The Interplay Between Individuals and the Religious Organization: A Case Study of a Cell-group Church in Taipei

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Abstract

This paper aims to observe cell-group churches in Taipei’s metropolitan area. These cell-groups have been widely influenced by the charismatic movement. This paper will also examine the interaction between individuals and the organization within these groups. By adopting a cell-group strategy, church organizations deliver a particular, intended value. Embodied in a metropolitan middle-class community, a rational, McDonaldized, and object-oriented organization manifests middle-class culture. This study discusses the interaction between the supply side and the demand side in a religious market in the framework of the economics of religion and rational choice perspectives. While the organization itself is rational and calculable, charismatic activities play a role in distinguishing the secular world from the religious world, thus strengthening the members’ identity as Christians. Individuals interact and negotiate with the organization by using capital from the secular world. In this interaction process, the church is now more actively involved than ever before. The preferences of the members as well as the products provided by the church both serve to shape and transform Christian culture in Asia.

Keywords: cell group, cell church, charismatic movement, church organization, megachurch
摘要

本文企圖討論台北都會地區以細胞小組為組織方式，並接受靈恩運動影響的中產階級教會，其信徒與組織的互動歷程。細胞小組作為被教會所接受的新的組織型態，透過組織方式傳達宗教組織希望傳達予信徒的價值。鑲嵌在中產階級的都會區之中，理性的組織、麥當勞化的思維，與積極、目標導向的價值觀彰顯了中產階級的文化。透過宗教經濟學與理性選擇的觀點，本文探討宗教市場中供應端與需求端所呈現的互動樣貌。組織方式雖是理性而可計算的，然而情感導向的靈恩活動卻在其中扮演區隔世俗世界與宗教世界的角色，並強化信徒的基督徒認同。個人帶著世俗世界的各項資本進入宗教組織，並與組織互動協商，而教會透過細胞小組比過去更積極地介入互動的過程，信徒的偏好選擇與教會組織提供的產品互相滲透，彼此影響，形塑並改變著亞洲的基督教會文化。

關鍵詞：細胞小組、小組教會、靈恩運動、教會組織、鉅型教會