp organized by the Boy Scouts. Their daily communications became tricky with this primary conflict unresolved in each other’s hearts, and it popped up frequently, becoming an issue that was triggered by other daily conflicts.

The following vignette illustrates the complicated dynamic development of the tension between De and Zack

De is going to dye her white hair in the bathroom, so she goes to the living room to check if her sons will need anything from her because she thinks she will take a long time to dye her hair. She doesn’t seem happy to see Zack coming up from the basement, sitting down in front of her laptop and starting to work on the

computer, so she asks him to do the dishes. Without looking at his mom but continuing to work on the computer, Zack says, "Mom, I have to get this done, it's important." De turns around to share with me that Russian gangs had decoded millions of people's Gmail accounts, and they had to change the Gmail account password to protect the family's privacy. De walks into the kitchen while talking with Zack, "You don't have to do that right now."

Zack says quickly and impatiently, "Mom, you do not understand; this is very important," sounding like he is annoyed by De's consistent disruption. De says firmly with a raised voice. "I do understand how important that is? It is okay that they take all of our possessions, but I am concerned more about your soul, I want your soul to go to heaven," She seems upset about how Zack responded and disobeyed her repeated request. Zack explains impatiently, "Mom, my soul won't go to hell. Dad says I need to do this immediately. (He pauses for a second and continues) No, he says I need to do it right away."

In what seems to be De competing with her husband's authority, she tells Zack "Mom says we do not need to do this immediately; that's not urgent. What I want you to do now is adjust your attitude. You stop whatever you are doing now and look at Mom." De says this while approaching Zack who is sitting in the dining table chair that is relocated in the living room. Zack slightly turns his body to face and look at De and says calmly, "Mom, you are disobeying Dad (the Bible-centered Christian family's household structure is viewed as Jesus Christ is the head of the family; then the husband is household head who has authority over his wife while they are equally created by God; parents have authority over their children to provide, love and protect them). He says I need to get this done right away." When De commands, "Show me your Dad's message," Zack turns back to the computer while saying, "It's not a text message, and it's in the email." Zack reads it for a couple of seconds, and says, "Here it is" with a slightly soft voice while showing the message to De. When De commands with a firm tone, "Show me where Dad says it has to be done immediately," Zack turns back to read the message, and he cannot find it. He explains with a soft and less irritated voice, saying, "I interpreted it as it needed to be done immediately because it is so important, I am wrong."

De indirectly pushed Zack for obedience when she noticed he was working on her laptop. Zack did not appear to understand De's subtle approach, and he continued to disobey De's repeated pushing for obedience. He even questioned De's understanding about the urgent issue he was trying to take care of. De appeared to be "humiliated" by Zack's back-talk to her. Their conflict escalated rapidly. De drew on her religious beliefs in the conversation to get Zack's attention regarding the serious consequences of his

behavior. However, Zack did not agree with it; instead, he “reassured” De that his soul would not go to hell. In addition, he pulled in his Dad’s authority to get De to stop pushing him for obedience, because he knew that his Dad had authority over his mom based on their religious beliefs. De’s pride as the mother appeared to be stirred up, and she was so determined to figure out if her husband really meant to have Zack work on changing their family email password even after Zack admitted his mistake.

De seems to ignore his apology and explanation, and she says, “I am going to call Dad to ask him.” “You can call to ask,” Zack says while returning to work on the computer. De replies, “I will call,” and still sounds irritated while taking on a battle of wills with Zack. She looks around and finds her cell phone on the dining table. She picks up the phone and starts to call. De asks her husband if changing the account needs to be done immediately while putting the phone on speaker. Her husband says they can have it done at some point. De asks her husband’s clarification if it has to be done today, and her husband says it does not have to be done today. De tells him that she is having a conflict with Zack regarding it now, and he thinks it has to be done now. (Zack whispers after her mother poses her question, “I said I was wrong” while his mother is still on the phone with his Dad), and they are having a lot going on in the household. De thanks her husband for clarification and hangs-up. “It doesn’t have to be done right away,” De says while confronting Zack. “I do not HAVE TO do it right away, I already said I think it is important and needed to be done right away, so I did, I am wrong.” Zack acknowledges his mistakes again while looking directly at De in her eyes. He sounds frustrated that De repeatedly ignores his recognition of the mistake.

De did not let Zack get by with his misinterpretation easily even after repeatedly admitting his mistake. However, Zack never apologized to De, and De did not seem to notice. De appeared to interpret that the root reason that Zack refused to obey her in the first place was because she would not let Zack have fantasy football and another electric guitar. She believed that his heart quietly harbored hostility toward her. Therefore, their conflict headed in the direction of talking about fantasy football.

De talks with Zack, “When I listen to you, all I hear is sleep over, fantasy football. Mama wants to keep you on the right track” (It sounds like she could not let go of

their primary conflict over fantasy football.) “Mama is not attacking your friendship, electronic guitar, and fantasy football. You just have to think it through. If you do really well after taking the college level classes, then you can take the fantasy football in.”

Zack responds, “Mom, there is no good, better, best,” but De seems confused, “What does that mean; spell it out. When you say good, better, best, except when it comes to sin, you are saying one of God’s creation is better than the other while they are all made for different purposes. Like the car and the airplane, you can’t say one is better than the other. They are made for different purposes.” Zack interrupts his mother, “We are having a debate now?” De pauses for a second and she continues, “What are the things God made the first day?” De stops him by telling him that she has a point to make but Zack says confidently. “I already know where you are going,” De lets him wait until she finishes her point, and continues the conversation, and they say together what God made from day one to day six. In the end, De asks Zack what man is made out of, and who is made in God’s image. Zack seems confused, “What is your point?”. De says slowly with a little smile, “Can we say we are no different than the animals? Zack says in a calm voice, Oh, I should have said there is no good, better, best in terms of things that God made. I see your point. I am sorry I didn’t make it clear,” De responds, “Do you see my point?” Zack responds positively with a smile, and he continues, “Yes, I do...I was going to propose it to you and Dad.” Talking with a big smile and hands held up in front of her chest, De seems engaged in her own talking about how precious God made humans to be, and God is the best,. Zack waits quietly until she finishes.

The conversation regarding if De should allow Zack to engage in fantasy football this semester turns into a theology discussion regarding what is good, better and best. Religious beliefs seemed to be their basis of making sense of life and talking through conflicts.

De finishes her thoughts and turns to ask Zack about his proposal about fantasy football, “What are you going to propose?”. Zack proposes, “I get one hour screen time each week, I want this screen time to be contributed to my fantasy football time.” De tries to interrupt Zack but he stops her before she starts. “I am not finished yet,” and he continues, “This screen time will include the time I am talking about it, researching it. All of the time will be deducted from my screen time.” De answers sincerely “Wow, this is a really good proposal. Mom wants to support you, but I have one question: How do you calculate the time? Are you going to start the time right before you talk with Jake about it?” De says this with a big laugh. Zack continue his proposed plan, “Well, I have the stop watch, and I can put it on. There are certain stop watches that...” Sam cuts into the

conversation “There might be a loophole, and you can just manipulate it around,” but Zack looks at Sam and says absolutely, “Well, there won’t be a loophole,”. With her eyebrows squeezed together a bit with a look that shows she is thinking hard about the schedule, De agrees, “I will talk with Dad and get back to you on Tuesday, (pause) oh, no not Tuesday. Dad will be gone for the minicamp.” Zack responds “I only need to know before the 23th. (Pause), it will be ideal if on the 20th,” De asks, “Why on the 20th?” Zack responds, “Because I need to let them know if I can be part of it.” De asks “Why the 23th?”. Again, Zack responds, “That’s the time we start the draft in it,” (pause), and then asks, “Can I go back to it now?” Zack asks if he can go back on the Internet to change the password of the email account. De says so firmly “But promise Mama you will just work on changing the password of your email account, leave Mama’s email account and usfamily (the shared family email account) to Dad, nothing else.” “Yes,” Zack answers quickly before his mom asks, “What do you do after that?” Zack responds without looking at his mother. “Wash the dishes.” “Good”, De says. “Do I get a hug?” “No”, Zack says directly without hesitation.

De took time to hear Zack’s proposal regarding his screen time for fantasy football, they walked through some of the details of Zack’s time management that could help him keep track of time so fantasy football would not get in the way of his academic studies. De responded to his plan diplomatically (talk with Dad and then can get back to him) while appearing to neither agree nor disagree with his plan. Their conflict over the email account password change was solved through a compromise. Zack could go ahead and change his own email account password but not the families’. However, Zack refused to hug his mom which signaled that the conflict was not really solved. It was also the message that indicated he was a grown “man” now but not Mom’s baby boy.

De shared that she had had a huge fight with Zack regarding his desire for an electronic guitar the previous night after the church worship service (Sunday, August 10th), the night her husband left for the Boy Scouts minicamp with Sam. Jake was the peacemaker, and he took De aside while both Zack and De were arguing loudly over the electric guitar. He suggested that De find out why Zack wanted the electronic guitar so

much and what his motivation was. De put both her arms close to her heart, looked really touched and talked about how she was comforted by her son's reasoning and understanding like a grown up while sharing how Jake helped them. However, De's counseling with Jake did not prevent the series of conflicts that occurred between De and Zack the following week.

It's about 3:00 p.m. De and Zack say goodbye to Zack's paternal grandparents, who came from Wisconsin to see a doctor in the Twin Cities. Zack asks while he is backing the car out from the hospital parking lot, "Where are we going now?" "Drive down this way," De responds with her hand pointing to the road ahead of them. Zack clarifies his question, and asks again, "No, I mean where are we going to, like home?" Instead of directly answering his question, De asks, "You hungry?" Zack reapplies quickly, "Yes, very much," with a slight sharp and impatient voice that sounds like, "Why do you even ask; it's almost 3pm without lunch. Of course, I am hungry." De suggests, "You want to go to United Noodles to have something quick?" Zack dislikes the idea and says without hesitation, "No." De suggests another plan, "You want to go back home to eat?" Zack again responds, "No, we have to go to Walgreens." At this point, De needs to instruct Zack to pull out of the parking lot and get on the road back home, so the conversation regarding where to go was postponed.

"Where are we going?" Zack resumes their unfinished conversation. De reapplies with a direct request this time instead of a suggestive question. "Let's go to United Noodles. They may have sandwiches there." Zack answers, "You want to go to United Noodles, because you can shop there?" "Yes," De responds immediately. Zack asks quickly, "Why don't you tell me directly at first?" De responds to him with a question, "Why do you not want to go?" Zack ignores his mother's question and pushes to ask her another question more intensely. "Why did you try to trick me?" He sounds irritated by his mother's response to the question. De raises her voice a bit, "Zack," and she sounds irritated by the way her son interprets her intention so directly or even harshly. She then softens her voice a bit and continues to ask with a gesture of being patient, "Why do you not want to go to United Noodles? Anywhere you want to go instead?" Zack ignores De's suggestion at this point, "Why did you try to trick me? sounding like all he wants to do is to make De confront her intention as how he interprets it. De responds, "Because Mama is selfish, and that's where Mama wants to go, but..." De does not finish what she is say before Zack cuts in, "Why can't you tell me that?" De says innocently, "I am doing it now." Zack points out indignantly, "No, I figured it out. You even did not apologize." De responds, "I am going to, and I will. (De sounds like she's really upset while raising her voice, and then she

changes the current focus of the conflict and says, “You know that United Noodles is not the issue, electronic guitar is not the issue, or fantasy football. Our issue is our heart condition. I am sorry Mama is being selfish, and wants to go to United Noodles myself, but...” Zack interrupts his mother saying, “You are not (sorry). You say but...” De is quiet at this point.

De again took an indirect approach to ask Zack to go to United Noodles (an Asia restaurant) for lunch, and when she knew for sure that Zack did not want to go there. She pushed to make it happen after Zack asked the second time where they were going since he was the one driving. However, Zack pointed out the reason De wanted to go there and accused her of playing tricks. De appeared to feel “humiliated” again by the way Zack talked to her and what he said. She admitted her “selfish” intent of wanting to go United Noodles, but Zack did not back down about her honesty. He continued to accuse her of not apologizing to him. De was outraged at this point, and she concluded that their conflicts were really because their hearts were not right.

“I am going to United Noodles”, Zack says quickly after a few minutes of silence, but his tone sounds like he is saying “Whatever.” “Why?” De asks with a curious tone. Zack says quickly, “Oh, because we get to go to United Noodles anyway.” But De responds, “I do not want to go to United Noodles now. My appetite is ruined. Zack, there is a wall between us, we have to reconcile. If I sinned, and you also sinned against me, we will never get the problem solved. Selfishness broke a wife and husband relationship.” Zack interrupted saying, “Can I talk about this later? I get distracted so much,” after having a close call changing lanes while arguing with De. “Yes,” De responds immediately and just realizes that her son, a student driver, is driving the car. On the way home, De tries a few times to express herself a bit more by saying things like she crucified her sin on the cross, but Zack keeps quiet.

Zack appeared to know De well enough to predict that she would push him to go to United Noodles anyway. He had actually tried to accommodate De’s wishes over little things such as “turn down the volume of the music” without disobeying because he knew he would easily get into another prolonged conversation over these little things. Thus, he

volunteered to go to United Noodles. De initially was pleasantly surprised; however, after she heard Zack's reasoning behind his decision, she was a willful mother, she firmly refused to go to United Noodles and appeared to feel like she had been "humiliated" by her son again. De drew on her religious beliefs to interpret their conflict as sin, and they were sinning against each other. However, unlike the previous conflict, Zack treated De's interpretation of their conflict as sin with silence.

When both get back home, De praises Zack for doing a wonderful job taking them home safely. She asks if Zack wants a sandwich or wrap for lunch the moment they get into the kitchen, and he responds negatively. He tells De that he wants pizza. "There you go," De responds, motioning to the freezer. (De sounds like she wants to lighten up the atmosphere with a smile). Zack cooks pizza for himself, and De has a wrap with ham and lettuce in the middle. She suggests to Zack that they will talk over the conflict either before or after lunch, and Zack says "yes." (He is not answering the question). De insists that Zack take away the left over wrapper to the fridge after Zack ignores her and then responds with "Don't you see I am busy" after her second request. "Yes, I do, but you still need to put things where they belong." Zack takes it to the refrigerator after he finishes setting the table for himself. De suggests that they watch the conflict resolution DVD entitled "*The Heart of Change*" with Zack, and he neither says "no" nor "yes" but eats his lunch. De gets her wonton ready to be wrapped up for supper after being on the phone for about one hour after lunch. She calls Zack to come up from the basement to watch the DVD together. De is so engaged in watching it, and she often interrupts responding to the questions saying, "We do what we do because we want what we want" with a big laugh while Zack just sits there and looks at the screen in silence.

Zack tried to ignore De and seemed to want to be left alone. He was quietly preparing his lunch while De was trying to do small talk with him to lighten up their tension. De's constant attempts to engage him for a conversation made Zack become passive-aggressive. ("Don't you see I am busy?") De did not appreciate his attitude, and she seemed purposeful (De took it out of the refrigerator) made him pick up the wrapper and put it back into the refrigerator as a way to push him to obey or maybe even respect

her as the mother. Unlike the previous conflict when Zack aggressively pushed back against De's request, their tension did not escalate because Zack passively obeyed De. He also obeyed her and sat down to watch the conflict solution DVD but he dropped his face quietly while De actively applied the content of the video to analyze their conflict.

De's husband calls that evening to warn her that the whole camp group knows of her conflict with Zack at home because he was talking about it with Jake on the phone, and Jake realized too late that he did not get far enough away, so the whole group heard him talking. De says she is okay, "It's better people know her struggles/faults. People at church pretend everything is okay, and then suffer quietly while they could let people help them." De tells her husband again that the oldest son Jake is being so good, and he gave her very good biblical counseling. "He tells me that I should guide more instead of being protective. I need to train myself to guide them. I am so reactive, instead of being proactive. But I cannot give a scissors to a two-year-old child to let them practice cutting. They end up hurting themselves without knowing it. You know."

De appeared to be appreciative of her oldest son Jake's help that was intended to solve her and Zack's conflict. Yet, she did not seem to change her mind about prohibiting Zack from having fantasy football and an electrical guitar even though she appeared to be very reflective of her parenting with her husband. She believed that the external attention from the public (in the church) could potentially provide some help to solve her parent-child conflict.

She tells her husband over the phone that they need to go out on the 19th for their 25th anniversary and develop strategies to take care of the issue. They need to be on the same page, and act the same. She says that their relationship is restored with Jake's help but the issue is still there. De continues, "The electric guitar, fantasy football, and there may be more issues, you know, teenagers. I gave him the counter proposal, since he is taking his college classes. He even dropped Chinese and guitar classes. I will let him play after the first semester, if he does really well for his college credits. But Jake tells me that the football season will be over by then. See? I did not know that, and Zack does not tell me that part. Now I have to think of a new proposal. There are two pitfalls of our parenting. I am too controlling, protective, and yours is fear. Her husband says he is not afraid, and De changes her word to say yours is avoidance of the conflict."

De seemed to try to be strategic about her parenting by opening space to discuss it with her husband. She openly admitted that she was a mother who was too controlling and protective while her husband tried more to avoid conflicts. De shared another time that she was the “bump” of the family, and another family’s Dad was the one who was firmer. Her statement reflected the kind mother, firm father (*ci mu yan fu*) phenomenon. Where Chinese parents take on different “faces” (kind/ firm) in parenting (Bo, 2008; Ho, 1971; Sun, 2011).

The next day, De drops Zack off at a family they know from church before she goes to the children’s Sunday school curriculum translation meeting at a local library. She comes back to pick Zack up a little after 1pm. Zack’s attitude is neither friendly nor hostile toward De. He gets in the house first, and the moment De comes in, Zack has already put his pizza in the microwave. He sets the table for himself and takes the heated pizza to the table right after it’s done heating. De says with a scolding voice while watching Zack prepare his own lunch, “Do you think it’s polite to just have your pizza heated? Have you even tried to invite Mama and Ayi (aunt) for lunch?” Zack explains, “We talked about lunch on the way home, I thought you were going to have wontons for lunch.” De clarifies, “I said we are going to...” she pauses for a bit and continues, “Do you want to invite Mama for lunch or are you just going to heat up your pizza?” Zack explains, “I am heating up my pizza only because it can cool down when I have it.” De asks, “Do you ask Mom what I want for lunch?” Zack hears De and follows her instruction, asking, “Do you want wontons for lunch?” “There you go,” De says sounding like she feels better now about Zack’s behavior.

Zack thinks his mother is done talking with him; he walks toward the diningroom table to pour a glass for himself while murmuring, “Why are you making this difficult?” De replies, “I just want you to have a good attitude toward your mother.” Zack responds, sounding like he is trying very hard to communicate with De, “Mom, it’s not about attitude. I just did not communicate with you while I was heating the pizza.” He pauses for a bit, and offers to help De with her lunch, “Can I heat up your wonton for you?”

De was clearly demanding good manners and respect from Zack by questioning what he was doing for his lunch. Zack barely had space to justify himself, and he obeyed

what De requested. However, he complained that De was making the situation difficult because he quietly believed it was a communication problem while De believed he was disrespectful, inconsiderate, or maybe even selfish. Zack's complaint escalated the conflict in a subtle way, and De felt an urgency to have a plan to solve it.

De talks with Zack in a soft voice while cleaning celery, "Zack, we really need to solve our problem. Otherwise it will always be there regardless of what we talk about. I do not care how we solve it. We're going to solve it; we need to set up an ultimatum to do that, okay?" But Zack responds, "No" while putting dishes into the dishwasher. "Zack," De stops cleaning, stands in front of the sink and looks at Zack. She looks like she is waiting for him to explain why he is refusing a reasonable request. Zack explains slowly, "Well, ultimatum means I say 'yes' to whatever you suggest," but he seems to know De may not know the meaning of the word that she just used. De says apologetically with a softer tone, "No, that's not what I meant. I used the wrong word. I thought it meant deadline." "What deadline?" Zack asks quickly with a slightly impatient tone. It sounds like he does not like the idea at all. De says firmly, "The deadline to solve our problem is now. We need to stop where we are if our relationship is not going to be approving, but at least let it not go downhill. I sense ice here."

De appeared to be very concerned about her relationship with Zack, and she wanted to have a plan to solve it. Yet her accidental misused word did not help her in the conversation about the conflict. She often laughed over words that she misused in conversation with her family, but this time. Zack pointed out her misused word with a sullen face.

Zack keeps quiet. De pauses for a bit and continues, "That's why Jake is coming home tonight, and he will be subjective. We both are so in the situation now we could not see our bias, but he will not as our third party. He will tell us our bias." Zack interrupted his mother to explain that he just wants to heat up the wonton for De. De brought the conversation right back saying, "We will not die without eating, but the relationship is dying" with her two hands at her waist and eyes looking into Zack's eyes. She seems irritated. De continues after a couple of seconds of silence, "If Jake cannot help us, we will go to Dad. I'd love Dad to do this for us, but he is not home. If Dad cannot help us, we will go to the youth pastor." Zack interrupted his mother again. "Well, we go to the peace maker first." De straightens out her thinking of whom to talk to first at church regarding

the situation, "Yeah, we go to the peace maker and then the youth pastor. The church takes care of conflicts when people at church run into situations like this," and then she points out that Zack interrupted her twice. Zack says, "We do not need to go to the church to solve this directly. We will solve it, and I will change. But (what if) only one person changes and others do not?" De interrupts this time and asks, "Do you think it solves the problem?" Zack reasons, "Well, if the one changes, the other doesn't, it will not (solve the problem)." De says "But it is better" and Zack asks "Why is it better?" De explains in English, "So it's not hard to hard (mutually negative emotion exchange) anymore. Husband and wife broke up because of hard to hard attitude." Zack points out directly, "We are not husband and wife," and De responds, "Yes, (we are not) but we have a relationship (as mother and son)." Zack agrees to set the deadline at this point and their interaction dynamic seems less intense.

De was very irritated when she noticed that Zack was not paying close attention to her seriousness of wanting to take care of their relationship. It was not until De spelled out all the individual details about how they could talk through the conflict that Zack started to realize that De was taking it seriously. Zack appeared to be particularly "nervous" when De proposed that she was going to pull in the church authorities to help solve the conflict. Zack promised that he was going to change, and he would try to improve his attitude toward De at this point by offering to heat up lunch for De. Both Tripp (1999, 2008) and Plowman (2003) discuss use of church authorities in parenting conflict if needed. It appeared that this method worked with Zack.

Zack heads to the refrigerator to get the wonton and asks, "You really want the wonton?" De points out quickly, "I hear a cynical tone," but lets it go. The house becomes quiet again. De breaks the silence and asks, "What did you do at Coco's house?" Zack responds dismissively, "There are so many things that I cannot remember it all." De insists, "Say one thing then," and Zack shares one thing he did at his friend's house. De picks up their conversation again with Zack about not inviting her for lunch and she is having Jake come home to solve their conflict. While cleaning the grapes, Zack explains that he is doing it now. De tells him that it's only worse doing so without his heart. She turns to the counter top and asks Zack to get a teacup for me. She tells him that's another lesson that he needs to learn, which is how to treat his mother's friend well while he is having a conflict with her. She uses the example that there is one family, the wife did not

treat her husband's friends right while having a conflict with her husband, and the family ended up only having De's family as friends. "All because of the little thing, so how you handle things really matters, Zack. What you learned today will affect your life significantly in the future. Dad and Mother have gone through life and people double and triple your age (so they are wiser)." Zack listens to De while he offers to heat up a wanton for her. De says, "Then your pizza will be getting cold again." "That's fine," Zack responds.

Zack appeared to be very obedient at this point. He followed all De's requests, and he explained to De that he was making up for his mistake now when De indirectly criticized him again for not inviting her for lunch. De appeared to grasp the opportunity to teach Zack a life lesson regarding respecting others while he was irritated. Zack quietly listened to her and then offered to heat up lunch for De.

De's husband calls her around 5:00pm the next day and she shares with him that she and Zack reconciled. However, she says that his mind is all about fantasy football. She continues, "That's what he has been talking about and doing today. The fervency he has with it is amazing. God really knows us human beings, what we think about, we talk about. Zack talks about fantasy football because that's what he has been thinking about. It's really amazing how fervent he is. But honey, the subject is wrong, I wish he would be so fervent about Jesus Christ. Let's just prepare for the worst scenario that he is so into it to the point that nothing can block him (change his mind). Otherwise, he will get really mad. Jake asks me to trust God, trust that he will be the one to change his heart. I do not think I can change his heart, I am not God, but I have a little faith, and please pray for me."

De tells her husband that Zack was thrilled to learn that his father is coming home tomorrow before 3:00pm, because it's before the date that their team starts the draft. She asks her husband to be prepared. "I know how exactly you will react. He will keep talking about it with you, and you will just agree. That's the easy way out." De disagrees with parenting the easy way out and she talks about it with her husband over the phone and refers to herself as the bumper of the family. "Just be prepared," she says to her husband again before hanging up.

De took Zack out for a reconciliation meal at her husband's suggestion. Yet, she was still concerned about how she and her husband were specifically going to solve what they counted as the root conflict: fantasy football. She asked for prayer for more faith in God who would help her. At the same time, she "warned" her husband not to take the

easy way out of their parenting. De did not appear to want Zack to have fantasy football, and she was going to push for obedience.

Parenting crisis is also a parenting opportunity. De appears to be very reflective about her everyday parenting if something was not working quite right. She shared, “It’s no big deal, when I did it wrong. I just make it right the next time.” De also claims that God-centered parenting is demonstrated by giving away herself and she only wants her children to ask for what they need instead of what they want, and she adds grace (occasionally give them what they want) to it.

De took her conflict with Zack as a parenting crisis, yet she seemed hopeful and positive that there was space for growth for both Zack and herself through the conflict. She cited an analogy to make her point.

You know, when the little chicken wants to grow up and wants to crack the shell to get out, of course, it will get upset when you do not let him do so, and they, of course, will butt heads with you. Parenting needs grace too. So my parenting is neither Chinese parenting nor American parenting, but parenting in God’s way. I would not know what’s wrong and right without God, and I would do what I want without God (in my parenting). You know, secular right and wrong does not necessarily match the real (biblical) right and wrong.

Based on De’s parenting philosophy, she solved her conflict with Zack, with both Jake and her husband’s active support. She agreed to let Zack sign up for fantasy football with the condition that he needed to show her very good academic standing for all the college credits he was taking fall semester. She had learned from Jake (the oldest son) that the football season would be over by the time the fall semester was finished so it would not have been a good solution if he were only allowed to do fantasy football after fall semester. De and Zack each compromised and eventually reached an agreement that

Zack could add fantasy football to his activities while still taking the Chinese and guitar lessons. The collective family effort was used to resolve the conflict.

Buying the new electric guitar, however, remained an issue because De believed it was not a necessity. This issue occasionally came out in their everyday conversation, and De often put it away quietly whenever Zack brought it up. She explained, “We often do not get what we want but what we need when we go shopping. My habitual reaction to Zack’s purchases like the electric guitar is whether he really needs it or he just wants it. It’s my parenting habitual reaction.” De holds on tightly to her parenting beliefs and is open to future negotiation. Therefore, De made Zack wait until the following Christmas to get his electric guitar.

“My husband’s support is very important when I butt heads with the boys.”

De shared that she tended to let her husband deal with her boys when they had conflicts. De lifted her arm to make a protective posture and explained, “I learned not to put too much authority over them. Sam is growing into a little man, and he already has started to shave. I do not want them to live under Mom’s wing. They learn to be a man from their Dad, not me.” Zack and Sam often obeyed their mother after De called their Dad, and the conflict was peacefully resolved. However, it did not always work well. For example, her sons who had better language skills than her accused her of not quoting them correctly over the phone. Here are two excerpts that show the different dynamics of how and under what circumstances De called her husband to resolve conflict, and the different results she received after calling him for support.

Sam comes into the living room to ask De if she is going to get an electric guitar as a surprise gift for Zack at Christmas with a low voice. De asks him if Zack can

hear their talking, and Sam responds negatively. De answers the question quietly, “Probably.” Again, Sam asked, “Hey, Mom, are you guys going to get it for him or not?” De says, “I want Dad to communicate with him, not me,” and then walks away to get an orange from the refrigerator as part of the breakfast preparation. Sam follows De around and presses for the answer, “Mom, that’s annoying that you can tell me but you just won’t. What is the reason you are not telling me?” De responds while continuing to prepare for breakfast, “Because it’s between Dad and Mom, and I do not want to usurp your Dad’s authority.” Sam does not look like he wants to stop asking De unless he gets the answer, “Mom” (pauses and continues to follow De around). He follows his mother from the dining table to the refrigerator and then the living room. Then De makes a suggestion: “Let’s call Dad, if that’s what you want.” De is hoping Sam will stop when she suggests this, but Sam continues to reason with her by saying, “It’s okay to share.” De asks, “Why do you want to know?” Sam responds, “Why are you not telling. De looks around for her cell phone in the living room “Because I do not want to say it,” and she calls her husband.

Sam seemed to have a good reason to pester his parents for a definite answer about whether Zack was going to get the electric guitar as a Christmas gift. He appeared to not mind that his mother “misinterpreted” his action as a “challenge” to tell him the decision. (He did not agree when he heard his mother say “challenge” over the phone with his Dad.)

However, in the following excerpt, Sam seems very mad at the fact that De called her husband and interpreted the conflict in a way that seemed to be untrue. He cornered De and made her articulate the motivation of making the phone call in every possible way De can think of, and De ended up apologizing to Sam and repeating it correctly after Sam said the response he wanted to hear from De regarding why she made the phone call in the first place — because it seemed De understood that Sam was very anxious about his Boy Scout project. She took responsibility as the one indirectly causing his anxiety for the absent support he needed for a long time. Most importantly, Sam was her youngest

child. Many parents (particularly Chinese) show special treatment toward the youngest child.

Sam would like to go to the neighborhood block party, and his face drops when he hears De's suggestion that he not go. They both stay quiet and look at each other in the living room for a few seconds. "There is a conflict of interest here," De says while walking around to look for her cell phone, "Let's call Dad, and ask Dad. I will put the phone on speaker so we three can discuss it." She asks if Sam wants to talk with his Dad first, and Sam does not take the phone, "Do you want Mom to explain everything to Dad?" De takes the phone and starts to talk with her husband about what they need to do at Menards in detail and concludes with her point that they have a lot to do. She then tells him that they do not need to go to the block party since they are not committed to being there, and therefore they do not need to be faithful of it.

"However, there is a conflict of interest," De continues, "Sam needs to be at the block party because he needs to ask Mr. Strucker some questions regarding his Boy Scout projects and he says this thing cannot be put off." Sam murmured, "I did not say my thing could not be put off." De prompts him to talk with his Dad when she notices him talking. He takes the phone, and asks his Dad questions regarding the title of Mr. Strucker.

"Why did you say that?" Sam asks his mom the moment he hangs up. De seems surprised that Sam is even asking the question. She looks at him quietly, apparently wanting Sam to say more. Sam slowly repeats his question, "Why did you say that? I did not say my thing couldn't be put off. I am just wondering when we will have time to do it later on. What you said does not make any sense." De does not respond, and Sam pauses for another few seconds and asks his questions again, "Why did you say that?" De responds with an awkward smile, "Well, because I am logically challenged." Sam demands, "You can't say that as an answer." De defends herself saying, "Sam, you are so logical, and Mama is not, so Mama is logically challenged." Exasperated, Sam responds, "You are not using your logic. Otherwise you would not say that."

De appeared to be surprised and "humiliated" when Sam raised the question and directly accused her of quoting him wrong. He pushed De for a different response because he did not like her first response to his question. De offered the same response which actually criticized herself (logically challenged) while appreciating Sam's gift of logic. However, this strategy did not stop Sam from accusing her and continuing to

question her. De honestly answered Sam's questions in different ways after realizing

Sam may not stop until she explained.

Sam pauses for a second and asks the same question again, "Why did you do that?" De reapplies honestly, "Well, because Mama just wants to get things done while you are using your logic." Sam seems unsatisfied with his mother's response, "Why do you call Dad?", and he presses the same question more specifically. De thinks for a couple of seconds while looking into Sam's eyes and says, "Because I need to let Dad know that we are not going to the block party, and so he does not need to pick up the salad. Sam goes back to his old question and presses for De's confrontation, "Why did you say that?" De sounds like she is brainstorming responses, "God makes Mama logically challenged and makes you logically gifted, so we can help each other. I am not super woman, and you are not a super man." Sam responds "Mom, that's not what we are talking about. You do not need to talk about super man and woman, You can just say you did not think that far,"

Sam was not satisfied with De's honest, more direct response. De did not seem to get upset with his persistent pushy behavior; instead, she invited Sam to brainstorm how he might respond differently putting himself in her shoes with big smile. She kept being patient with him.

"How would you do (it) if you were in Mama's shoes? What would you say?" De asks Sam. Sam responds slowly, "Mom, that's not applicable to both before and after the situation. You know what applicable means, right?" De responds quickly, "Yes, apply to." Sam again asks slowly, "Do you know what I mean by prior to the situation?" seemingly trying get De to understand what he is talking about. "No," De says. Sam responds, "I mean, before you called Dad." De sounds excited to find another way to respond to Sam's question, "Oh, how about this," and she continues, "because Mama is just trying to escape the situation and trying to find a short cut, so I take it to Dad, and I do not need to deal with it myself. How is that?" De asks with a big smile, and she seems trying to be as honest as she possibly can with Sam. Sam repeats, "You can just say you did not think that far" "Now?" De asks, "Yes," Sam says. "Sorry, Sansan, Mama did not think it that far."

With De's patient efforts of trying different honest responses, Sam was finally satisfied. Their conflict was solved by De making an apology to Sam for not thinking far

enough before she made the phone call to her husband. De was happy that Sam explained to her that all he had tried to do was not to deconstruct her talking, but he was just trying to communicate with De well, so they could better understand each other. Sam ended his conversation with De by thanking her for listening after noticing his Dad's car was pulling in the driveway. De took Sam's explanation and happily accepted it by asking him for a hug. De did not seem to notice anything else besides the fact that she reconciled with Sam. It appeared that reconciliation was all that mattered to her.

“There is no reason I do not understand him.” Sam is De's youngest son. She shared that Sam is a very independent thinker, and he does not follow the flow. She butts head with Sam the most because they are so much alike in personality. She said she often loses the argument if they argue over something. De showed both high levels of warmth and control over him in different contexts. For example, in public, De tended to ignore Sam's needs and often asserted a high level of control over him. For example, when she leads the geography bee class after homeschooling co-op meeting, Sam rarely was chosen to answer questions even if he often raised his hand and wanted to participate. Sam was also the one that did not get the study guide, often because De forgot about him, and occasionally, because De did not have enough copies, so she took away Sam's copy and gave it to others. She often laughed at the fact that she would forget her own son afterward, and she seemed fine with the frequent mistakes that were taken as altruistic natured. De loved to chat with people after church and homeschooling co-op. Sam seemed to be trained very well to put up with De's personality, and he would often waited on her quietly either sitting somewhere reading or standing beside her. He rarely

hurried her up except when they had an appointment to make. De seemed to be unaware that Sam had been waiting and ignored his unhappy face.

However, De seemed very lenient with Sam at home. She rarely pushed him to obey unless he became unreasonable and argumentative. De seemed to relate better with Sam than with the other sons. She claimed, “He tends to be slow when he engages in doing things, and I am the same way. So there is no way I do not understand him.” De also shared that Sam is a perfectionist. “It’s miserable to be a perfectionist in this fallen and imperfect world,” De shared with a sympathetic tone one day after the Sunday worship service. De said she loves the fact that Sam takes ownership of his Boy Scout projects, and she appreciates his spirit of being very responsible for it. De also shared with me that she wished he did not push himself that hard after seeing him get everything ready to go to the Boy Scout mini-camp. He would take everything out and repack it with his oldest brother Jake’s help. She shared that children of other families often need their parents to nag them constantly, but Sam just gets into it very much himself. Here is an excerpt that explains how De showed deep sympathy with Sam when he worried about how upset his Dad would become because he lost one of his Boy Scout badges.

De notices Sam is sitting quietly at one of the dining room table chairs in the living room. “Is everything okay with you?” she asks. Sam replies in a low voice while looking at and playing with his hands nervously, “I am a bit upset.” (Pause) De asks, “What is the thing you need now is neglected?” Sam replies with frustration, “Well, it’s useless to talk about, because it will not get resolved.” De probes, “What is it now?” Sam explains reluctantly, “I put my entire merit badge from the Boy Scout activities on the sofa, and now I cannot find the “first class” badge. (Pause). I put it in the envelope and placed it on the couch as Dad said, and now it’s gone.” “Try the pocket,” De suggests. “Try to search your other pocket.” Zack turns away from the computer that he has been working on for his online classes and suggests, “I already searched the pockets.” Sam explains with frustration. “Dad is going to be very mad at me because he told me to put them

together and do not lose any,” sharing the hidden reason that makes him anxious. De suggests, “Can Mama take the blame for you?” Sam disagrees, “No, you can’t. Dad will still be mad at me.” De makes another suggestion, “Can we go to buy one like that?” Sam retorts, “I do not think you can buy one.” De says positively, “Well, Mom knows you put them on the couch, Zack knows, and everybody knows. We can be your witness.” Sam responds in a really low voice, “Dad is still going to be really mad at me,” and he sounds very disappointed.

De’s husband seemed to Sam to be the firm parent, and De was the lenient one to him. Sam was very nervous about what his dad would think of him after knowing he lost his Boy Scout badge. De was the lenient parent who tried to accommodate Sam’s current need in every possible way.

“Don’t say anything before I get to talk with Dad. I will talk to him, don’t you worry?” De says with a sympathetic look and assuring tone. Sam nods his head quietly. “Feeling better?” she asks. “Sort of,” Sam says with a slightly happy tone. “Do I get a hug?” De asks, and she often asks for a hug from her sons after having a conversation with them. It seems to be the way she connects with them. “No, not now,” Sam says while standing up from the dining table chair. De also sits up while reminding Sam that Zack is waiting for him to unload the dishwasher before he can put new dishes into the dishwasher. Sam says while looking toward Zack. “I cannot do that now. I have to do packing. That’s my priority” Zack avoids eye contact with Sam while saying “No, you have to do it. That’s your responsibility.” Sam retorts while looking at Zack, “There are exceptions.” De suggests, “Let’s Mama and you do it together. That’s Mama’s grace to you.” Zack completely ignores Sam and keeps quiet while gathering the dirty dishes from the dining table. “I can do it myself,” Sam says with a slightly upset voice while he is putting the entire badge into the plastic bag as De tells him to do, and he goes to the kitchen to unload the dishes.

De shared with me that she often tells her older ones to let the younger one alone during their growing up process. Zack told her one day that he had tolerated Sam in the past, but he would not keep doing it when Sam turned ten years old. “It’s interesting how children think, and I never knew that’s what he had been thinking. Now he is not letting

him. It's his turn to load the dishwasher, and he will ask him to do it. These kinds of little things, I just let them deal with it." De shared this with a big laugh while walking away.

Here is another excerpt that illustrates how De actively supported Sam when he was discouraged by some bad math test results. De seemed very sensitive and protective of Sam's feelings after he received discouragement from his Dad and brother. She knew very well that Sam was not very good at taking criticism, so she actively guided Sam to take his mind off his Dad's and brother's criticism regarding his understanding of the math logic. De knew that Sam was not good at math, and in fact, she shared that all of her sons tended to be more literacy and art oriented but not math and science oriented in their academic studies. De also tended to avoid pushing her understanding about math problem solving onto Sam, and instead, she often asked Zack to help Sam out on a math problem before she started to butt heads with Sam on a math problem. "My way of thinking does not click with his way of thinking, and I often know how to solve the problem, but I am not quite sure how to explain it in a way that Sam would understand." De shared this with a big laugh. De seems satisfied with the simple fact that Sam gets up fairly early each morning to work on his math, and she does not dwell on the math test results even if Sam usually does not do well in math.

"You okay?" De asks Sam who is still sitting at the table. He replies, "Not very good. Dad called and told me I did poorly with my math test. He is mad. Zack told Dad my logic thinking and reasoning isn't good, which is not true." De calls Zack into the room and asks him why he said that to Sam while he was already not feeling good. "What you say builds him up or tears him down." Zack replies while sitting down at the dining table, "Well, I did not say that to him. I was trying to communicate with Dad over the phone, and he heard it." Sam explains, "I did not try to eavesdrop. I just happened to walk by." De asks Zack, "What can

you do to solve the problem?" Zack offers, "I will tutor him." De tries to comfort Sam, "Zack did not say it with the purpose of 'I am going to hurt Sam's feeling.' He was talking with Dad and trying to solve the problem." Sam turned to Zack, "I am sorry, I didn't mean to eavesdrop." Zack does not seem to want to respond to Sam's apology. De asks Zack, "What did you say to Sam?" Zack pretends he does not know what's going on, "What?" De instructs Zack, "Sam apologized to you, and should you forgive him." Zack says quickly and with a low voice, "I forgive you," but he did not look at Sam. De asks him to look at Sam to say it, but Zack says he can't turn his body that far while De is looking at him. De persists and asks him to turn this head to say it, and Zack does so but still cannot reach the point to face Sam, so De continues her instruction, "You can stand up and do it." Zack sits up and asks for forgiveness quickly and walks away to head outside to take care of some landscaping that needs to be done.

As usual, De tended to push Zack for obedience when there was conflict, and she tried very hard to attend to Sam's feelings. She offered a solution to Sam with his bad math score, and made sure he would not be stuck in his self-defeating thoughts.

Sam says in an almost whining voice, "Dad asks what we have been doing, and I keep telling him I am busy packing. That makes him madder, and he says we have not been productive. If I cannot get it done productively, then I should not go to the minicamp." De encourages Sam, "Oh, you've been very productive. Mama is your witness." Sam continues to complain, "He is mad. He says there is no summer reading. He says my logical thinking and reasoning are not good-- which I am good at. He says I need to work on it this summer." De continues to try and encourage Sam, "Zack says he will help you," but Sam counters, "No, I do not want Zack to be my tutor." De interrupts Sam and asks, "Who do you want to be your tutor then?" and Sam immediately responds, "You." Surprised, De asks Sam, "You want Mama to tutor you? No problem, I will help you. I am your teacher. If Dad is mad at you and me, that's his problem; our problem is how we respond to this anger. Should we get mad at him too?" Sam answered, "No, but how can he say that to me? I get the concept part all right, and the problem part I did poorly on. That means I understand the concept." De tries to explain, "Well, Dad is upset. When one person is mad, his IQ is zero. When Mom gets upset, do I say things that are hurtful?" Sam replies, almost crying, "But what he says matters to me," wrapping his hand around the bottom of his T-shirt. De tries to reason with Sam, "What would you say if I put yourself in Dad's shoes? What would you do." Sam taps his finger on the dining table while making his point, "I would not call somebody to talk over matters like this over the phone first, and I would not get mad. I would process and check what is exactly happening." De suggests, "Well, tell Dad that when he is cooled down, and not upset. Tell Dad what exactly you

shared with Mom.” Sam replies, “He is so mad, and he thinks my logical thinking and reasoning are not good.” “Don’t go there, De says to Sam, “Sometimes, you did the calculations wrong but you understand the concept, or you add up the score wrong.” De is trying to lead Sam out of his self-defeating talking. “I think you should study liberal arts instead of engineering, field.” Sam shouts, sounding frustrated, “I DO NOT KNOW,” and it seems De’s trick to get Sam’s mind off what his Dad says does not work well. De again tries to comfort her son, “Everything will be fine. I will talk with Dad. Feeling better?” “Sort off,” Sam says, Satisfied that their conversation may be over, she suggests, “Come, give Mom a hug.” Sam goes to his mother, and hugs her.

De seemed to have a perfect understanding and tried very hard to make Sam feel better after hearing his math test results and his Dad’s negative response toward it. De shared with me that Sam’s math was not good. He received poor scores when he was young, and he did not care as a little child. But now she felt his self-esteem was hurting because his math scores were not good. He did not know he was not good at math logic, but he liked to argue and was skilled at using logic in his conversations. “I always lose in our argument,” says De. De seemed happy with Sam’s dedication to math each morning, but not so much with the test results.

When De pushes for obedience. De pushed for obedience and showed more control over Sam when he purposefully acted out and was not reasonable or became argumentative. For example, in De’s Chinese lesson, Sam did not seem to like it, and he mimicked every single word that De said along with her body language. De ignored him at first, and then she disciplined Sam with a firm tone. “Settle down now. Otherwise we watch you do double pushups.” Here is an excerpt that illustrates how De simple pushed Sam if he became argumentative.

At lunchtime, De gets food ready to go on the table. She asks who is going to lead the prayer. Zack asks Sam to lead the prayer, and Sam asks Zack to lead with a

“Please.” Zack starts leading the prayer, and he prays for Sam that he won’t have the fear to pray in the future, then for Jake’s safety of getting back home, and finally for the food. Sam says to Zack that he does not have fear of praying right after Zack finishes praying. Zack ignores what he says, and so does De. Zack throws his hat onto the couch next to him before starting to eat, De instructs him, “Don’t put your hat on the couch. What if somebody wants to sit there?” Zack looks at his mom, “No, I always finish first.” Again, De instructs her son while showing the look of gulping food herself, “Don’t gulp. That looks bad. Mind your self-imagine. Your Dad did that when we were dating in China, and I don’t really like that. Sam gulps too, Dad says.” Sam defends himself, “I don’t gulp.” De continues, “Dad says you do,” looking toward Sam. After some silence, Sam says, “I am not afraid of praying” looking toward Zack and De. De chastises Sam, “Sam, if you keep being argumentative like this, you can go and stay in your bedroom. He helped you (attach multiple Sam’s Boy Scout first aid kit pictures in the email), and you did not even thank him.” Sam continues to be quiet and has his lunch.

De’s constant adjustment of her parenting expectations (letting go process).

“Letting go of making my sons show me the respect that I expect.” During the early stages of data collection, De often demanded that her two sons pay her respect when she was present, which she felt they often failed to do. De often needed to raise her voice and demand explanations from her sons who were having a contest while often ignoring their mother’s inquiry about what was going on. She seemed to learn that her expectations of demanding her two boys to keep her updated on what was going on in their conversations often was not a realistic expectation, and this expectation often caused her to butt heads with them. She often took her son’s lack of explanations as disrespectful while he insisted it was only a matter of miscommunication. She then learned to let go of the nuances of everyday parent-child interaction to avoid conflicts that may have caused her to butt heads with her boys, as much as she could, in the second half of data collection.

De showed appreciation for what Sam thought about the meaning of greeting his mother. She shared with me that she had an argument with Sam one morning. He headed directly toward the basement without saying “good morning” to her while seeing her reading the Bible on the sofa at around 6am. She stopped Sam and asked him to greet her as a way to show respect for her. Sam explained that his mind was occupied with his math assignment. He also argued that not greeting her was not necessarily disrespectful. He used the example that Judas kissed Jesus when he betrayed him, and he used a kiss as a way to expose him to the persecutor. Sam was right that it does not necessarily mean he loved or respected De by greeting her when seeing her. However, what does it mean when he does not greet her at all? De seemed to have a deep appreciation of her son’s insights about greeting, and she realized consciously or unconsciously that she could let go of arguing more with Sam.

De strived to let go of her expectations on how her sons should show respect to her with manners in the little details of everyday life, and she seemed proud of herself as a democratic parent who was being shaped by American’s egalitarian social system instead of the Chinese hierarchical interpersonal relationship that had heavily influenced her. (De’s parents seemed to live under this hierarchal structure, and they pointed out how De’s family had no such respectful son-father relationship when her husband let the boys ride on him). De laughed loudly, and said she could laugh over little things and let them go.

De, however, took it very seriously when the parent-child interaction concerned an attitude. She cared very much when her sons showed negative attitudes toward her.

For example, in my earlier excerpt, Zack ignored her and quietly prepared his own meal after they came back home late in the afternoon and both were tired and hungry. De demanded that he show sensitivity toward her need for food as a way to show her care and respect. Zack did not seem to recognize he still needed to be respectful and considerate after a serious argument with his mother. De seemed to think that the conflict just happened and had nothing to do with his humanity as a son to care for his mother. She purposefully trained Zack to be considerate and respectful to the person he had a conflict with and to separate his negative emotions from his character as a human being, Christian, and a man. Therefore, when De saw Zack completely ignore her need as a result of their conflict, she questioned and even scolded him for his indifference and childish behavior. She even got me involved as a way to shape Zack's character. She told him, "That's another lesson that you need to learn- how to treat your mother's friend while you are having conflict with Mother." De's smiling face gradually came back when Zack corrected his behaviors and offered to help prepare the lunch. "There you go," De positively commented on Zack's behavior.

De also seemed very sensitive toward her son's attitudes about other things. Here is an excerpt that explains the dynamics of how she regulated her boys' critical behavior over a newspaper article.

"Zeski (Zack's nickname), look at this paper." Sam lifts the newspaper in his hand and tries to get Zack's attention while standing in the living room beside a rocking chair that is near the front window. He is working on his online class at the moment. Zack slightly turns his body and head to look at Sam and respond to him, "Yeah? There's really nothing there." Zack continues to share his comment about it, and the two brothers exchange comments about the article back and forth. De interrupts the conversation, saying, "Zack, you know what you say makes you become what you exactly disagree with. You can disagree, but you have to watch

your attitude.” She corrects the position of a painting showing God’s nine spiritual fruits (e.g., kindness, gentleness, faithfulness). Zack responds, “No, I wasn’t showing any attitude, and what I said is completely different from theirs.” De responds with an awkward smile, “We need to be careful to not go to the extreme thought. We get stuck in the middle of ultra liberal and ultra conservative.” Sam reads the sentence to Zack, “Zack, listen to this sentence,” but Zack continues his critique, “It’s not even a sentence. It’s a segmented one, a run-on sentence.” De again tries to stop them, “Whoever wrote the article should go take some grammar class.” As her boys walk away toward the basement, she comments to me, “I do not like them getting too critical. You know, too critical brings out pride, and pride is very destructive, and God is displeased with human being’s pride.”

“Letting go of my will.” De also tried to let go of her will when she wanted her sons to listen to her when she knew they would not obey either way. She often told her sons openly that she had a strong will of self, and she asked her children to learn from Dad who was selfless but not her. She shared with me that Zack was going to have his pre-SAT test one afternoon, and he was not reviewing for his test. De commented,

College entrance exams in China are very high pressure. Students often are crazy doing review and more review before the test. I want Zack to focus on reviewing too. It is a college entrance exam. It’s very important. However, my will is not necessarily right. You know, in the summer, he insists that he wants to go to two camps. I do not necessarily agree, but I let him go. He came back exhausted, and he shared with me that he learned he is limited. Oh, this is good for him. He has been too successful with everything, and I am concerned that he will grow prideful. It’s such a good lesson for a young man like him. If I stop him from going to the camps, he may be unhappy about it. But I let him go and set my own will aside. He learns something important.

De shared her experiences of letting go of her will when having conflict with her children, and she was pleasantly surprised with their obedience one Friday in the homeschooling co-op mom’s small group. Sam insisted that practicing the trumpet should be a priority over lunch when both De and Zack were ready to have lunch. De talks to

Sam while he is arguing with Zack about why he needs to practice playing trumpet before lunch. “We still love you when you think differently, and I am not going to twist your arm to convince you otherwise.” Zack sits down to have lunch with De and retorts, “It’s not a necessity (playing the trumpet) and food is.” Soon, Sam joined them. De used what happened with Sam over lunch as an example to share with the group on how she let go of her will of wanting to have Sam eat lunch before it got cold. Then she shared that she was shocked at how he decided to eat lunch with them without further arguments. She said she had to put trust in God, and let go of her own will.

Letting go of the cultural differences. In Chinese culture, people always share food and are always considerate regardless of how little food they are having. The cultural norm is that people always share. Especially younger ones should save food for the older ones as a way to show love and respect. De made the assumption that Jake, her oldest son understood this culture norm but he actually did not. De ended up skipping lunch after giving away her lunch to her son. Here is the excerpt that illustrates the dynamic of different cultural expectations.

Jake’s foot is inflamed from a blister and it is starting to impact his everyday life at college. He needs a ride to the hospital. Interestingly, De packed three hamburgers for her lunch before she headed out to pick up Jake for the doctor’s appointment. When Jake gets in the car, De hands the hamburger bag to him, “I have packed lunch, and you can have it. Leave one for me if you cannot take them all.” Jake takes it and finishes all of the hamburgers. De asks him if he finished all of the hamburgers. His response is “yes,” and then De asks him in a surprised tone, “You did not save one for me?” Jake responds, “You did not say you wanted one.” De is quiet with a little smile on her face. I joke with De on our way to the car, “That’s the cultural difference. You have to tell him to leave one for you, and you cannot expect him to do it without saying so.” De also laughs, “Yeah, he is too honest.”

De’s is talking with me in Chinese somehow irritates Jake, and when De realizes it, she tries to do some small talk with him to lighten up the atmosphere

by making a comment about the area were driving. “There’s a lot of business here, uh?” De receives no response from Jake, and she repeats her comment. Jake realizes his mother is initiating small talk, and he responds, “That’s not a question.” I smile and think quietly, “It’s also very different how we deal with uncomfortable moments, Chinese tend to do small talk as a way to distract people’s attention from the uncomfortable moment, and it doesn’t seem to work well with Jake.”

One day when both Zack and Sam are finishing up their lunch, De shared with me that her sons love meat. De asks in Chinese, “They love American meat. Did you hear they want me to put more meat in the chili when I am making it?” However, Sam understood what his mother was talking about since he was taking Chinese lessons with De once a week. He protested in English with an upset tone. “It’s not true. Americans eat vegetables too. Some people are quite balanced.” De exclaims, “Oh, you understand me. Wow,” and she continues, “I’d better watch what I say in the future. He understands what I just said!” De turns to Sam after praising his capacity to understand Chinese. “Mama is happy that you understood me.” De does not seem to be aware that Sam is defending the American diet, and he is not happy about what De says as a self-identified American. “What you said is annoying.” Sam did not seem to want to let it go, and he told his mother directly how he felt about what she said, even while De was praising his Chinese. De smiled awkwardly and said in Chinese, “He understood what I am saying.” De seemed to have missed the opportunity to be in tune with her son’s emotions because she was focusing entirely on her own thoughts.

Chinese and American parenting. De is Chinese from Mainland China, and her husband is White American. De’s childhood was full of negative memories of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and she immigrated to the United States in the 1989. It

seems that she had experienced more negative aspects of Chinese parenting, in particular, and Chinese culture, in general, even after immigration. Her narrative regarding Chinese and American parenting, culture, and people came from her negative perception of Chinese parenting.

Here is an excerpt from my interview with De that explains her view about Chinese parenting.

We Chinese people... when children disobey, we scold them for sure. The American mom I observed, many from church, ah, their patience and sweetness, oh, their loving heart. When children disobey, she (the American mom) is like, what we say in Chinese is use your love to guide patiently, lead her/him (the disobeying child) to the right place. It's really eye opening, truly eye opening, and it's very different from what we do as Chinese (parents). We Chinese, (pause) like last time I visited back home in China, there is a grandma, (at) a park playground, (and then) my children came to tell me. They say, "Mom, come see this grandmother who is scolding her grandchild." The grandchild is learning how to ride a bike. I went ahead and listened (to what the grandma was saying), after listening, (I say to my children), "No, she is not scolding her grandchild. She is teaching her grandchild how to ride a bike." However, to them, it sounded like scolding, and it was scolding after I listened (what she was talking about) again. The words she was using were all negative ones. "This way, this way. Why don't you do it this way? Where should your left foot be positioned?" My children did not understand what she was talking about, but they knew that she was scolding (her grandchild) by watching her tone and attitude. However, we were all born and grew up in that environment. The whole environment is like that.

De vividly represented how a Chinese grandma teaches her grandchild to ride a bike. Even though it may not generalize to today's younger generation of parents, it does illustrate the negative approach (direct correction) of Chinese parenting. Following is an excerpt that shows how De contrasted Chinese and American parenting.

American moms... take teaching a child to ride a bike for example... (she) leads the child to the right place. It's not like we Chinese who focus on correcting mistakes, and making the wrongdoing right. An American mom is like she does not see the wrong doing. In fact, she does see it, but she won't use it as a focal

point to scold a child. It's the way that we Chinese should use. (The scolding way) is very negative. What Americans do (of course not all American moms are like this), the American mom I observed, (she) sees that the child is doing something a bit right (while learning to ride a bike), and she encourages (the child) to go that direction. "That's good, that's right, go left a little bit, then you will be perfect." That's the way they teach. Do you see the differences? Then the child will follow the right direction, and she/he will be doing right. "That's a good job; that's the idea." They do not say you are wrong. They will say "that's the idea, if you go this way a bit more, that will be even better." Ah, encouraging type (of parenting). We Chinese (parents) tend to correct mistakes and point out wrong doing all the time. That's too much. However, American moms rarely do this, I feel like this is too much too. In fact, there are times children need wrongdoing to be pointed out. It's not like you cannot point out any mistakes they make. They are too nice. Maybe I am wrong (big laugh).

De sharply pointed out the current parenting problems among Chinese immigrant communities which was the Chinese parenting aspect that she openly disliked.

The way I parent my child is rarely impacted by the Chinese way, and I am not too nice either, and I'm far from it. In my value system, I am naturally attracted to what's right. Like when I go to Moo Church (Chinese Christian Church that De used to attend), the children were running around or screaming and yelling when the pastor was preaching, but their parents did not discipline them. It made me so bad. There was one time when a child was tapping her/his Dad's head, I was about to run over and say to him, "She/he is tapping your head. Why don't you stop him/her?" Oh, this is really other people's business. Maybe the father did not know how to respond, and maybe it was his only child. I do not understand, and I do not like a child acting willfully and making nonsense.

When what you teach is used against you. De shared with me that when children are smart, they often find loopholes in what the parents are saying and doing. She said with a big smile, "They use what you say to them against you if you are not consistent. So, I have to make sure that I act accordingly with my husband. Once there are loopholes, they will find them and use them for their own interests." De paused for a second, and then she continued, "I learned the most from my mistakes, and the situations

led me to learn.” The following excerpt explains how De’s teaching was used to
against her with her sons.

One day, on the way back home from the restaurant, Zack was driving a bit faster than she wanted him to be. “Slow down,” De says firmly. Zack asks, “Why?” De defends herself, “You are at the curve, and you are going 30.” Zack reapplies, “You will go over 35.” Again, De defends her comment, “I am a more experienced driver, and know how much to turn the wheel in this situation, and you are learning.” Zack responds, “Well, knowing how much to turn the wheel is irrelevant to how much experience you have.” But De holds her ground, “How to deal with certain situations is dependent on your experience.”

The time you see yourself in your child. De shared that the most rewarding and yet most challenging thing about homeschooling was how she saw herself in her children. That was one of the most important ways she learned about herself and saw her own parenting outcome that challenged her to keep growing. The following excerpt illustrates De’s response to the question “What challenges you the most in your homeschooling process?” in our interview.

I see myself the way the kids talk to me, (big laugh). You know, kids go to school, they say what the teachers say, but kids are at home, they say what I say. That’s terrible (laughter). Sometimes, I will hear them talk to each other. I am like “Why they say that?” and then I remember I said that. You know, it’s horrifying. I see my own terrible trait (laugh) in the kids (laugh). They do not learn from anybody else (laugh...). I have only myself to blame. You watch the homeschool kids, the way they talk, so much like the parents, so very much like the parents, really, I can see Jenny and Jack the way they talk, how they respond to things, even the same response, when situations come up. It’s just so... if you see something good, then you really think, “oh good,” then you see something you do not like about yourself, then here you see it in your kids. This is the most challenging, yet also the most rewarding part of homeschooling.

Oh, very interesting, because you keep learning and keep making progress. When you see the part you do not like about yourself, for example, I am very messy. Ah, I cannot get on their case if their bedroom is very messy. I can’t. I see it, and I know it’s myself. There is no way to deal with it. Oh yes, there is a way. You know, just like one of my Chinese friends who just bought a new house. She says, “I do nothing every morning after getting up but clean.” She dedicates two hours each morning for maintaining a clean house. Every morning, she does

nothing but clean the house. Two hours every day in the morning. If two hours is minimum, if two hours is not enough for cleaning the house, she will continue, while the kids go to school. Then I am thinking, "I can do that... send the children to school," but I cannot. I have to make the choice this morning, Should I go do math with them or pick up things that are scattered around the house? Sometimes, it's hard. Sometimes it's a very hard choice. Then I will struggle, and I will talk with other homeschooling mothers. They say, "Your kids are going to be gone in a blink of light. The teachable years are going to be gone, and you are not going to bring it back." These mothers are very nice. They warn me. I also have struggles, you know. This is messy and no good habit will be hard to get rid of in my children, and it will follow them for the rest of their lives.

Learning to let go of Jake. Jake is De's oldest son who left her first for college.

De had been home educating him since he reached school age. De shared that she was trying to get herself ready for the time when all of her children would grow up and leave home. "I will go crazy if I do not get my mind off my children by then as a homeschooling mother, because they have been my primary focus since entering motherhood." She shared that if you really love your children, you give what is the best for them. "I have been struggling very much to let Jake live on campus, and I want him to live at home. It's a struggle for half a year, and I eventually am able to let him live on campus. However, now I am still struggling. But thinking about it, him living at home is good for me, but not for him. So I learn to let him go."

De cooked and dropped food off on campus for Jake occasionally. She was learning how to handle the times Jake had to say "no" and go eat with a friend at a restaurant because he already had plans and did not know De was coming to visit. Zack was helping her let go of Jake. Here is a field excerpt that explains how Zack helped De let go of Jake.

Zack finishes his guitar lessons one day in the music department, which is located at the university Jake, attends, and De realizes that she needs to text Jake who is

on the same campus to alert him that she is coming to drop off a restaurant coupon that Jake and Dad will be using that night for their weekly routine meeting. All the boys are standing in the hallway waiting for her to text Jake. “Mom, you know you do not have to do that, right?” After De drops the coupon off for Jake, she comes back to the car and starts driving. “I am sorry; did I keep you guys waiting for about 30 minutes? Zack responds. “No.” De asks, “20 minutes?” She seems interested in knowing how long everybody had been waiting on her while trying to navigate the car out of the university campus. Zack says, “It was about 10 minutes.” When De is close to their driveway, Zack says to his mother again that she does not have to give Jake the coupon right away, and reminds De that she needs to let go of Jake. De accepts his suggestion of letting Jake go, but she insists that she needs to give Jake the coupon right away because Dad won’t come home directly from work, but will go to meet up Jake directly. At their lunch when they get home, Zack prays that De will let go of Jake.

De had the most direct and intimate interaction with American culture given her cross-cultural marriage. Her general attitude toward American and Chinese parenting from her lived experiences shaped her parenting practices to be more American oriented. With the negative aspects of Chinese parenting in mind, De was very reflective about her own parenting practices, and she was also very open to learn and adjust if she observed or someone pointed out her inappropriate bias in her parenting. She had authority and control over her teenage sons only when she could make a strong case for her controlling behavior, and she often needed to take it lightly when her sons did not show her what she perceived to be respectful manners.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

In the last chapter, I shared the major findings using ethnographic vignettes regarding how Christian Chinese immigrant mothers, Qing, Xian, and De, made sense of reality and their lives, and how their reality was practiced in their parent-child conflict management in their homeschooling settings in the United States. In this chapter I draw

on existing literature to discuss about how Qing, Xian, and De negotiated their multiple identities in and through various contexts as they made sense of life after immigration, and how their way of making sense of life shaped their approaches to parenting, in general, and managing parent-child conflicts, in particular. I conclude the chapter with a detailed description of the diverse approaches of Christian Chinese immigrant parenting. The implications of this study are also discussed.

Chinese immigrants are challenged to restructure their lives in many aspects after immigration to the United States. Christianity serves as a non-governmental social force that guides immigrants to re-examine and reconstruct the world and their sense of self from a religious lens (Chen, 2008). Many Chinese become Christians after coming to the United States (Chen, 2008; Guest, 2003; Ng, 2002; Yang, 2002; Yang, 2009). Christianity does not reinforce the Confucius-based social system but deconstructs and reconstructs their sense of selfhood (Chen, 2008; Gorge, 1998; Kim, 1996; Kim, 1997).

The symbolic procedures of becoming an evangelical Christian is that one must first pray to personally designate Jesus Christ to be his/her Lord of life and then get baptized in water as a way to publicly proclaim his/her faith (Chen, 2003, 2008, Yang, 2009). People become re-born through this procedure, and theologically they have a new-self with Jesus Christ's Holy Spirit that lives within and the old self which has died (a process of becoming selfless). From an evangelical Christian worldview, this new self is a constant battle with the old self since one's physical body is still living in a segmented, fallen, and imperfect world while the new self strives to enter God's Kingdom of Heaven (Chen, 2008).

The evangelical Christian churches Qing, Xian, and De attend are theologically conservative and heavily influenced by John Piper's teachings. They all have attempted to legitimize their existence based on their religious beliefs, as individuals, and parts of families that were uprooted from their home country and working through the process of resettlement in the United States. Identity is socially and culturally constructed. Self in Chinese culture is constructed through family relationships, and the individual interest of building a strong sense of self is discouraged because it potentially disrupts the solidarity of the harmonious family and society according to Confucianism (Bo, 2008; Huang & Charter, 1996). There is a fundamentally different perspective regarding identity construction in Christianity. From a Christian point of view, identity is religiously constructed. The church has become the way for these Chinese immigrants to solve integration and acculturation problems (Chen, 2008; Yang, 1999a; Yang, 1999b). Evangelical Christian faith and identity positioning was well accepted by these three mothers according to my interviews with them. The Christian and Confucius traditions both emphasize the values of being selfless, yet the Confucius tradition values being selfless as personal conduct and morality, while the Christian tradition goes further by calling for selflessness as a way to reach self sanctification, which is God's command as God's children. Qing, Xian, and De all claimed that they are God's children. Their stated purpose of life is to glorify God through spreading his gospel among people, including their children.

Additionally, from an Evangelical Christian point of view, a Christian has both a new and old self. The old self tends to be attracted to the secular world, and it needs to be

eliminated (reduced). The new self tends to be attracted to the Godly world (heaven).

A Christian's new self assumes that we are precious and unique in God's eye. Therefore, Christianity provides an alternative way for these Christian Chinese immigrant mothers to see themselves as individuals who are cherished by God. De claimed that she tended to ignore what others said about her as a Chinese immigrant, and about how she raised her children, because she was a "princess of the King of Kings and the creator of the universe."

In addition, identity was not ethnically based (Chinese and/or American) for my participants based on our interviews. Namely, Christianity seemed to provide these three Chinese immigrant mothers with a new model to make sense of the self and their identities. This model deconstructed the Chinese traditional Confucius-based *relational-self*—holding family members accountable and reconstructing the new self based on Christianity. God was clearly at the center of this new self for these women. From a human behavior perspective, Confucius selflessness and Christian selflessness looks very similar, but the motivation and implications behind the same behaviors are quite different. In addition, this new way of making sense of self also blurred and mitigated the struggles of ethnic belonging as immigrants. For these mothers, homeschooling became a way to legitimize, practice, and reinforce their religious identities and served as their motivation to homeschool.

In my interview with Xian, her statement regarding her identity positioning resonated with a well-known pastor John Piper's (1996) definition of a human being. She quoted Piper's rationalization of identity construction in our interview to articulate her

identity recognition. She said her nature was that she is God's child. She also claimed that she is Chinese, but being Chinese is not her nature and is not important to her any longer after becoming a Christian. All the behavioral differences demonstrated between American and Chinese cultures are just phenomena and do not indicate her nature. Xian stated that her American-born Chinese children have to solve the identity issue in God after they recognize these differences (skin color, ethnicities, cultures), and that is the reality that they have to confront. Xian shared that it is good for her children to feel different at some point, because they are God's children. God's children are different and unique.

Identity can be reconstructed and expressed as well as resisted and reshaped (Majors, 2004), and individuals actively interpret, select, reconstruct, and even create environments that they interact with daily (Bronfenbrenner, 2003). In my interview with Qing, she constructed her identity purely from a Christian perspective. She stated that it is inappropriate to use the term "culture" to describe the existing differences between American and Chinese culture, and culture is more of an academic term. Everybody is the same in Christianity. She claimed that she did not know Chinese culture since she never worked there, and she did not know American culture as well because she is an immigrant. Her understanding of living in this world is suffering because of sin. She has to endure this suffering to be able to enter God's kingdom of heaven as God's child. She was not willing to make comments about herself as a Chinese living in America. Her identity positioning was only in God. The ways she perceived the world (cultureless in nature) and interpreted Christianity (Christians are the same all over the world)

significantly contributed to (1) her insensitivity to everyday experiences of differences between American and Chinese cultures, and (2) her incapacity to process the real existing differences for her children in their everyday lives. However, Qing's everyday parenting as a Chinese immigrant "pushed" her to process the differences between Chinese and American culture for her children.

In characterizing Qing's children's identity, she showed genuine concern regarding their identity construction through her observations of them having difficulty fitting in with their American peer groups. Her children self-identified as American, yet they found there were differences between them and white Americans. Qing passively confronted the cultural differences as demonstrated through her children's social network given how she perceived the world. Qing denied the cultural differences between American and Chinese and was not willing to process her identity construction as Chinese living in the United States. This may significantly contribute to her incapacity to help her children's identity construction. This potentially reinforces parent-child conflict interaction.

Qing's conflict with her daughter, Xiao, mainly revolved around the Bible storybook training. Qing emphasized the significance of training through Bible stories with Xiao every morning, to help Xiao understand who she is (God's child) and why she lives in this world (glorify God). However, Xiao did not seem to grasp the purpose of Qing's training, and in fact, she struggled very much through Qing's training process. Xiao obviously did not comprehend the significance Qing perceived to be in the Bible storybook training, but she could see differences among people (skin color, language, and

way of behaviors). However, Qing did not have these existing differences in her everyday parenting agenda because that was not what she perceived as significant.

Therefore, their conflict most likely will continue given the different ways of seeing the world.

De adopted a Christian mentality to structure her identity as God's child instead of struggling through negotiation of being American or Chinese. However, her husband is a white American, and her identity position has constantly subjected her to challenges in everyday living situations because of the intimate interaction of two ethnicities and cultures in one household. Her family back in China still holds her accountable to Chinese cultural conduct and traditions even though she has been highly acculturated. She said that she felt she was a combination of Chinese and American. She self-identified as Chinese in her everyday discourse and shared that her friends tell her she is an American with a Chinese face. Her children all self-identified as American while De believed that they also carry some Chinese traits. In De's case, she struggled more than her children with positioning her identity. It is important to recognize and acknowledge the important roles of both self-identification and the perceptions and attitudes of others in the construction of ethnic identity (Mendoza, 1999).

From a religious worldview, Christian people are free from the social institutions and traditions that used to define and confine them, so they can become a *new self* through the process of being *born again*. Paradoxically, the new self is constantly reconstructed through individuals' living experiences in the United States (Chen, 2008). In addition, Qing, Xian, and De all became Christians through their own lived

experiences with God, who showed them miracles that solved practical life

challenges while living in the United States according our interviews. Becoming a

Christian is not changing religions, but is a way of living for many Chinese immigrants.

For these immigrants, there were many shared values of Confucius and Christianity and a

strong network support system within the church and other church organizations. These

religious organizations offer a wide array of formal and informal social services that

support an immigrant's social, material, and psychological adjustment after their

resettlement. Additionally, it is a way to hold family members accountable when their

Chinese social ties and moral responsibility grow weaker after immigration (Chen, 2008;

Yang, 2009).

According to Chen's (2008) two-year ethnographic study on how immigration

makes Taiwanese religious, she found that becoming a Christian is a way to become

American. Christianity offers Taiwanese immigrants an alternative way of being

themselves and parenting their children. Culture is regional, even though Christianity is

not by nature American; yet, in the current study, it had a profound influence on shaping

Qing's, Xian's and De's identity reconstruction and recognition after their immigration to

the United States. Their everyday living contexts are situated in American culture, and

their evangelical Christian churches they have been attending were developed in

America. Ek (2009) asserted that individuals build their own identities through emerging

social activities with their cultural knowledge at hand through their acts, actions,

performance, and practices of their identity. Social institutions can shape and influence

the resources individuals use to construct identity and the opportunity for an individual to demonstrate their identity.

The findings in this study suggest that Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers construct and carry on multiple identities in their everyday parenting. Recognizing the existence of their multiple identities is significant in making sense of why they parent the way they do. The nature of co-existing multiple identities suggests that Qing's, De's, and Xian's identity construction is not fixed, but it is continual, intersecting, incomplete, and ambivalent (Ngo, 2002, 2008, 2009) among the various aspects of the contexts where their parent-child interactions were situated. The coexistence of multiple identities does not necessarily coordinate with each other, and sometimes identities could be subdivided (Ngo, 2008) and resisted and reconstructed (Majors, 2004).

Qing, Xian, and De were all international scholars. Both Xian and De studied in the United States, and Xian had a master's degree in Education from Harvard. Qing's master's degree was in mathematics, and she had taught in the K-12 educational system as a substitute teacher in different grades in the U.S. These mothers' educational backgrounds appear to support the existing literature indicating that many Chinese homeschooling mothers have at least a bachelor's degree (Fu, 2008; Sun, 2007). However, these three mothers' motivations for homeschooling appear to trouble the existing clear division of homeschooling families being ideology-motivated (religious) (Higgins, 2008; Meehan & Stephenson, 1994; Nemer, 2002; Van Galen, 1988) or pedagogy-motivated (academic) (Holt & Farenga, 2003; Higgins, 2008; Meehan &

Stephenson, 1994; Nemer, 2002; Taylor, 2010; Van Galen, 1988). Both Xian and

Qing “naturally” started to home educate their children given the living arrangement, and they learned to process and legitimize their homeschooling motivation as a combined concern for their children’s religious development and academic performance through their homeschooling practices. De started homeschooling because her husband suggested it, and she eventually, after much struggle, took the suggestion as a way to obey God. She claimed that her homeschooling was ideology-oriented but in her every day teaching and parenting, academic performance was highly emphasized and valued. Again, her homeschooling was motivated by the joint concern for her children’s religious development and academic growth.

These three Chinese immigrant mothers’ homeschooling practices and religious beliefs framed their living contexts—family activities were typically at home, in churches/church related organizations and at their children’s extra-curricular facilities (e.g., piano teacher’s house, guitar lessons in the music academy, swimming lessons). Bronfenbrenner’s (2003) bioecological approach of human development was brought in to examine parent-child conflict interactions within these three families’ micro homeschooling living contexts. This approach involves studying the dynamic of interactions between a developing individual and the immediate environment where this individual is situated in and over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1999, 2000, 2001; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The findings of this study, however, go beyond revealing the reciprocal interaction between a developing individual and the immediate environment. It illustrates

in detail how the individuals attempt to “upgrade” the old existing knowledge and beliefs (child obedience and parental authority) by absorbing a new interpretation and implication (Christianity) on this familiar and even taken-for-granted knowledge in the new environment as a way to adjust to and even restructure the life to fit in the regional culture after immigration. Additionally, it explains the intimate interaction of a spiritually constructed reality and the everyday living reality by illustrating parent-child conflict interactions, on which Bronfenbrenner did not focus.

Confucianism (Gorman, 1998; Wu et al., 2002) and Christianity (Plowman, 2003; Rosemond, 2007; Tripp, 2008; Tripp, 1993) both value child obedience and authority in parenting. Relationships within a family are hierarchical, and parents hold authority over their children. This shared knowledge and values made it easier for these three Chinese immigrant mothers to adopt the evangelical Christian-based living and parenting styles after immigration even though there are significantly different interpretations and implications behind the same values. Confucius values of parental authority and child obedience are for the purpose of building harmonious families and society, while the ultimate purpose of evangelical Christian values of parental authority and child obedience is for self sanctification.

As revealed in the literature, Chinese immigrants’ parenting methods and styles are fairly diverse. There are Chinese immigrant parents who adopt authoritative parenting styles (Chao, 2000; Cheah et al., 2009) and authoritarian parenting styles (Chao 1994; Chao, 1995; Chao 1996; Chao 2000;Gorman, 1998). Permissive parenting style has also become popular among Chinese immigrant families raising the younger child (Chao,

2000; Chen, et al., 2012). However, “authoritarian” is perceived as a Western concept, and it does not fully capture the essence of Chinese immigrant parenting (Chao, 1994; Chao, 1995; Chao, 1996; Chao, 2000; Fung & Lau, 2010; Gorman, 1998; Steinberg & Darling, 1993; Wu et al., 2002). Gorman (1998) also stated that the authoritarian parenting style derives its methods from an entirely different cultural background and may have completely different attitudes and values attached to it. Both Fong’s (2004) and Goh’s (2011) studies strongly suggest that social, political and economic transformations heavily impact the Chinese child-rearing practices, and today’s Chinese parenting is concerned more about the children’s long-term happiness. The now classic term “tiger parents” is defined as parents who apply classic authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, and psychological control in their child rearing practices (Kim et al., 2012).

Chao (1994) has offered an alternative concept of *jiao xun* (teaching and guiding) or *guan* (training) that is mainly derived directly from an appreciation of Asian culture in terms of parenting. However, she neglected to articulate the complete aspects of the concept *jiao xun*. *Jiao* means teaching, which potentially involves parental warmth and love. *Xun* means to guide with scolding. This feature of scolding is what Chao (2000) did not include in her characterization of Chinese immigrant parenting.

Considering the complex and dynamic nature of Chinese immigrant parenting practices and the limited existing literature that looks beyond Baumirnd’s framework of parenting styles to examine current Chinese immigrant parenting, we need to take into account multiple parenting dimensions when defining Qing’s, Xian’s, and De’s parenting profiles. There are different parenting dimensions (e.g., warmth, control, inductive

reasoning) that may be viewed in both a positive and negative light to grasp the whole picture of parenting characteristics. In the classic dimension of control, for example, there is positive parental control that is conducted with democratic reasoning and negative parental control that is conducted with physical coercion (Kim et al., 2012).

In the following section, I discuss how obedience and parental authority were illustrated in Qing's, Xian's and De's everyday parent-child bidirectional interaction (Kuczynski, 2003) with conflict, and how age differences played a role in their interaction dynamics. In doing so, these mothers' parenting profiles are viewed within the context of homeschooling, the interdependent parent-child relationship, and bicultural ethnicities. Qing, Xian, and De illuminated three patterns of parent-child conflict management methods through their everyday parenting practice: (1) push for obedience and immediate discipline, if needed; (2) facilitate negotiation to encourage child obedience; and (3) let go without pushing for obedience. Each mother demonstrated a different level for each of these methods when dealing with parent-child conflict interaction.

Qing primarily applied "push for obedience" and "letting go" to deal with parent-child conflict situations while confronting child misbehaviors. Her inconsistent yet opposite responses (ignore or lose her temper) toward similar misbehaviors seemed to confuse her children. Losing her temper made Qing feel like she had control over them for a moment, and then the strong sense of lacking control soon came back to her. For example, Qing's children did not yet have a solid habit of cleaning up after themselves because of their young age and lack of consistent long-term training. So they quickly

repeated the same behaviors since they did not know what would cause Qing's negative emotional response. When the children scattered toys on the living room floor, sofa and table, nothing happened until Qing noticed it when she came into the living room. In a scolding voice, she would ask her children where people sit when the toys are on the sofa, and she threw the toys off the sofa. Qing also often used the methods of letting go and pushed for obedience simultaneously. For example, Qing tended to initially ignore Xiao's resistance toward her reading or other scheduled academic activities, and she then would scold Xiao to push for obedience. However, Qing's two inconsistent and major polar responses toward her children's behaviors illustrated her spontaneous nature and situation-driven parenting practice.

Qing's everyday parent-child bidirectional interaction featured the general structure (e.g., breakfast, clean up, reading together, and academic work) with many spontaneous activities and much flexible space. This routine was often disrupted without Qing's presence since both Xiao and Liu were highly dependent on Qing's initiatives and facilitation in the daily schedules. For example, as the family profile illustrated, Xiao and Liu would not attend to their personal hygiene without Qing's constant reminding or occasionally pushing them to do so after breakfast. Reading together would not get started if Qing needed to attend to Qiu before she could start cleaning up the breakfast dishes, which she prioritized before reading. Reading had to be postponed if Qi got in their way, and Qing needed to attend to him. Both Xiao and Liu exercised their agency to keep themselves company when Qing was not present.

Xiao was quite resistant to reading Bible stories with Qing most mornings.

There were three reasons contributing to her resistance. First, as a baby boy, Qi was a major distraction for the learning activity in the morning, and Xiao was used to arranging her own play time when Qing was absent to attend the baby. Additionally, Qing tended to push for a non-stop agenda once the house became nice and quiet after Qi fell asleep. Most importantly, Xiao did not enjoy the Bible stories (she initiated the reading of different books with Qing as a way to skip reading the Bible stories some mornings), and these two factors potentially reinforced her negative attitude toward it. Qing valued her morning reading activities with Xiao, and she particularly emphasized the value of doing Bible training with Xiao through reading Bible stories with her in our interviews. These competing interests set the pattern of Qing and Xiao's everyday bidirectional interaction considering their equal agency. Parental behavior gives rise to a child's response and vice versa, and parent-child interactional outcomes are an ongoing process from the bidirectional perspective (Kuczynski, 2003).

Qing's Bible training primarily focused on knowledge, historical facts, and rules. For example, Xiao was asked to recite all the names of the books of the Bible, and Qing had been training her to do that for weeks. Qing often quizzed Xiao on the content of the Bible stories. Qing emphasized to Xiao the price of disobeying God (death) and praising her when she was obedient. Qing often ignored Xiao's negative attitude toward the Bible story reading until Xiao pushed further. Qing then tended to scold Xiao for not being an obedient child after her silent treatment (ignoring) failed to work. Qing's passive (ignore first) and then aggressive (scolding, get angry) pushing for obedience after experiencing

Xiao's continued resistance did not always work with Xiao. Resistance is the continuing theme that went across the parent-child relationship. Children actively resist, select, and negotiate parental ideas and construct ideas of their own (Kuczynski, 2003). Xiao often would lie down and claim that she felt hurt somewhere on her body or sick every other time when she did not want to engage in the reading activity anymore. Qing would often have to adjust her agenda accordingly after realizing there was nothing she could do to get Xiao to continue her reading, but carefully observing and testing to see if Xiao was truly sick or not while still caring for her.

In conclusion, Qing's parenting practice appeared to feature *xun* (guide with scolding) which she most likely carried over from her growing up experience in China. According to Chao (1994), *xun* potentially involves genuine parental care and concern about their children. Qing's negative emotional reaction toward a messy house may come out of a genuine concern for providing and maintaining a neat family environment for her girls. She restructured her children's study spaces many times to make a difference. She pushed knowledge, facts, and rule-based Bible training which also may have come out of her caring for her children's spiritual development. She occasionally tried to use role-playing to read some of the Bible stories. Qing also fed Xiao occasionally when they were involved in a battle of wills over Xiao's skipping lunch. Most of all, Qing indicated that she hoped to have a family where parenting was God centered where parents are loving and children are obedient. These revealed that Qing's parenting was based on caring toward her child. Yet, it is equally important to recognize the potential destructive impacts of Qing's negative emotional responses that were embedded in her everyday

parenting approach to achieve these goals. For example, Xiao complained to Qing that they all learned how to not be nice from Qing (Chapter 4). Additionally, Qing's character training with her children was illustrated through negative reinforcement. Character books that Qing read with Xiao and Liu each morning featured different kinds of negative behaviors (e.g., teasing, lying, disobeying, gossiping, stealing, whinnying) that children may have, and Qing used these books as guidance to train her children's character by discouraging these negative behaviors.

Xian strived to use the Bible to guide her children's understanding, thinking and doing in the world, and she hoped to train her children to use the Bible as a mirror and compass through which they could see themselves and see if they were on the right track. Xian tried hard to help her children understand that biblical scriptures were connected to every aspect of their lives.

Christian parenting books heavily impacted Xian's methods of guiding her children to achieve her parenting goals in everyday parent-child conflict interactions. Child obedience was highly valued, repeatable, and consistently emphasized in Xian's parenting. She believed that the capacity to obey was strength of character. This reflects Tripp's (2008) statement about child obedience, and according to Tripp, it is noble and dignified to have the capacity to obey. Xian's parenting practices can be described in three major patterns: (1) push for obedience and take time to discipline, if necessary; (2) negotiate for obedience through reasoning; and (3) letting go without discipline. Xian's primary parenting strategy was to use reasoning as a way to negotiate for obedience. She also firmly pushed for obedience if the misbehavior was her children's purposive

misbehaviors that involved children doing what they were not supposed to be doing, and they were fully aware of it. Xian tended not to push for obedience when she observed the girls had already tried their best or the older two girls failed to help take care of the younger two.

Xian applied a few parenting methods that Rosemond (2007) discussed in his Christian parenting book *Parenting by the Book* (Bible), to push for child obedience and prolong immediate discipline. The first one was parents should expect the children to obey after making their first request to their children, and if the child does not listen, then parents have to discipline as the authority figure. Xian practiced this method with her children in everyday life situations, yet she recognized that she should be flexible in different situations. For example, Xian would strictly push for immediate obedience during the morning pray time together when Zhen was not cooperative after Xian called her for prayer (Chapter 4) and everybody was waiting for her. However, before the oldest two, Jing and Tiao, got in the routine pray circle, Xian did not seem to mind having to call them a few times and waited patiently.

Another method Rosemond (2007) discussed in his book and Xian practiced was using unforgettable discipline. Rosemond (2007) claimed that when discipline leaves no mark, the effect will not last. Xian tended to conduct unforgettable discipline with her oldest child, Jing. Xian was on the phone with a friend, but the morning routine for her oldest two, Jing and Tiao, was that they should volunteer to get on schedule even if Xian was on the phone. However, when she finished talking with her friend, she noticed that Jing was playing instead of working on her academic studies. Xian took it very seriously,

and she devoted about 15 minutes to “interrogate” Jing by asking Jing different questions that focused on the topic of what she was supposed to be doing. Jing was made to feel very uncomfortable, and Xian’s purpose for doing so was to have Jing remember the strong sense of discomfort and never repeat the same mistake again.

Xian used a heart training approach suggested both by Plowman (2003) and Tripp (1999, 2008) to conduct democratic reasoning with her children to get them to obey. She articulated how she taught her children God’s commandment “love each other” by quoting the disciplinary example from Tripp’s (2008) book *Instruct a Child’s Heart* regarding two children fighting for a toy, and how biblical parenting which emphasizes love (let the other one have the toy first as a way to show love) is different from secular parenting that is based on fairness (the one who got the toy first gets to play first). Xian went beyond Tripp’s discussion about fairness and love-based discipline, and she stated that she also used the “two child fight for one ‘toy’ situation” to help her girls see themselves as selfish, sinful, and lacking, and that they need Jesus Christ as their Savior. There was one time that Xian took time to “facilitate” her four girls’ fight over two whole eggs and a half egg during lunchtime. Qing purposefully made it an unforgettable (Rosemond, 2007) and uncomfortable heart desire confrontation and heart attitude training process (Tripp, 1999, 2008; Plowman, 2003) through which her children could see their true selves. Xian believed that the biblical scripture messages such as “love each other” serve as a mirror and compass that keep her children on the right track and also empower them to hold parents accountable for the same standard. The combined resources of the Bible and Christian parenting books inspired Xian’s parenting practices.

De's everyday parenting was a conscious and unconscious negotiation process of letting go of the aspects of Chinese parenting that she was familiar with and added the positive behavior focus, love, and patient-oriented American parenting that she observed while living in the United States. For example, if she found herself demanding Chinese hierarchal-based manners that demonstrate filial respect toward parents, she would strive to let it go. However, if she observed hostile attitudes toward her from Zack, she would push for an immediate attitude change (Chapter 4). For example, De strived to let go if Zack failed to greet her in the morning after getting up, but walked directly to the computer. She pushed for an attitude change if she observed that Zack talked to her in an impatient tone and an upset face. Her parenting practice with Zack centered on initially pushing for obedience with or without her husband's support, and then openness to adjust her request accordingly after reflecting on their conflict. Parent-child conflicts between Zack and De were often triggered by different perceptions of behavior, and De's parent-child conflict management skills were primarily to push for obedience in conjunction with reasoning.

De claimed that her parenting strategies were inspired through her active and attentive learning from American mothers from churches and homeschooling co-ops, and she said that these mothers were her models. She believed that American parenting was more egalitarian and the Chinese counterpart is more hierarchical. De also disliked Chinese ways of parenting that mainly focus on the negative aspects of a child's behavior and correction. She emphasized that Chinese parenting is about correcting a child's mistakes all the time (一天到晚纠错). However, she also disliked American parenting

that avoided pointing out children's mistakes, and said that her parenting was God-centered parenting. De shared that the way her husband and her came to the same understanding of their parenting was by striving to remove the aspect of the parenting value that was not God-centered but more culture-oriented (American or Chinese). Therefore, their parenting was more of a combination of Chinese and American parenting that they believed was aligned with God's Word.

In addition to discussing how culture, identity, and religious beliefs shaped Qing's, Xian's, and De's parenting practices, the children's ages and birth order were also shown to play a significant role in shaping their parent-child interaction dynamics. These three Chinese immigrant mothers all demonstrated different parent-child interaction dynamics with their youngest children compared to the older ones. Qing was very attentive and accommodating to her baby boy, Qiu's, needs, and she never showed negative emotions to him but just smiled at him even if he made a big fuss and often made big messes at mealtime. Qing also often shifted into a more positive attitude toward Qiu even if she just lost her temper with her older girls. Xian acted in a similar way to her baby girl, Qi. She smiled at Qi regardless of what she did. Xian often interpreted Qi's body language and joked about it. Her main love language toward Qi was hugs and kisses. She sometimes playfully disciplined Qi by taking her for a time out and taking pictures of it. Both Qiu and Qi were close to one year old by the end of my data collection. According to Ho (1971), they had not reached the age of understanding. Xian often told Zhen that "Qi was too little and she did not know anything," when Zhen complained about Qi. Existing research has found that Chinese immigrants use a

permissive parenting style when raising the younger child (Chao, 2000; Chen, et al., 2012).

De's youngest son, Sam, was 13 years old, and she was very lenient with him in her everyday parent-child conflict management. She tolerated him when he accused and "interrogated" her for about 18 minutes because De did not quote Sam correctly in her phone conversation with her husband (Chapter 4). De also offered to take the blame for Sam when he was anxious about losing one of his Boy Scout badges that his Dad asked him to take good care of. She comforted Sam when he had negative emotions toward his math test scores and his Dad's attitudes toward his scores. She shared with Sam that she was also responsible for the poor test result to make him feel better. De shared that Sam's older brother Zack would let him have his way when they were younger, but Zack told her that he would never let him win anymore when Sam turned ten years old. These three immigrant mothers' parenting practices toward the youngest ones appeared to resonate with existing research findings regarding Chinese parents' child rearing toward the youngest child.

In summary, these findings suggest that Chinese immigrant parenting was not by nature authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, or neglectful (Baumrind, 1971). It is also simplistic to portray them as tiger mothers who use classic authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles and demonstrate excessive psychological control over the children (Kim et al., 2012). Parenting appeared to be the most discursive, dynamic, and even messy process of parent-child interaction. It is a reflexive, inductive and ongoing

process to learn to parent in given contexts. The same mother also reveals different parenting practices with different children based on their age and personality.

Qing, Xian, and De shared the same religious beliefs and strived to live out what they believed to be truth. However, they each were constrained by the own lived experiences that shaped the parenting practices in completely different ways. Qing's parenting seemed to align with how she was parented as a child. Xian's parenting tended to be heavily influenced by current available Christian parenting books and the Bible. De's parenting showed major influence from what Rosemond (2007) called grandma parenting.

In summary, Qing, Xian and De illuminated three patterns of parenting in conflict interactions based on their current major parenting practice influences, in addition to the influences of ethnicity, culture and religious beliefs. In general, their patterns were (1) push for obedience and discipline immediately, if needed; (2) facilitate negotiation for obedience; and (3) let go without pushing for obedience.

Research Implications, Limitations and Future Research Directions

Research implications. This study may make significant contributions in the following ways. It illustrates a holistic picture of three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers' parent-child conflict interactions. This illustration potentially engages future Chinese immigrant families in a reflection on their own parenting practice patterns. Secondly, this study helps engender a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese immigrant families' parent-child interaction in homeschooling settings in the U.S. It challenges the stereotypical image of the authoritarian Chinese

parent that was reinforced by the “tiger mother” analogy of Amy Chua (2011)

through closely examining these three evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers’ parenting in the U.S. Additionally, this study provides important insights for parent educators, social workers, and other professionals who work closely with Chinese immigrants.

Furthermore, evangelical Christian Chinese homeschooling mothers’ everyday experiences of parenting are being shaped and are shaped by their intimate interactions with the existing environment. Their shared religious beliefs set out a fundamental theology framework for everyday parenting practice. However, each mother had their own unique way of approaching, understanding, and practicing their faith in their childrearing in a bicultural context. Therefore, each mother’s child rearing was guided by her Christian faith but was also an individual experience. Individualized and culturally sensitive parent education programs are needed to support future immigrant families’ needs.

Research limitations. In addition to the standard limitations of an ethnographic research study (e.g., small number of participants and not generalizable to the larger population), this study has two limitations. First, this study explored evangelical Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling mothers’ parenting practice. These mothers’ parent-child conflict interactions were carefully examined and illustrated. However, this study did not intend to provide parenting suggestions or parenting standard practices given the ever-changing and diverse nature of parent-child interaction dynamics.

Future research directions. These three Christian Chinese immigrant homeschooling families used both English and Chinese at home, and they revealed interesting bilingual information exchange dynamics even though speaking Chinese at home was encouraged. Future research could be done to address the language policy and dynamics within immigrant homeschooling families' households. In addition, according to my literature review (Rosemond, 2007) and De's response, parenting ideas, tips, and methods presented in current parenting recourses (books, websites, programs) are often contradictory. These contradictions cause confusion and frustration among parents. Therefore, future research can be done to examine and address contradictory parenting ideology problems.

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Appendix A
IRB Research Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Human Research Protection Program
Office of the Vice President for Research

*D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 820
Minneapolis, MN 55455*

*Office: 612-626-5654
Fax: 612-626-6061
E-mail: irb@umn.edu or ibc@umn.edu
Website: <http://research.umn.edu/subjects/>*

July 2

Chun Zhang Curriculum and Instruction Room 125 PeikH 4301A 159 Pillsbury Dr SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

RE: "Challenging Tiger Mother Stereotype? Christian Chinese Immigrant
Homeschooling Mothers Parenting Practice in the U.S." IRB Code Number: 1405P50763

Dear Chun Zhang

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) received your response to its stipulations. Since this information satisfies the federal criteria for approval at 45CFR46.111 and the requirements set by the IRB, final approval for the project is noted in our files. Upon receipt of this letter, you may begin your research.

IRB approval of this study includes the consent form received July 2, 2014 and assent form received June 25, 2014.

The IRB determined that children could be included in this research under 45CFR46.404; research not involving greater than minimal risk.

The IRB would like to stress that subjects who go through the consent process are considered enrolled participants and are counted toward the total number of subjects, even if they have no further participation in the study. Please keep this in mind when

calculating the number of subjects you request. This study is currently approved for 14 subjects. If you desire an increase in the number of approved subjects, you will need to make a formal request to the IRB.

For your records and for grant certification purposes, the approval date for the referenced project is June 6, 2014 and the Assurance of Compliance number is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003). Research projects are subject to continuing review and renewal; approval will expire one year from that date. You will receive a report form two months before the expiration date. If you would like us to send certification of approval to a funding agency, please tell us the name and address of your contact person at the agency.

As Principal Investigator of this project, you are required by federal regulations to:

*Inform the IRB of any proposed changes in your research that will affect human subjects, changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. *Report to the IRB subject complaints and unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others as they occur.

*Inform the IRB immediately of results of inspections by any external regulatory agency (i.e. FDA). *Respond to notices for continuing review prior to the study's expiration date. *Cooperate with post-approval monitoring activities.

Information on the IRB process is available in the form of a guide for researchers entitled, What Every Researcher Needs to Know, found at <http://www.research.umn.edu/irb/WERNK/index.cfm>

The IRB wishes you success with this research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at 612- 626-5654.

Sincerely,

Jeffery Perkey, MLS, CIP Research Compliance Supervisor JP/bw

CC: Mark Vagle

Appendix B

Research Consent Form: English and Chinese Version

CONSENT FORM

Challenging Tiger Mother Stereotype? Christian Chinese Immigrant Homeschooling

Mothers' Parenting Practices

You are invited to participate in this ethnographic research study that focuses on exploring the Christian Chinese homeschooling parent-child interaction dynamic in cross-cultural settings. You were selected as a possible participant because you currently home educate all of your children who are at different ages, and you are a Chinese immigrant who has lived in the United State at least 10 years. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Chun Zhang, third year Ph.D. student studying in the Curriculum and Instruction department, at the College of Education and Human Development in the University of Minnesota.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to get a holistic picture of how homeschooling mothers interact with their children in cross-cultural settings. Specifically, it is to understand

how homeschooling mothers conduct parenting in every day life activities. The following research questions guide this study.

4. What does it mean for you (Christian Chinese immigrant mother) to home educate your children?
 - c. How do your religious beliefs shape your parenting practices?
 - d. How do you characterize your identities, and how do your self -identified identities shape your parenting practice in homeschooling settings?
5. How do you interact with your children in everyday life, and how do the parent-child relationships take shape (e.g. verbal and non verbal communication, parent and child intimacy and hostility etc.) in homeschooling settings?
6. What stories do you want to share regarding your parenting beliefs and practices in the homeschooling setting in the U.S.?

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. Permission for me to conduct observation at your home and come along with any field trip (e.g. go to museum) you might take your children to along my research process.
I will be coming to your home and/or join your field trip everyday from Monday to Friday for participatory observations of the parent-child interactions. I will be coming in every other two-weeks. The overall observation time will last eight weeks and total 40 days.
2. Participation in 4 sessions of audio-recorded interviews.

I will also conduct four interviews with you, and each interview will be about 90 minutes. These interviews will be arranged in different time across my total visiting of the site and will be audio recorded upon your permission. You may feel free to have me turn off the audio recorder anytime, and the interview language, place and time will be negotiated with you based on your preference. One informal interview will be conducted with your children who are older than five years old, and it will be about 15-20 minutes regarding her/his lived experience interacting with you (homeschooling mother). For instance, what does she enjoying doing the most with you as a homeschooling mother? I will need your consent and your children's assent to conduct the interview with your children who are between 8-17.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has no direct risks involved. However, there are possibilities that my interview questions that engage you in sharing your parenting practice, values, and belief might trigger some emotional discomfort.

There are no direct benefits to homeschooling mothers in this study. But the study findings will be shared with the participants. Opportunities will be provided for participants to articulate their every day cross-cultural parenting. Children who participate in this study will be getting Chinese short story books and snack as gifts.

Compensation:

You will not receive monetary compensation, but a copy of my dissertation will be shared with you as a way to show my appreciation of your participation of the research. Children will get Chinese story books and snack for the participation of the research.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as my participant. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records. Study data will be encrypted according to current University policy for protection of confidentiality. My doctoral committee and I will be the ones to have access to the audio record data, and it will be deleted 6 months later after my dissertation defense.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researchers conducting this study are: Chun Zhang. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me at 2191 Commonwealth ave, St Paul, MN, 55108. You can also reach me through my cell phone (651-600-9411) and email (zhan1593@umn.edu). You may also contact my academic advisor Dr. Mark Vagle for any of your concerns regarding this research through his phone (612-384-2262) and email (vagl0006@umn.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Date: _____
(If minors are involved)

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

同意书

中国基督徒移民妈妈在美国施行在家育儿经历

您好! 我叫张春, 明尼苏达大学教育学院
的研究生。我现在在做博士论文, 主题是研究中国移民在家教育妈妈管教孩子的理念, 方式和技巧以及移民后的个人生活经历与环境对父母观的影响。我诚恳地请求您参加我的论文研究。您被邀请参与这项研究的主要原因是您移民美国十年以上并且在家教育您的孩子。这份研究同意书主要提供您研究的简介和您的参与所涉及的内容。请仔细阅读并随时提问。您也会得到一份同意书的复印件。

目的

通过这一研究, 我希望探求基督徒中国移民妈妈是如何在家育儿的(育儿观, 育儿技巧等等)。通过研究你们跨国和跨文化个人经历与在家教育, 希望产生对教育者, 社会服务者, 家庭教育 和亲子关系研究人员有价值的信息, 同时使社会更理解和关注移民家庭和孩子们的健康成长。总共有三个家庭, 三个在家教育母亲以及他们的孩子参加这一研究。这项研究主要探索三个问题:

1. 在家教育对基督徒中国移民母亲意味着什么?
 - a. 基督徒中国移民妈妈的宗教信仰对亲子教育的影响是什么?

- b. 基督徒中国移民妈妈的自我身份定位是什么, 这样的自我身份定位是怎样影响您在家亲子教育的?
2. 基督徒中国移民在家教育妈妈是怎么和孩子交流的, 你们的亲子关系是如何发展的?
3. 那些关于您在在家教育环境下的亲子教育理念和实践的故事您觉得您必须分享?

研究过程

如果您同意参加此项研究, 在具体研究过程中我会每个周一到周五来拜访你的家, 或是跟随你和孩子的户外活动(比如参观博物馆), 以此来观察你和孩子之间的交流。这项观察的时间会在两个月, 总共40天。您也会参加四到五次访谈, 每次大约90分钟。您的孩子也会被邀请参加15—20分钟的访谈。访谈是很轻松的聊天方式, 不需要任何准备。由您(或是您的孩子)选择地点和时间经您同意, 访谈会被录音, 但是您可以随时要求终止录音。所有访谈由我和您进行并由我整理成文字后与您分享。希望您提出宝贵意见或纠正可能出现的错误。

风险

参与此项研究不会给您带来任何风险, 但也不避免会有暂时无法预测的情况出现。比如, 访谈中有可能涉及到您过去一些不愉快或是痛苦的育儿经历。无论如何, 保护您的权益将是研究者最优先考虑的。您可以提要求那些内容您不希望被列入我的研究数据。

利益

参与此项研究不会给您带来直接的利益, 但我会很高兴和您分享研究发现。我会赠送参加这项研究的孩子中国文字的短故事书籍和零食。

花费和补偿

参与此项研究会花费您一些时间, 但是不会对您造成金钱或物质补偿。我和您分享研究发现。

保密性

您的名字, 身份和其它私人信息将完全保密。在论文报告中, 所有参与者的名字都将是匿名。所有访谈记录将存储在研究者的个人电脑里, 只有研究者和她的论文委员会成员可以看到, 并仅作研究目的之用。论文答辩后一年内所有记录将被删除。在未来任何形式的成果发表中, 任何能够识别您身份的信息都不会包括在行文当中。

。被您对此项研究的参与完全自愿。出于保护人类研究参与者的安全的目的。您可以拒绝回答任何您不想回答的问题或中途退出 研究。您的参与和退出这项研究将不会对您有任何负面影响。这项研究严格遵守明尼苏达大学人文研究保密政策。

联系与问题

如果您对此项研究有任何问题,请随时和研究者张春联系,电话是 651-600-9411,电子邮箱是 zhan1593@umn.edu。您也可以随时联系她的论文导师 Dr. Mark, Vagle 电话是 612-384-2262电子邮箱是vag10006@umn.edu。如果您对自己作为研究参与者的受保护权益有疑问,请随时联系明尼苏达大学人文研究参与者保护办公室,电话是 612-626-5654,电子邮箱是 irb@umn.edu。

同意声明书 我已经阅读这份参加研究同意书或有人口述以上资料给我。我有机会提出问题并得到满意的回答。我同意参加这项研究。我将得到一份同意书的复印件。

参与者名字: _____

参与者签名: _____ 日期: _____

研究者签名: _____ 日期: _____

Jim's Bible Copying

10/17/14

He makes all things beautiful in its time.
Ecclesiastes 3:11

10/27/14

Be joyful always, pray continually, give
thanks in all circumstances, for this is
God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

10/28/14

For to us a child is born, to us a son is
given, and the government will be on
his shoulders. And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God,
the Everlasting Father, the Prince
of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Tico's Bible Copying

10/27/14

How terrible it will be for those who try to hide things from the Lord. How terrible it will be for those who do their work in darkness. They think no one will see them or know what they do. Isaiah 29:17

10/30/14

The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

10/31/14

In my mind, I am happy with God's law. But I see another working in my body that law makes war against the law my mind accepts. Romans 7:23

So now, those who are in Christ Jesus are not judged guilty. I am not judged guilty because in Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2

11/5/14

Do not let evil defeat you. Defeat evil by doing good. Romans 12:21

11/8/14

Remember what happened long ago. Remember that I am God. There is no other God. I am God. There is no one like me. Isaiah 46:9

Appendix E: Sam 'study Schedule

*Sam's
schedule*

2014 – 2015 School Year Schedule

Grade 8

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday			
7:00	Rise, Bible (Daily Reading Plan, Fighter Verse)	Rise, Bible (Daily Reading Plan, Abiding in Jesus)	Rise, Bible (Daily Reading Plan, Abiding in Jesus)	Rise, Bible (Daily Reading Plan, Abiding in Jesus)	Rise, Bible (Daily Reading Plan, Fighter Verse)			
7:30	Get ready for the day (change and put away clothes, open blinds, make bed, greet family)	Get ready for the day (change and put away clothes, open blinds, make bed, greet family)	Get ready for the day (change and put away clothes, open blinds, make bed, greet family)	Get ready for the day (change and put away clothes, open blinds, make bed, greet family)	Get ready for the day (change and put away clothes, open blinds, make bed, greet family)			
7:45	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast			
8:30	English	English	English	English	Non Co-op Week:	English	Speech	
10:00	Algebra 1	Algebra 1	Algebra 1	Algebra 1		Algebra 1	Co-op Week:	Stewardship
11:15	Trumpet	Trumpet	Trumpet	Trumpet		Trumpet		Lunch
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Geography Lesson & Bee Practice	
1:00	Science	Science	Science	Science		Science		
2:00	Chinese Lesson	Chinese Homework History Lesson Geography Homework	Chinese Homework History Homework Geography Homework	Chinese Homework History Homework Geography Homework		Chinese/History /Geography Homework		
3:00	Prepare for Scouts			Trumpet Lesson		Stewardship		
4:00	P.E./Play	Speech	Speech	Speech	Speech	P.E./Play		
5:00	Finish school day (put away school books and materials, do chores, pick up bedroom)	Finish school day (put away school books and materials, do chores, pick up bedroom)	Church connection	Finish school day (put away school books and materials, do chores, pick up bedroom)	Finish school day (put away school books and materials, do chores, pick up bedroom)			
5:30	Dinner and Devotional	Dinner and Devotional		Dinner and Devotional	Dinner and Devotional			
6:30	Go to Scouts	Free time		Free time	Free time			
9:30	Pray and Bed time	Pray and Bed time	Pray and Bed time	Pray and Bed time	Pray and Bed time			

