Christ The King Of Kings
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CCC And TSPM General Committee Meets

The General Committee of the China Christian Council and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee met in Shanghai, November 28 to December 2. This committee, with delegates both from the CCC and the TSPM, was elected by the Fifth National Chinese Christian Conference in January 1992.

Under the theme "Strengthen Self Construction, Run The Church Well According To The Three-Self Principle," 161 delegates assembled to hear and discuss a work report delivered by Rev. Liang Fuhuan, Vice-chairperson of the TSPM. Among the delegates were 16 newly elected members from both CCC and TSPM, most of them young people.

In its final resolution, the General Committee urges all churches and Christians in China to participate in the current campaign against corruption. It also notes that there has been some progress recently in the implementation of the policy of religious freedom, especially since Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin called on a national meeting of the United Front Work Department to improve its work.

With regard to the upbuilding of the church, the final resolution calls on churches and church organizations of all levels to put great emphasis on the training of lay people, to ensure that the skills of young and middle-aged church workers are better employed, and to continue to better regulate church life in a democratic way. Churches are encouraged to rely on their own resources instead of looking for outside help.

Commenting on disagreements between provincial and city level Christian Councils, the resolution admonishes both sides to show Christian love and a willingness to solve problems amicably. Provincial and local Christian Councils are reminded that contacts with churches and church organizations abroad should be coordinated by the Christian Council on a national level.

The General Committee also formed a Committee on Women’s Work, headed by Ms. Wang Juzhen of Shanghai, and with Rev. Gao Ying of Beijing as its Executive Secretary. [ANS]

Law Needed To Protect Interests Of Believers

On September 9, the Sub-Committee On Religion of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was briefed by officials from the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council on the progress and the problems in the on-going process of formulating a law on religion.

In the discussion following this briefing, the Sub-Committee agreed that such a law was urgently needed to protect the interests of religious believers. In some areas, there have been violations of the government policy of religious freedom. To avoid such incidents in the future, religious policy should be firmly grounded in law. [ANS]
Church Magazine Circulation Soars

Tian Feng, the national Chinese church magazine, increased its circulation by over 40% in 1993. In the magazine’s October issue, the editors report that subscriptions have grown from 56,000 in 1992 to over 80,000 this year.

The editors believe that the addition of new regular columns is one of the main reasons for the increased interest in the magazine. Since 1989, "The Implementation Of Religious Policy" has been a regular feature, reporting successes such as the return of church property and exposing and criticizing cases in which the policy of religious freedom has been violated.

In 1993, the editors added columns geared towards new believers, young people, and lay church workers. Another new feature is the "Readers’ Mailbox", with readers asking theological as well as practical questions to be answered by the editorial team. Tian Feng hopes to expand its circulation to 100,000 in 1994. [ANS]

Yunnan Church’s Success In Financial Independence

Yuanjiang County in southern Yunnan Province is mainly populated by the Hani, Yi, and Dai minorities. Missionaries from Germany, Switzerland and the USA worked there in the first half of this century, establishing a large church in the area.

After the reimplementaion of religious freedom in 1980, Christians in Yuanjiang County started meeting in homes. A new church building was needed. But the area is very poor; the Sunday offering seldom amounted to more than one yuan and was often even less. To put the church on solid financial footing, Christians in the county town started a "Benefit The People Restaurant." With tasty food and good service, this venture quickly raised a good profit, which the Christians invested in pig breeding, a small store, and a fruit orchard. By the mid-eighties, the church had an annual income of about 7,000 yuan.

With this income, the church set up two training classes for lay Christians in 1986 and 1988. In 1990, a six-month literacy class was organized, with more than 90 participants from the county. In 1992, finally, the congregation had enough money to build a large new church.

For more than ten years, the income-generating projects of Yuanjiang church have been successful. Other congregations still meeting in homes have felt encouraged by this accomplishment to start their own ventures, and many of these groups now have a solid income of several hundred yuan every year. [ANS]
Rural Bible School Opened In Hubei Province

A rural Bible School was opened in Yongnian County, Hubei Province, in August this year. The Jingling Bible School offers a two-year program that covers the whole Bible. Teaching sessions are held eight months a year and take place during the slack seasons when peasants do not need to work in the fields.

Since the school does not charge any fees, it relies completely on the support of Christians from the area. Several Christians donated necessary equipment such as tables and chairs; and all churches and home meeting points will contribute two Sunday offerings per year to the school. Students have to bring their own food and whatever else they need, from quilts to wash basins.

Graduates of this Bible School will work as rural evangelists after their graduation. [ANS]

Rev. Chou Lien-hwa From Taiwan Teaches At Sichuan Seminary

The prominent Christian leader from Taiwan, Rev. Chou Lien-hwa, recently taught a month-long course at Sichuan Theological Seminary in Chengdu. In addition to the seminary’s 70 students, more than 30 graduates of the seminary came to Chengdu to study with Rev. Chou.

According to a report from a participant, students greatly appreciated Rev. Chou’s student-centered teaching approach. After mornings spent in the classroom, Rev. Chou ate with the students at the seminary canteen and spent many afternoons in discussion and counselling with small groups.

While urging students to center their studies on the Bible, Rev. Chou also advised them to learn from the world around them; rather than locking themselves in their churches, they should be a part of society. Only in this way could they become real evangelists.

In addition to teaching at the seminary, Rev. Chou preached in various churches in Chengdu. [ANS]

Y.T. Wu Centenary Celebrations

The 100th birthday of Y.T. Wu, the "Father of the Three-Self Movement" and an important leader of the Chinese church in the 1950s, was celebrated in November.

To commemorate his work, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee and the China Christian Council organized a one-day symposium in Shanghai on November 27. Ninety-five papers were submitted by scholars, pastors, and lay Christians. The church magazine, Tian Feng, printed commemorative articles in its October and November issues. [ANS]
Problems Over Return Of Church Building Solved in Sanxi, Hunan

Over the last few years, many cases of conflict between churches and work units still occupying church property have been reported in the Chinese church magazine, *Tian Feng*. In this year's October edition, a successful case has been described in some detail, shedding light on several specific problems faced by churches in the reclamation of their original property.

The church building in Sanxi, Yiyang County, Hunan Province was taken over during the Cultural Revolution by a local factory and turned into a garage. When the church requested the return of the building, the factory declared that machines had been installed in the building and that there were no funds to pay for their removal. The church then called for help from relevant government authorities. After a prolonged investigation of the case, the Sanxi county government decided to pay 1000 yuan to the factory to offset the cost of removing the machinery, making it possible for the building to be returned to the church.

The article in *Tian Feng* stresses that such help is to be expected from Religious Affairs Bureaus and United Front Work Departments, and the Sanxi church case is cited as an example of proper implementation of religious policy. [ANS]

*Ecumenical Consultation Held in Manila*

An international ecumenical consultation met in Manila for three days in mid-November to explore the theme "Living the Gospel in Society Today". The consultation brought together 34 Protestants and Catholics from Asia, Europe and North America to discuss papers on the theme from a variety of different contexts and perspectives. Among the participants were six Christians from the People's Republic of China. Bp. Jin Luxian from Shanghai, Bp. Pius Jin from Shenyang and Mr. Liu Bainian from Beijing represented the Chinese Catholic community. The Protestant representatives were Dr. Han Wenzao from Nanjing, Rev. Shen Cheng'en from Shanghai and Rev. Gao Ying from Beijing.

In addition to meeting together for lectures, discussions, prayer and Bible study, participants were received by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and Cardinal Jaime Sin on separate evenings.

The consultation had been planned as an expanded meeting of the International Planning Committee (IPC) which was set up in 1989 after the cancellation of a proposed international conference with Chinese Christians. Following the fruitful ecumenical exchange which took place in Manila, it was decided to reconstitute the IPC as a new "China Ecumenical Network" which would meet to coordinate and study future ecumenical exchanges, and also serve as a forum for communication and response to new initiatives within the broader ecumenical community. Ms. Theresa Carino of the Philippine-China Development Resource Center was elected Coordinator of this new network, whose membership includes Protestant and Catholic representatives from China, Asia, Europe and North America. [ANS]
News In Brief

A report from Xinjiang Autonomous Region says that the church in the Chepaizi reclamation area on the border of the Gurbantungut Desert has seen enormous growth in the last ten years. Christians first arrived there with pioneers who started to reclaim the area in the 1950s. Today, there are more than 500 believers in Chepaizi, and most production brigades have a home meeting point.

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The property rights to the Yangzi Hotel have finally been returned to the Shanghai church. The eight-story building, situated at Yunnan Road in the city center, was originally erected by the Methodists. When they moved to a new building in 1931 (today known as Mu'en Church), the original structure was leased to the Yangzi Hotel for 20 years. Due to the political situation of the time, the church was never able to reclaim the building. Several years ago, some older Shanghai Christians raised the issue and, after some research, were able to find old documents proving the church’s rights to the building. The Shanghai City RAB backed the church’s claim and the edifice was finally returned in July this year.

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In an open letter published in the church magazine, Tian Feng, the Three-Self Committee of Pucheng County, Fujian Province, demands the return of church property in Yongxing Village that was taken away during the Cultural Revolution. The letter states that the Three-Self Committee first applied for return of this property in 1986, and had since exhausted every means to get it back. The letter appeals to all concerned authorities to properly implement government religious policy and help the church in Yongxing Village to reclaim its building.

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The Inner Mongolia Provincial Christian Conference was held in June this year. The 52 delegates from each city, banner (prefecture) and county of the province were told that since 1987, 69 church owned buildings had been returned to the church. Additionally, 39 churches and 477 meeting points were built during this period. In six training classes held since 1987, more than 280 lay workers have been trained.

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A ten-day music training class for church workers was recently held in Ruicheng, Shandong Province. More than fifty church workers, mostly young people, participated.

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A two-day training course for church treasurers was recently held in Xiapu County, Fujian Province. Treasurers from the more than 50 congregations in Xiapu County participated. All participants became acquainted with the new rules for financial management of the churches in the province, and were given a manual to help with their work.

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To celebrate Fujian Seminary’s 10th anniversary, three retreats for all graduates of the last ten years were held on the theme "How To Run The Church Well." With lectures by theological teachers in the morning and group discussions in the afternoon, young graduates were given much time to discuss their experiences. 245 participants gathered for the Fuzhou area retreat, while the Quanzhou and Xiamen retreats each had 100 participants.

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Fourteen new ministers, among them three women, were ordained in Fuzhou in August this year. The ministers will work in different cities and counties throughout the province.

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According to the Jiangsu Christian Council, 38,366 people were baptized in Jiangsu Province in 1992. This is an increase of more than 8% over the 1991 figure of 35,346 baptisms in this province. There are now almost 700,000 Christians in Jiangsu.

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Gaoling County in Shaanxi Province has more than 3,000 Christians. As many of them have never had much education, false teachings and superstitious practices have been common. To remedy this situation, the Christian Council and the Three-Self Committee of the county recently held a three-week lay training class in which 60 Christians participated.

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Xingxing Kindergarten was opened in Zhouning County, Fujian Province in September 1993. Run by an experienced Christian teacher, it is comprised of three classes with a total of 52 children. Tuition fees for the kindergarten are 20-30% lower than those of other kindergartens in the county.
A ten-member delegation from the United Bible Societies visited Nanjing, Kaifeng, Zhengzhou and Beijing, October 15 to 25. In Nanjing, they participated in a ceremony to celebrate the printing of the sixth millionth Bible at the Amity Printing Press.

Bishop Shen Yifan and his wife visited the Episcopal Church in the USA and the United Church in Canada in October.

Rev. Werner Burklein and three more members of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Team visited Nanjing Seminary and met with teachers, students, and pastoral workers from Jiangsu Province, October 17 to 19.

By invitation of Dr. Milan Oppocensky, General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Han Baoping of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary participated in a conference on ecclesiology in Kampen, Netherlands, October 19 to 23.

By invitation of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, a seven-member CCC delegation under the leadership of Bishop K.H. Ting visited Indonesian churches, October 19 to 29.

Dr. Heinrich Ott from Basel University in Switzerland lectured at Nanjing Seminary, and also visited Hangzhou, Suzhou, Shanghai, Guillin and Beijing, October 21 to 31.

Dr. Carl Fr. Wisloff of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission lectured about the Lutheran Reformation at Shanghai and Nanjing seminaries, November 4 to 12.

Bishop K.H. Ting and two delegates from the China Christian Council visited churches in the Philippines by invitation of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Bishop Ting also lectured at Silliman University and received an honorary Ph.D. from the Union Theological Seminary in Manila.

By invitation of Samuel Reeves, Chair of the Board of Fuller Theological Seminary in California, Bishop K.H. Ting visited this seminary, November 6 to 17 and also participated in the installation of its new president, Richard Mouw.

The Malaysian theologian, David Hock Tey, visited Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Shanghai, lecturing at seminaries and preaching in churches, November 11 to 22.

Fifty-one delegates from 19 countries participated in the second Amity Consultation On Social Development, held by the Amity Foundation in Huaiyin and Nanjing, November 20 to 16.

Wang Jianguo and three other young Chinese church workers participated in the First East Asian Youth Gathering, organized by the National Council of Churches in Korea, November 21 to 27.
St. Paul's In Nanjing - Portrait Of A Chinese City Church

Taiping Road is one of the main shopping streets in Nanjing. Among the many stores, restaurants, and night clubs with their glittering neon lights, the grey church building at No. 369 looks somewhat out of place. St. Paul's church, built by missionaries in the 1920s, is today one of the main churches in the city. It is also the church where students from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary do field work. ANS editor Claudia Währisch-Oblau has known St. Paul's since its re-opening in 1985.

Sunday mornings are busy times at St. Paul's church. By 7:00 a.m., the sanctuary has begun to fill with worshippers for the early morning service, which will begin at 7:30 a.m. Old ladies in faded blue trousers and jackets, bent over by age, mingle with smartly dressed young entrepreneurs. Even at this early hour, the church is packed, and latecomers are directed towards the little church hall next door to which the service is broadcasted. By 8:30, space in the small courtyard is at a premium, with hundreds of bicycles parked in orderly rows, people crowding around a table where Bibles, hymnals, catechisms, devotionals and calendars are sold, and early morning worshippers leaving the church while others arrive for the 9 a.m. service.

Amid the melee is another table, staffed by young teachers and senior students of Nanjing Seminary. A large sign announces "Counselling." Rev. Ji Tai, one of the young teachers involved in this service, tells me that problems discussed here span a wide range: "About one third of the people coming to us are just curious. They come in from the street to see what is going on here, and then, when they see our sign, they come up to ask all kinds of questions about Christianity. A second group of people who come to us are seekers, those who have been attending church for a while already. They may have questions about a Bible passage, or about the sermon they have just heard. The third group are Christians from this church. They come when they have problems in their faith, their work, or in their families."

Before the service begins, there is hymn singing, with a young student leading the congregation. By 9 a.m., the church is packed even more tightly than for the early service, with chairs and small benches in every aisle, hardly leaving room for people to pass. Recently, a close-circuit video system was installed at St. Paul's; now people directed to sit in the hall next to the church actually get a better view of the preacher than those at the back of the big sanctuary.

The service itself is simple, with hymns, Bible readings, some liturgical singing (a St. Paul's specialty), and a sermon that, at 20-30 minutes, is short by Chinese standards. Meanwhile, about 30 noisy children are crammed into the church office for Sunday school, taught by some seminary students. This is a new program, started only recently. Peng Yaqian, the young seminary teacher in charge says that most of the children come from Christian families and have been brought up in the faith. "When we tell them Bible stories, they often know the ending before we get to it," she laughs. [Over]
St. Paul's In Nanjing/2

After the service, many people stay behind to pray privately. Small prayer groups are scattered all over the sanctuary. Twice yearly, in early spring and in late fall, catechism classes are held after church. Anybody who wants to be baptized must participate in these classes and pass an exam first. Says Ji Tai: "We not only ask them whether they have understood the basic teachings of the gospel, but also about their faith, what Jesus means to them personally." Before Christmas and on Easter, St. Paul's celebrates huge baptismal services. Rev. Chen Zemin, Vice Principal of Nanjing Seminary and St. Paul's pastor-in-charge: "When the church was re-opened in 1985, we had about 300 members. Since then we have baptized about 2,000 people in this church alone, an average of 250 per year. That means that in every baptism service, more than one hundred people are baptized."

Even with this kind of growth, St. Paul's is not exceptional. Many rural churches are growing at an even faster rate. What is it that attracts people to Christian churches? Li Fuyang, a theological student involved in church work, explains: "Many young people feel a great emptiness. They think their life has no meaning. There is nothing you can rely on - what used to be important 20 years ago has now been completely discredited. So many young people think that there is no meaning whatsoever. Some of them look for love, but even human relations aren't very good today. So people cannot find what they are searching for. Such people easily become Christians, because they realize that Jesus is one who will not forsake them."

Wang Xixian, a woman minister with the Nanjing Christian Council, adds that the changed lives of many Christians are a great witness. She cites the examples of families who always quarreled until one or two members became Christians. "Now that they have accepted Christ, they are full of love, they live differently." Wang adds: "I also know some private entrepreneurs who prefer to hire Christians because they are honest and reliable. Some of these entrepreneurs have become Christians themselves." Recently, Rev. Wang was told by a senior policeman that there were no Christians among the many people in the Nanjing area who had been arrested for robbery in recent months.

For Chinese Christians, it is important that faith become manifest in a life that is obviously changed. Sermons therefore often center on how Christians should lead their lives, how they should deal with money, how they should order family life. Zhao Qusheng, the young seminary teacher in charge of youth work at St. Paul's underscores this: "Our aim is not just to win new converts - we also want to train them. We don't want people to become Christians only in name. We need to help them understand that the new life in Jesus that they have received must become evident; the new person they have become must be visible to others."

Young people have been coming to St. Paul's church in greater numbers since the church started its own youth work. Every Saturday evening, about one hundred young people, [Over]
most of them between 18 and 25 years of age, gather for a lively youth meeting. There is hymn singing, an evangelistic sermon, and then group discussion. It is those discussions that draw the many high school and university students who regularly attend the youth meeting. In school or university, they are often just spoon-fed knowledge, without many possibilities for questioning what the teachers say. Here, in church, they can finally ask all the questions they will not find answers for anywhere else.

Still, more than half of the members of St. Paul's are elderly, most of them women with very little education. Chen Zemin says that it is not easy to meet their needs, especially as many Sunday preachers come from the seminary. He feels that St. Paul's strength lies in reaching out to intellectuals, and that the church should do this consciously. But as the large majority of worshippers are either still seekers or recently baptized, sermons need to concentrate on the basics of the gospel no matter what, even though the questions of intellectuals and illiterates may not be the same.

There are other problems, too. Recently, sectarian groups have been active in and around Nanjing, telling new believers that their baptisms are not valid because they were not conducted in a river. Especially for older, less-educated Christians, this has caused some confusion. It is obvious why the education of Christians is so high on everyone's agenda at St. Paul's.

Regardless of all this, St. Paul's is a thriving church. Sunday services are pervaded by a very strong sense of worship. Church music is flourishing, with the church and the seminary choir taking turns in making services festive. Wang Xixian looks back at the time of the Cultural Revolution, when St. Paul's church was turned into a factory workshop and she herself was imprisoned in a 'cow shed': "Then we thought that all was over, that the church had come to its end. But nothing happened to us that God did not allow. Then we were scattered and buried, like seeds in the soil. And now is the time of growth, of resurrection. God has opened the door for the gospel." [ANS]
Provinces and Municipalities mentioned in this issue

Abbreviations used in this issue: CCC, China Christian Council; TSPM, Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee; CPPCC, Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference; RAB, Religious Affairs Bureau