

*Abstract*

The essay aims at understanding Chinese receptivity towards Pentecostal belief by uncovering factors that made Chinese people inclined to Pentecostal faith, particularly its countercultural and premillennialist theology. A first part of the essay traces the history of Pentecostalism in China. The central second and third part of the essay show motives of countercultural faith by analyzing two modern-day independent theological interpretations of Chinese history, the Back to Jerusalem Movement and the work of Yuan Zhi Ming. A next part demonstrates how such pessimist and countercultural views of history are part of a long history of counterculturalism in China, as the examples of the millenarianism of 19th century Taiping, the Buddhist White Lotus Movement, and some Daoist movements of the late Han dynasty illustrate. The examples point to an undercurrent of pessimism and counterculturalism in Chinese history that prepared the ground for the reception of Pentecostal and of other revivalist faith in China. The essay closes with a critical assessment of the theological and political ambiguities of Pentecostal pessimism and counterculturalism.

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