

Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church in China Today

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how the Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church recommenced church ministry under the unique context of the “Three-Self” Patriotic Movement (TSPM) under the government of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Shanghai. The paper begins by reviewing the history of Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church prior 1949. It then examines in some details, how the Church has re-organized itself in China today in response to the "neo-religious" framework introduced by the “Three-Self” Patriotic Movement (TSPM).

Keywords: SDA in China today, Shanghai SDA church, “Three-self” patriotic movement

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how the Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church re-commenced church ministry under the unique context of the “Three-Self” Patriotic Movement (TSPM) under the government of the Communist Party of China in Shanghai. The study first describes the history of Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church before 1949. Then discusses in some details how the Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church has been affected after the set up of the “Three-Self” Patriotic Movement (TSPM) in China.

The Beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Church Mission in

China

According to history Abram La Rue, a shepherd and woodcutter from California, had a burning ambition to take the three angels’ message to China. He wrote to the General Conference to become a missionary, but was told that at the age of 65 he was too old and they did not have the money to send him. Not discouraged, La Rue negotiated his way onto a ship where he could work his way to Hong Kong. Thus, he arrived in China in 1888 and began preparing pamphlets for distribution. Fourteen years later Jacob N. Anderson, the first official church missionary to China, arrived in 1902. La Rue witnessed the first seven people baptized in that part of Asia, and he died one year later¹.

¹ Zhonghua, 2002. 34.

Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church's Ministry Before 1949

After arriving in China, Jacob N. Anderson and his coworkers began their ministry in Guangdong province which is located in South China and Henan province which is located in North China. Later, they set up the Chinese Mission in Guangzhou. In 1908, the Chinese Mission moved to Shanghai, and they spent USD 7,000 to purchase a property in the Ningguo Road area to build a church and other buildings. Meanwhile, they rented some houses for evangelistic meetings and baptized some Shanghainese².

Like other denominations, these pioneers also spread the Gospel through the methods of education institutions, medical institutions, and the printing press. In 1908, the press of the SDA Church moved from Henan province to Shanghai and began its business. They published various magazines, such as *Signs of the Times*, *Minister*, *Youth Friend*, *The Last Day Shepherd's Call*, *Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly*, and *Health and Longevity*. Because of the high quality and rich content, the circulation was large; it reached 30 thousand per month at the beginning³. As a result, a lot of readers were attracted by these Adventist magazines, and came to church to seek for the truth. And some of them become Adventist.

The Adventist school was established in 1911 and offered four departments: theology, health education, business, and education. The Chinese word "San Yu" signifies the three dimensions of a whole being: the spiritual, the intellectual, and the physical which are inseparable. The students who attended the school came from 17 different provinces of China and some even came from Korea and Singapore. After graduation, most of the students (about 60%) were employed in different capacities by the SDA Church in China⁴.

Medical missionary work was led by Dr. Harry W. Miller sent by the General Conference of the SDA Church. Dr. Miller and his associates adopted the principles of natural healing and vegetarianism as their main approach, and promoted the use of hydrotherapy, sunlight, and electric therapy. At this point in time, all these methods created interest among the people of Shanghai, and so medical missionary work became an effective means to attract new converts. Not only ordinary people but also high government officials and rich businessmen preferred to receive treatment in our Adventist hospitals. Consequently, two sanitariums and one hospital were set up in Shanghai⁵.

After 42 years of development, the SDA Church membership in Shanghai increased to approximately 2000 and six churches were established by 1950⁶.

² Zhonghua, 2002. 41.

³ Shanghaizhong 2001. 520.

⁴ Shanghaizhong 2001.506.

⁵ Shanghaizhong 2001.527.

⁶ Shanghaizhong 2001.455.

Table 1: Shanghai Seventh-Day Adventist Churches in 1949

Church	Address	Year established
Hudong Church	Ningguo Road	1909
Hubei Church	Wujing Road	1916
Nanmatou Church	Pudong Nanmatou Road	1940
Huzhong Church	Changshu Road	1945
Huxi Church	Hami Road	1946
Tilanqiao Church	E. Daming Road	1950

Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church's Ministry in 1950-1979

After 1949, under the rule of the Communist Party of China, the SDA Church of Shanghai entered into a new and trying time. At the beginning of the 1950s, many foreign missionaries left Shanghai but assigned some Chinese pastors as the leaders of the Shanghai SDA Church. Meanwhile, the publishing house was closed and hospitals were confiscated for military health care services.

Later, under the government officials' arrangement, the SDA Church of Shanghai became the first denomination to become a member of the TSPM in Shanghai, because it owned a lot of property and had a deep relationship with the United States⁷. Then, the government officials and the TSPM officials instigated some SDA Church pastors, workers and students to accuse overseas missionaries and Chinese pastors as instruments of imperialism.

During August to October in 1951, three meetings were held to accuse overseas missionaries of being spies. They were blamed for causing conflict between the Christian and non-Christian Chinese and for influencing the people to disrespect their own culture and country⁸. Many workers of the Adventist printing factory and students of the Adventist school were encouraged to accuse the church pastors in high positions as agents of imperialism.

As a result, many loyal church pastors were driven out of the church and instead the accusers became the leaders of the Shanghai SDA Church. William H. Branson, the former president of the Chinese Mission, fasted and was sick for two days after he heard the accusation against him by his Chinese co-worker⁹.

⁷ Zhonghua, 2002.125.

⁸ Zhonghua, 2002.124.

⁹ Zhonghua, 2002.124.

The Shanghai SDA Church inevitably lost its gospel function and actually became a channel through which political power was exercised. By means of these trials, church members' genuine Christian beliefs were revealed, whether they truly followed Jesus Christ or were just professing to be Christians because of material gain. Some church pastors and members gave up their Christian belief because of the high political pressure, and some of them even became renegades.

In contrast, some still insisted on their belief. Most of these lost their positions or jobs for keeping the Sabbath. In addition, they continually spread the Gospel, translated and printed the writings of Ellen G. White until they were arrested around 1958¹⁰.

In 1955, a new Chinese Mission organization was set up. Compared to the old one, the new leaders of the organization were comprised of the church print factory workers, students, and some pastors. Later, one leader committed suicide at home but the reason was not clear. No foreign missionaries were allowed to be in leadership. Pulpit messages could not include Jesus' resurrection and His second coming. Moreover, God as Creator, or the Sabbath truth were prohibited¹¹.

In 1958, individual denominations lost the liberty to worship independently. This took place in Shanghai as well as other parts of China. The SDA Church together with other Protestant churches were compelled to unite under one name, "United Worship" by the TSPM and share a communal church building within certain regions. Due to the implementation of this policy, church membership decreased rapidly. Initially, there were 200 Protestant churches in Shanghai; but later, it dramatically reduced to 20 churches¹². The members of the SDA Church in Shanghai were allowed to keep the Sabbath just on Friday evenings, and the last Sabbath worship was held on September 6, 1958, in Hu Zhong SDA Church. On this evening, the pastor of the church was arrested and became a lunatic when he was released out of prison 20 years later¹³.

During the "Culture Revolution" (1966-1976), churches were prohibited from conducting any religious activities¹⁴. However, some sincere members held Sabbath worship secretly in their private home.

The history of the Shanghai SDA Church in 1950s is poignant and thought-provoking; a lot of lessons could be gained from this period. The essence of Christianity is lost if the church's mission is not focused on personal spiritual quality but focuses on the church structure

¹⁰ Zhonghua, 2002.143.

¹¹ Zhonghua, 2002.135.

¹² Zhonghua, 2002.139.

¹³ Zhonghua, 2002.123.

¹⁴ Zhonghua, 2002. 139.

alone. In the past, with even few church members, a church could be established, but negligence to nurture the church members would create complications for the church in the future. A pathetic phenomenon occurred when people were motivated to become a church member because of some benefits. Some Adventists frankly admit the reason why they became a church member is because western missionaries promised to offer them jobs after they were baptized. Western ministers were more interested in their own comforts than church ministry.

Reports indicate that 2.3% funds were for church building, whereas 40% for the pastor's house¹⁵. It is inevitable that a church built on such grounds is doomed to collapse during trial periods as was portrayed by the house built on the sand. For the present and future, it would be advisable to review the history of the Shanghai SDA Church in the 1950s, in order to avoid the same tragedy from happening again.

The Ministry of Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church After 1980

In the beginning of the 1980s, with the tolerance of the government, the Shanghai SDA Church began to revive and some members commenced Sabbath worship in several private homes. On February 18, 1989, after 3 years of negotiations with Sunday keepers and with the support of the government, the Shanghai SDA Church started to hold Sabbath worship and other services in the Muen Church.

The place of worship was located in the downtown area and it was shared with Sunday keepers. From then on, the Shanghai SDA Church was also called the Muen Adventist Church. Currently, church membership has reached to approximately 5000. Meanwhile, some Shanghai Adventists did not want to worship in the Muen Church and preferred to worship in private homes, they were called "Wilderness Church" or Adventist House Church.

Shanghai Seventh-Day Adventist Church Affiliated to the "Three-Self" System

The Adventists who worship on Sabbath in the Muen Church belong to the Shanghai Christian Council (SCC) and Shanghai "Three-Self" Patriotic Movement (STSPM). As mentioned before, they are "two organizations, one team," the shortened form is STSPM/SCC.

¹⁵ Zhonghua, 2002. 880.

Daily Management

Regarding to the agreements between the Shanghai Adventists and the STSPM/SCC, an Adventist administration committee (Shi Gong Zhu) was set up to manage the affairs of the church and conduct programs in the Muen church¹⁶. All the committee members (pastors, elders, deacons and members) belong to the SDA Church; however, some of them need to be affiliated with the STSPM/SCC.

Sabbath Worship

The Sabbath worship and other services are all conducted by Adventist pastors in the Muen church and the pastors of Sunday denominations are not welcomed to do it or stand behind the pulpit. Adventist's clergies can preach all the doctrines of the SDA Church freely¹⁷, including the heavenly sanctuary and pre-advent judgment, the second coming of Christ, the mark of the beast, the remnant church, the spirit of prophecy, and so forth. The SDA Church is not obliged to use the TSPM/CCC song book, but are at liberty to use the Adventist Hymnal.

Ellen G. White's Writings

The Muen Adventist Church is allowed to use Ellen White's writings to help the church members have a deeper understanding of the Scriptures. Most books are printed illegally though. Through the diligence of senior Adventist pastors, the TSPM/CCC has published two books of Ellen White's writings: *The Desire of Ages*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*. Due to this public printing of her books, some Sunday keepers now have a better understanding of Adventists' beliefs.

The Process of Ordination

The Muen Adventist administration committee has the right to elect the pastors, elders, and deacons. In the context of Adventists in China, the role of the pastor and the elder is similar. There are no great disparities between them as in the overseas Adventist world. The elder can do everything the pastor can do in the church, but some church members do regard their different in titles of position.

Generally, members who have spent a long time in church ministry or received formal theology education (whether in China or overseas theological seminaries) are qualified for a pastor position. On the other hand, members who have shorter pastoral experience and did

¹⁶ Shisi 1989.

¹⁷ Shisi 1989.

not get a formal theology education are eligible for becoming an elder. After a period of time, it is possible for an elder to become a pastor.

After the Adventist committee elects the candidate, they first need to get the permission from the STSPM/SCC¹⁸. Then after a long discussion it was approved to allow the SDA Church to ordain their own pastors and elders. The ordaining ceremony could be conducted by Adventist pastors, however, the pastors of Sunday keepers are welcomed to join the ordaining ceremony just to congratulate them.

In China some regions are free to ordain their own pastors while in other areas, the pastors of Sunday keepers insist that they take part in the ordaining ceremony. The whole process might take a long time to get final approval because of unexpected situations and sometimes the Muen SDA Church and the STSPM/SCC have different views about the candidates. In the past few years, some Adventists argued that the right of ordination belongs to the church itself and not to STSPM/SCC.

As logical as it seems, it include risks if actually followed out. After all, the newly ordained pastor or elder will have to communicate with the Sunday keepers and government officers from time to time. Therefore, official recognition will indeed benefit the church ministry.

Financial Status

The Muen SDA Church is a “self-supporting” church and all the income resources come from the congregation’s tithe and offerings. The Muen Adventist administration committee appoints the treasurers and accountants to handle the money issues. Since the Muen SDA Church is not an independent organization (there is only one legal Protestant church in each district in Shanghai), it is not allowed to have its personal bank account. Therefore, all the tithes and offering belonging to the Muen SDA Church are saved in the same account as the Sunday keepers¹⁹.

On a typical Sabbath the tithes and offerings are taken up in a different manner from most churches in other countries. As church members enter the church, they place their tithe enclosed in an envelope into an offering box. Others may place their freewill offering directly into the boxes and these offering boxes are situated in several places inside the church either in the foyer or in the church itself.

After the worship, the treasurers both from the SDA Church and Sunday keepers will count the tithes and offerings collected on that particular Sabbath and record it. According to financial policies, the tithes and offerings have to be deposited into the bank on the same day it was collected.

¹⁸ Shisi 1989.

¹⁹ Shisi 1989.

Even though a communal bank account is used, the pastors from Sunday keeper churches are forbidden to use any money from the Adventists' tithe which is exclusively used for paying the salaries of Adventist employees. However, from the offerings, expenses for utilities may be taken with the permission and signature of the Muen Adventist administration committee leader. Being aware that the entire tithe offering belongs to the SDA Church, members would rather give more tithes than freewill offerings or include the offering into the tithe envelope as well. One challenge is that Sunday keepers control the SDA Church's bank account and are familiar with the committee's financial status clearly, which is not good in a sense.

Theological Training

Since there is no Adventist theological seminary in China; a great challenge for Chinese SDA churches is how to train the younger generation to become church pastors²⁰. In some areas, the local Adventist churches send some young people to the "Three-Self" theological seminary. One benefit derived from this is that after graduation, they are accepted by the government and may become members of the local "Three-Self" Church system.

In contrast, in other areas leaders are reluctant to do so, afraid that they might be brainwashed by the "Three-Self" teachings; instead they themselves train the young people. A problem arises and that is most of the seniors did not receive formal theology education and some did not even finish high school, so this creates a concern to train young people correctly. One solution is to send the young people to overseas Adventist theological seminaries, but after completion of studies they are not easily accepted by the local "Three-Self" system. Thus, today this is the biggest challenge for Shanghai SDA Church, as well as the rest of China.

Communication With Foreigners

According to the TSPM/CCC bylaws, the local church has no right to invite guest speakers or pastors from other provinces including foreigners for personal preaching and training²¹. Permission must be granted first from the superior church organization as well as the local church's pastor. Foreign Adventists are neither allowed to speak in front of the congregation nor sing in Sabbath worship unless permission is given. The Muen SDA Church is also encountering the same challenge, and it is harder to get approval due to the absence of mutual trust. Local pastors are restricted to preach within their designated areas and more than likely do have opportunity to do church ministry elsewhere. In addition, foreign Adventists cannot get permission to do church ministry among the people of Shanghai.

²⁰ Zhonghua, 2002. 881.

²¹ Shanghai, Shangaizhong, 473.

Since only a few Adventist pastors belong to the STSPM/SCC, their “voice” is not strong enough and this phenomenon also exists in other cities. Since Adventists lack official power, there is no one to lead out in the official publishing of Adventist books or arranging foreign Adventist pastors to visit the local Adventist churches just for personal meetings. All of these issues are drawbacks for the Chinese SDA Church²².

Conflicts Between Adventists and Sunday Keepers

The Adventist and Sunday keepers in Shanghai share the same church building, and due to the deep bias between them, conflicts occur frequently over trivial things. According to the Sunday keepers’ perspective, the church building belongs to them and attempts are often made to drive the Adventists out of the church building. The SDA Church is perceived as a cult which keeps the ceremonial law and claims that salvation is obtained by good works. In addition, the Sunday keepers are very domineering and always wanting to control the matters of the SDA Church.

Meanwhile, some Adventists have a burden to save those worshipping on Sunday from receiving “the Mark of Beast.” Many Sunday keepers fortunately were converted to Adventism after the Adventists started to worship in the Muen Church. Several of these factors create conflict. Both parties hold a false perception of each other which makes it hard for them to love each other. Generally, the same conflicts occur in the city where the Adventists and Sunday keepers share the same church building.

Strengths

A Bible-believing church. Almost every member of Shanghai SDA Church believes that the Bible is the very inspired Word of God and it is the final authority for Christian belief. They love it, admire it, study it, and preach it. Because of their strong faith in God’s word, the church has endured all kinds of political persecution, and was able to grow rapidly towards the end of the 1970s in quantity as well as quality. The church conducts various Bible studies. On Sabbath, church members are eager to study from morning till evening. Small groups consisting of six to 20 members meet in homes on a regular weekly basis to have a Bible study and pray. And because of these Bible studies, many church members have gained a deeper understanding of the Bible. They not only love reading the Word of God, but also share what they have learned with their family, neighbors, and friends.

High value and respect for Ellen White’s writings. For Shanghai Adventists together with the Chinese Adventist population, Mrs. White is held in high position and her writings is much appreciated, because “taking her writings as an aid to a deeper understanding of the Bible also points the way to escape from the final tragedy humanity is preparing for itself”²³. They

²²Zhonghua, 2002.892.

²³ Noorbergen 1972. x.

quote her writings in sermons, articles, arguments, and as a guide for all kinds of church activities, such as church ministries, evangelism, church music, church management and church finance. Some even go to the extent of applying some of the principles she recommends in their real life, such as marriage, education, and medical treatment. However, it is unfortunate that sometimes the writings of Mrs. White are respected equally as the Bible. Though it is wrong attitude to have, it has helped the Adventists in Shanghai to keep the distinctive doctrines of the SDA Church firmly among the “United Worship” policy.

A praying church. This is a crucial factor for the blossoming church. Besides mid-week prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings in the Muen SDA Church, the church members also participate in small groups in various homes for prayer. The prayer points on the agenda include church ministry, pastors, spiritual growth, and personal needs. Should they encounter emergencies, fasting and prayer for the entire night will be adopted. On certain occasions, each small group take turns visiting different church members and their families, to get acquainted with their needs and pray for them. As a result, the church members draw closer to Jesus through by these means.

An indigenous church. Everything has two sides. The Chinese government’s religion policy does not allow church organizations to receive any support from overseas but instead it promotes self-support among churches. In the beginning of the 1950s, the traditional structure of the SDA Church was destroyed and since then self-support has been practiced. It means they revived without any official financial aid and overseas missionary organizations.

After a period of time, the Shanghai church has become more developed and are able to contribute to the less fortunate SDA churches outside of Shanghai. This phenomenon proves that the success of church ministry comes from the local Christian workers themselves, though external help is needed at times.

Weaknesses

Lack of unity. For Chinese, it is not easy to cooperate with each other. One Chinese proverb says, “One Chinese is powerful, but three Chinese are weak.” The Shanghai Adventists also seem to have this character. Because of government policies each district is only allowed to have one main church. However, there are three or four daughter-churches in Shanghai now. Although all of them come from one mother church, they do not get along sometimes.

Even some SDA members are not able to cooperate smoothly in one daughter church; often leaders are seen fighting during Sabbath worship. Various factors contribute to dissension in the church which could be historical, personal character, and government interference, however, the fundamental reason is sinful human nature. If church leaders are controlled by this kind of spirit, the result is tragic indeed. Recently, the situation has changed through the effort of the newer generation of church leaders.

Adventist House Church ministry has its complications. A great challenge is to invite non-believers to home churches since people might be suspicious. Another obstacle is that home churches are unable to accommodate a large group of people due to limited space. So they encourage the members who worship in the Muen SDA Church to come out of “Babylon” and join them. It creates a gap between the two groups of Adventists.

Lack of trained leaders. Because no official Adventist seminary exists in Shanghai, some Adventist members refuse to study in TSPM/CCC seminaries. So just a few church leaders received formal seminary training, some from the overseas SDA seminaries or the TSPM theological seminary, and some completed courses at Bible Schools.

A lot of full time church workers are not even qualified because of lack of formal theology education and even basic education. Thus, a tremendous need for well-trained workers is inevitable in the church today. In contrast, many trained workers of Sunday keepers start their ministry each year and in the long run degrades Adventist ministers. But there is hope that if SDA Church workers receive proper theological education, they can be more equipped to fulfill God’s work.

Lack of balanced teaching. Due to the lack of skilled and trained preachers, members are confused about the doctrines of the SDA Church. Most them find it hard to keep a balance in regards to faith and works, salvation and keeping the commandments. It is therefore easy to become extreme. For instance, as discussed in the previous section, some church leaders think that Mrs. White’s writings own the same authority as the Bible meaning, that it is an additional Bible, while others claim that her writings could be read instead of the Bible. Another limitation is the fact that only a certain percent of her books have been translated into Chinese, so members are unable to read extensively to find the balance on topics, especially the sensitive ones.

The narrow understanding of Mrs. White’s writings makes it hard to understand the different contexts: culture, lifestyle, and the political and economic environment between modern China and Mrs. White’s time. Consequently, there are many extreme interpretations and misunderstanding of her writings, especially in the areas of health reform, Sabbath keeping, children’s education, and so forth. With these extreme interpretations, unwise zealous actions lead to tragedy. So no wonder in Shanghai (China) many Protestant denominations consider the SDA Church to be heretical.

Lack of defined church policy. The political circumstances restrict the Shanghai Adventist Church from following worldwide SDA policies. This lack of a unified system creates chaos within the SDA Church and so an urgent need for a set of well-defined and consistent church policies. Democracy prevails in some churches in the sense that everyone can suggest something. On the other hand, monopoly occurs when church policies are entirely controlled by a minority, perhaps two or three leaders usually coming from the same family. Their words must be obeyed like the law. These people gradually have become a hindrance to the church development due to their narrow-mindedness and experience.

Gender imbalance. Gender inequality creates conflict. Females make up two-thirds of the congregation usually devoted to the church. They love the Lord, and spend much time in prayer and in witnessing to others. They contribute a great deal to the progress of the Gospel. Thus, these women always gain more power than the men and become leaders. The SDA Church unknowingly has become a women church. This situation produces some problems within the church because the males feel that church administration is taken care of by the women. So they feel that there is no need for them to be concerned about church issues. The attention of the men is then diverted to secular business. Women leaders have their shortcomings and tend to overlook large visions. This phenomenon of women dominance in church governance in the church can be a drawback for the church to reach a new stage.

Summary

This paper provides a brief description of the history of Shanghai SDA Church over different periods from its beginning to the present day. Nowadays, the Shanghai SDA Church scenario is similar to the meetings of the Jews under the government of the Babylonian and Persian Empire as well as the early Christian church under the rule of the Roman Empire. They indeed have some limited rights. Consequently, dealing with the government is a great challenge for the Shanghai SDA Church.

The New Testament provides some guidelines to deal with these challenges. Peter, the apostle, taught the early Christians to, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors" (1 Pet 2:13-14). However, he also indicated an important view about handling political stress. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). These texts are not conflicting at all; rather it reveals the balance needed when encountering political issues. As long as commands from political powers are in harmony with the will of God, Christians should follow and vice versa. Ellen G. White also indicated,

Christ taught them not to place themselves needlessly in antagonism to established order. So far as possible, they were to avoid giving occasion for misinterpretation of their faith. While Christians are not to sacrifice one principle of truth, they should avoid controversy whenever it is possible to do so.²⁴

This thought could guide the issue of the Shanghai SDA Church and the TSPM. As mentioned earlier, the Chinese government has been more open-minded and less stringent in its regional policies since the end of the 1970s. Thus, the role of the TSPM has also changed accordingly. They still control the Christian churches but not as strictly as in the 1950s.

²⁴ White 1898. 434.

Today, the government is more benevolent to Shanghai Adventists to a certain extent. The church members are allowed to keep the Sabbath, and preach their distinctive doctrines. The government also offered a place to worship at Muen Church which is located in downtown. This is advantageous in that it attracts many new members to attend the church services. Although many of Adventist books are printed illegally, the government keeps its eyes half-closed at this. On the other hand, things do not always run smoothly and conflicts between the Shanghai SDA Church and the TSPM arise frequently. Meanwhile, stress from the government and the "Three-Self" Organization constantly interferes with the church ministry. The issue is how the leaders can overcome these factors so that church growth may steadily continue in the Shanghai SDA Church.

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