Rural Christian

I grow up in the countryside, where most of the elders around me have beliefs. The most impressive one is Christianity because my grandmother is a Christian. I went to the church several times on Sunday with my grandmother and found most of the Christians in rural areas were the elder, most female. There are tiny numbers of research about this group, and the approximate number is unclear. Party School of Zhejiang Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China conducted one reliable research in 1998 in the Zhejiang province, which displays the older women had taken a large part of the Christians, and one-fifth of the participants are illiterate. However, most youths do not have beliefs and do not care about their elders' beliefs. This documentary named Rural Christian displays the regular Sunday ritual in the rural church. With the interview following the activities, the participants explain why they join and express their attitude towards Christianity.

This documentary includes three conflicts:

First is the identity conflict of myself—the narrator. On the one hand, I am normal and even similar to the audience who have no belief. On the other hand, I am special since my family has a Christianity background. The conflict between China's social trend—having no faith, and my family's belief background makes me separated from Christians' activities and explore those closely. I film the activities with a third-person perspective to hide my attitude. Thus, the audiences can have their own opinion about those rural Christian.

The second conflict is between science and religion. Some youths may think those are all superstitions and cannot understand these elders' join. However, becoming a Christian for these elders is their sustenance of life. Future living goals are not as encouraging for elders with their ages, but the belief can relieve the painful lives. And it is the material for filling up the hole in their lives. The audiences can have a basic understanding of the join of these elders from their interview. Rural Christians are praying for peace, relief, happiness in the family, and their lives after death.

The third conflict is between the present mainstream education and the religious heritage. In this documentary, those elders sing, preach, and pray while their children or grandchildren play around in the church. So I interview the children in the church about their understanding of their parents' Sunday church activity. Their answer reveals that they have no idea about those activities, but they can sing songs and imitate those elders' actions. Under China's Materialistic education, will those children in the church also become Christians as their elders? That is an open question for the audience.

I used the fly-on-the-wall technique to record and represent the scene objectively without any bias. Those footage do not contain any personal emotion and only inform the audiences about those elders' actions. Even though I participate in the interview for question asking, the documentary is still objective. Because the interviewees can express whatever they want to cover. At the end of the documentary, the data about the number and composition of the rural Christians aim to let the audience know the number of rural Christians and their educational level. The audiences can have their own prediction about these numbers at present.

Having belief cannot be simply labeled as a good or bad thing. The meaning of having a belief can be different individually. The interviews display the reason for those elders' join, which seems understandable. And the objective footages lead the audience to consider those conflicts. Will those children in the documentary also believe in Christianity? Will religion develop in future China? The audiences will have their own answers to these questions.