**Destroyed Church Rises From Its Ashes**

(ANS) On Sunday 23rd October 1994 at 4pm, the believers at Ningde’s Guanbeimen church left the building after completing a joyful and lively service of praise and worship there. As they filed out of their beautiful and magnificent church that day, none of them could have guessed what kind of tragedy and sorrow lay in store for them.

Just next to the church was a building belonging to the local army contingent in the city. At 5.10pm a cook in a third floor restaurant there smelled burning and traced the smell to a room on the second floor. When he kicked open the door, he was confronted with thick smoke which billowed out of the room. The cook tried to tackle the blaze but the fire was already too strong, and he was unable to put it out.

A distance of only 60 centimetres separated the room where the fire was raging from the eaves of the church roof. As the fire burned, flames and sparks flew into the air and started to lick the dry wood of the church roof. In a flash the church itself was ablaze, and within half an hour it was reduced to a pile of ashes. Only part of the clock tower remained and losses were estimated at one million yuan (1 US$ = 8.1 yuan approx.). Believers who soon gathered to survey the damage had to fight back their tears at the sight of this destruction.
That evening, the mayor of Ningde came to the scene. Although his departments had financial difficulties of their own, Mayor Chen immediately authorized a donation of 25,000 yuan from the local government to help the church. Representatives from the Provincial TSPM/CCC council, the Nanjing Amity Foundation and from neighbouring county churches all came to visit the Ningde believers and offer their sympathy.

Although the fire destroyed the church building, it could not destroy the faith of the believers. In the following weeks, they continued to meet as before to praise and worship God at three makeshift meeting points around the city.

After a ten month inquiry held by the local fire department into the cause of the blaze, a lawsuit was prepared on behalf of the church against the owners of the second floor room opposite the church where the blaze began. The court ruled that the guilty party should pay 300,000 yuan in damages to the church but, up to now, the church has not received a single cent, and this has cast a shadow over the rebuilding work.

Despite the disappointment of the lawsuit, Ningde believers prepared to construct a new church. A construction group was formed with the support of the local government and it was decided to build a two-storey building on the site of the original church. One of the members of the congregation who was an engineer worked hard to draw up blueprints for the new building and estimated that it would cost 800,000 yuan, although the church only had 60,000 yuan available at that time.

Nevertheless, the believers in Ningde decided to begin work on the new building in faith, and construction began in May 1996. When news spread that the church was being rebuilt, the hearts of believers from far and wide in the surrounding area were stirred into action. The Provincial TSPM/CC council donated 50,000 yuan to the project and encouraged local churches to give whatever they could too. The Amity Foundation in Nanjing sent 10,000 yuan and also made an interest free loan of 20,000 yuan to the church. Two foreign teachers from the local Ningde Teachers' College also donated regularly to the reconstruction work by making economies in their living expenses and then giving their savings to the church. Other overseas believers as well as neighbouring county churches gave generously too, with people saving up their spare cash and presenting it as a gift to the reconstruction effort. One believer even instructed her family on her deathbed to donate her life savings of 500 yuan to the church. Other people donated the various material goods needed by the new church, such as a piano, kneelers, even a photocopier delivered in person from by one believer who had travelled hundreds of miles from Nanjing. The donations, big and small, poured in and were hailed as a true miracle from God by the joyous Ningde believers.

After seven months of hardship, struggle and uncertainty, 3,000 believers from Ningde and the surrounding area gathered at the new Guanbeimen church to give thanks for their newly completed building. The new church covers an area of 1,500 m² and can normally hold over 2,000 people. The building is even more magnificent than the former one, and is seen by the Ningde believers as a testimony to God's power to create new life from the ruins of destruction and despair. [822 words]
Sihong County: Hard Work To Meet Needs Of A Growing Church

(ANS) One result of the implementation of church registration policies throughout China has been that the number of churches in most areas has actually increased. Sihong County in Jiangsu province is a good example of this phenomenon, where the number of meeting points rose from 79 to 176 after registration procedures had been completed. While the increasing number of churches is welcomed, the number of trained evangelists and church workers available in the area is small and cannot cope with this abrupt increase of new meeting points. In the April edition of the Chinese church magazine Tian Feng, a church worker from Sihong reports how the county TSPM committee tried to address these problems.

In December of last year, the county organized a short one-month church worker training course. The main aim of this course was to give practical training to a group of church members from all over the county in Bible knowledge and its practical application in pastoral duties within the church.

The training course met with difficulties right from the start. There were problems with the living arrangements for the students and also in finding enough money to pay teachers’ salaries. Since the provincial TSPM/CC councils were too busy to assist in these matters, it was up to the local churches themselves to find a way out. But many individual believers and local church congregations responded with gifts of money and also food and bedding. Furthermore, churches released their own trained evangelists and church workers so that these could attend the course and give classes there. By pulling together in these ways, the practical needs of the course participants were largely met.

Most of the students were from the countryside and had never studied before in their lives, therefore the course was tailored to their needs and level of ability. The students responded to all the efforts of the course organisers by studying hard and for long hours each day. Most of the graduates from the course will be placed in the new meeting points within the county that emerged through the registration procedure, where they are needed the most.

Following on from the success of the short church worker training class, the county TSPM committee decided to hold a "preaching drive" during the Spring Festival holiday of this year. Twenty-four experienced evangelists from throughout the county were selected and divided in to eight groups of three persons each. These groups were sent to 30 different locations throughout the county over a six-day period during the holiday season. Between them they covered all 176 meeting points within these locations, reaching out to a total of over 50,000 listeners.
Summing up the experiences made during the preaching drive, the article states that believers have a thirst for teaching. Many Christians complained that even attending sermons all day and well into the evening wasn't enough to satisfy their longing and need to hear more. The article adds that this preaching drive came at just the right time in Sihong county and facilitated the solution of numerous problems. Preachers encountered congregations at different stages of spiritual growth. Some believers had let their faith grow cold. Other congregations had fallen prey to infighting and disputes. Still other congregations had practical problems, such as with their accounting systems. The evangelists were able to bring renewal, zeal and reconciliation to these believers, and assist them in their practical difficulties. Finally, the preaching drive cleared up certain misunderstandings and prejudices among groups of believers who had been suspicious of the Three-Self movement, and who had stayed away from the church in the past for this reason. After listening to the evangelists address their previous misconceptions, many of these believers made decisions to return to the church. [640 words]

97.5.3

Call For Church To Be More Accountable To Its Members

(ANS) "I first stepped into a church in 1988 and was baptized at Christmas '89. However, since my baptism I have never received any further counselling in my faith, either personally or in written communications. After being baptized, it really is a case of 'sink or swim' by yourself!"

So writes Chen Qi in the April issue of Tian Feng, the magazine of the Chinese church. In recent months, Tian Feng has featured several articles in a series looking at the work of the church, and readers have been quick to respond. Chen Qi continues his comment above by stating that although many people are baptized, their faith is not immediately stable or secure as a result. These people cannot solve problems of faith by themselves, and with no help they ultimately end up leaving the church. "I have worshipped at my church so often now, but I am still not familiar with the pastors and church workers there," Chen continues. "Sometimes I ask for advice, but I only get short, sharp, cold answers in reply. If it wasn't for reminding myself that I should 'only see Jesus, not the person' then I wouldn't have been able to remain so firm in my faith."

Chen complains that he and many others often contribute money toward the life and work of the church, but then find it difficult to watch as some pastors and church workers draw four-figure salaries. Chen would not mind this so much if he could see the church caring for the many believers who suffer from poverty, difficulty and loneliness. Many such believers are just like the widow who gave all she had in contributing two coins to the collection box, yet these same believers get no help and comfort when they need it. Chen would like to see some clear guidelines stating that a fixed percentage of church income must be given over to poverty alleviation. "In society, doing good works is becoming more and more popular, shouldn't this be even more the case within the church?" Chen asks.
Chen also mentions how he has travelled a lot throughout the country and worshipped in many churches. Those in Guangxi Province impressed him the most. The reason is because they published clear lists of church income and expenditure and were in this way accountable to believers. This is one way to help pastors and church workers remember who they are supposed to be serving. [419 words]

97.5.4

CCC Publishes Booklet On Sects

(ANS) Chinese Christians need to know sectarian teachings so that they can help erring believers to find the truth, says Rev. Zhao Zhi'en, the editor of a new CCC booklet on sects and heresies. The booklet, with a print run of 50,000, aims to equip Christian workers at all levels to identify and refute sects and heresies, so that congregations can be strengthened in their fight against false teachings.

In his foreword, Zhao identifies several characteristics that unite most sects operating in China: a) the claim that the world will soon come to an end; b) stress on the differences between believers and unbelievers; c) the rejection of the Three-Self principle and patriotism, as well as the government and the Communist Party; d) claims that Christ has returned to earth in this or that person; and e), the call for secrecy in meeting and setting up an organization.

The booklet contains a number of different articles, some of which have previously been published in the church magazine, Tian Feng. Contributions are organized in sections on apologetics, refuting certain heresies, introducing different Chinese sects, and methods of strengthening the church in its fight against heresies. The book also has a short section introducing foreign sects like the Unification Church which have been active in China.

Among the sects introduced in the booklets are the Yellers, the New Testament Church (also known as the Gospel Of Blood, Water And The Holy Spirit), the Established King sect, the Spirit Church, the Disciples' Church, the Cold Water Church, the New Birth Sect (also known as the Crying Assembly) and the Wilderness Church. [275 words]

To our readers: Due to staff transitions due later this year, ANS publication may become somewhat irregular during the summer and fall months of this year. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. To make up for possibly slimmer issues during that period, this issue has more pages than usual. The editors

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ANS Documentation: An Interview With Luo Guanzong

Mr. Luo Guanzong was elected chairperson of the TSPM in January. ANS editor Claudia Wahrsch-Oblau recently spoke with him at his Shanghai office.

ANS: Some people have said that the Three-Self Movement has fulfilled its role and is therefore no longer needed. As the new chairman of the TSPM, what kind of role do you see for the TSPM in the late 1990s?

Luo: To answer this question, it is necessary to look at the history of the Three-Self Movement. It was founded in 1951 with the aim to put the Three-Self principle into practice within the church. Until then, the church relied on foreign churches for everything: personnel, finances, education... So people used to say that we were a foreign religion. But patriotic Christians in China had felt for a long time that only an independent church could be a true church. As China was making its transformation from being a semi-feudalist, semi-colonial country to becoming independent and strong, church leaders wanted to make sure that the church had its place within the new China. In the old society, there was a saying: "One more Christian means one less Chinese." We had to change this!

Today we can see that the TSPM achieved a lot. People around us have realized that Christians are patriotic Chinese, that we love our motherland. Three-Self changed Christianity from being a "foreign religion" to one that has become genuinely Chinese. While people were often hostile towards Christianity in the past, there has been a real interest to study and understand it.

During the 1950s, building the church well was mainly a matter of becoming independent, becoming a Chinese church. After this has been achieved, we have to think even more about how to run the church well. So the concrete manifestations may be different, but the basic direction or spirit of Three-Self need to be maintained.

There are several important aspects to the Three-Self principle today. Firstly, we are very happy that today we have many friends abroad, and they encourage us. But there are still some people abroad - I know they aren't many - who oppose the new China, who oppose Three-Self, and who don't like the fact that we are an independent church. So how can we protect our independence in the light of such opposition from outside? This is why we still need to uphold the Three-Self principle.

Secondly, patriotism was an important topic in the 1950s. But today, we still want to encourage believers not only to help build the church, but also to participate in the building of our new China. Our lives have improved so much, our country has gained a much higher status - all of this makes us very happy. How can we not love our country, even if there are still shortcomings! Where there are shortcomings, things need to be improved, and we can criticize, make suggestions, help with improvements - but China is still our country that we are enthusiastic for.

Thirdly, unity has always been an important aspect of Three-Self. Before, we used to have many denominations. Putting Three-Self into practice means promoting church unity. And of course, we do stress that in matters of faith, there should be mutual respect. We all have the same faith, but our traditions are different. Today, we are a post-denominational church. You could say that we have come a long way already, but we still have problems within the church that are the results of a lack of unity.

When I talk about unity, I don't only mean unity within the church. We also need to unite with those who do not believe, or those who adhere to a different faith. There are still people today who look down on non-believers or on those who have a different religion. They curse them and dislike them. This is not good. Our country enjoys religious freedom, but within this freedom, there should be mutual respect.

Finally, now we often talk about "Three-Well" in addition to "Three-Self", because we want to stress that the church needs to be run well. It is important that our church is run by ourselves, under the guidance and with the help of the Holy Spirit. This way people can see that the church is good, and it can attract people.
ANS: If you look at the Chinese church today, what makes you glad?

Luo: Firstly, I feel that we have a clear sense of direction. The Three-Self principle clearly shows us where we ought to be going. We have already made much progress in our church, and I am grateful to God for this. We have learnt how to give witness as the church in a socialist society, how to proclaim the Lord in this situation.

Secondly, I am very happy that there is a new generation of church workers. Many young people have come out of our seminaries. Of course, there are many old people who have done a lot of work, but now there are many young ones who are already shouldering a lot of responsibility. This has become obvious in the last two or three years. The responsible workers within many local Christian Councils and TSPMs are now younger people, and I am very glad about this.

Thirdly, I am glad that our church is so united, and that many Christians are giving a very good witness in society. You can also say that the environment in which our church finds herself is quite a good one. Our constitution guarantees religious freedom, and the party and government documents dealing with religion show that the leaders of our country care a lot about us religious believers. The religious policy is good. Of course, there are also some problems, I am not denying that. But still, the overall situation makes me glad.

ANS: You have just mentioned that there are some problems with religious policy. What are they?

Luo: For example, there are some officials in some areas who don't understand much about religion. Some still insist on saying that religion is opium, even though the documents from the central government don't say this any more. Then there are others who feel that there is religious freedom as long as there is Buddhism or Daoism. They have not had Christianity in their area before, so they are not willing to allow it now. This is why you can find regulations against Christianity in some areas.

Some of these problems have their roots in the church. We simply have developed too fast. There are some so-called believers who haven't got a spiritual understanding of the Bible of the Gospel truths. Such people - they are mostly in the countryside - do things that others are quite disgusted with: They tell people not to see a doctor when they are sick, but rather to rely on prayer. They tell them that they are possessed by evil spirits, and they may even beat them to drive these spirits out! Others say they know the exact day when the kingdom of heaven will come, and so they create problems here on earth.

I heard about one such case because some Christians wrote to us for help. There was a village which had two Christian meeting points. In one, people started to believe that they would be going to heaven any day now, so they stopped working and sold all their possessions. Other Christians in this place felt that this all was very wrong, and they complained to local officials. Now these officials didn't really understand what was going on and said: "These are all conflicts within your religion, and we don't care about them." But then a group of believers, after having sold off everything they had, left to wait for Jesus' coming. These people were without the means for survival, because they had been told to not bring along any material possessions. Finally, they all came back and were completely destitute. That was when the government decided that they had had enough, and prohibited every kind of Christian activity. You can see that the situation is often very complicated, and problems sometimes crop up because of weaknesses and problems within the church.

There are other cases where people use the name of Christianity, but they are practising all kinds of feudal superstition. It is very important that we fight against sects and heresies, and that we strengthen our rural church work. Lay training classes are very important, so that lay workers and evangelists have a good understanding of the Christian truths and improve the quality of their faith. Of course, where government officials do things that are against the rules and regulations of our country's religious policy, we should point this out and bring it up with the authorities. This way, the problems we have been seeing in some areas can be solved.

ANS: On my recent visit to Shaanxi Province I came across some very poor churches. However, churches here in Shanghai or in Zhejiang Province are already quite well-off.
What can be done to help bridge the gap between rich and poor churches?

Luo: I think the poverty of churches is often linked to the poverty of a region in general. If people in an area become better off, then our churches can also solve their financial problems. Sometimes there are reports in Tian Feng about the difficult situation of a particular church, and then a lot of people donate money. But this only solves the problems of that one church. We should rather give some thought about how the churches could help believers in poor areas to improve their livelihood. There are already some areas in the southwest where Christians have done some very good work in this respect. We should encourage more such projects. We should also have mutual help, where richer churches give aid to poorer churches. But this is not something we can set up overnight.

When I went to visit churches in Henan some time ago, I was very moved to see how even very poor churches were able to put up buildings for themselves, just relying on the believers in the area. In one township I saw a new meeting point, big enough for 400 or 500 people. The brother in charge told me that the building had cost them only 6,000 yuan (US$ 810). Many people who didn't have money donated their work. People came to work on the building site every day, they even brought their own food! I was very glad to hear about this. In another part of Henan, I encountered an interesting way of mutual help. If one meeting point needs a new building, people from other meeting points in the area will come to help put it up. Then when it is another meeting point's turn, again people from all surrounding meeting points will help. Several meeting points have been built in such a way. I believe that the Lord will give his blessing on our church. We should rely on the Lord, but at the same time we should get busy ourselves. Then the Lord will help us to stand on our own legs.

97.5.6

ANS Focus: Church Music:

"Sing Praises To The Lord" : Inculturating The Gospel - Chinese Rural Church Music

(ANS) The old lady stands in front of the expectant congregation. She closes her eyes and starts to sing. Her low, rough voice fills the sanctuary and carries even beyond the open doors. "The Lord of Grace," she sings, "the Lord of Grace, Jesus Christ, suffered multitudes of hardship to atone for our sin, to rescue us from evil. He came down from heaven, he gave up all riches and honor he had received from his father, to whom be praise. He left all that behind and was born more than 1,900 years ago in Bethlehem in Judea. He slept in a manger. The Savior Lord who had all riches and honor became poor for you and me..."

The congregation in rural Shaanxi listens in rapt silence as Tao Buzhen sings a long Gospel song titled "The Life Of Jesus". Her singing style is that of a Shaanxi folk singer and story teller, with simple, repetitive melodies.

Tao Buzhen is one of the "bards" or "minstrels" who sing Christian folk music in the rural churches of northern central China. These singers, many of whom are women, generally use local popular folk-song tunes adapted to Gospel texts or lyrics. Sometimes they compose and improvise in their local ethnic style. The language of their songs is colloquial and easy to pick up and remember even by those who are illiterate.

Tao has a huge collection of Christian folk songs, all copied down by hand into a grubby exercise book. This is typical: Songs are passed orally and copied down by the singer, but never printed for wider distribution. Most of them remain unknown outside of a limited radius, but some travel hundreds of miles, often undergoing musical and textural changes along the way.

Chinese Christian Gospel songs are not only sung by specialist singers. In northern Shaanxi, rural Christians openly admit that they don't like the hymns in the CCC hymnal, and only sing Christian music set to local folk tunes. Rev.
Chen Zemin of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, a renowned researcher of church music, explains that such an attitude is typical for many rural Christians who often cannot read music, and who feel that traditional Western hymns and Gospel songs are too hard to understand. Chen adds that many Chinese find it difficult to sing the 4th and the 7th tone of the seven-tone scale correctly and therefore have trouble learning Western melodies.

Deng Zhaoming, a Hongkong researcher who has recorded many Chinese Gospel songs over the years, finds that there are distinct types of songs. Congregations sing short spirituals set to local folk melodies, or chant psalms and Bible verses using traditional storyteller chants. "Bards" often sing or chant longer songs which retell Biblical stories or preach an - often strongly ethical - message. Says Deng: "Many rural women would never dare to speak up in the church. But as singers, they have a message to preach."

A typical example of such a message is contained in a spiritual which originated in Heze, Shandong Province, but made its way to the mountains of Shaanxi: "I ask my brothers and sisters in the Spirit: Are you still walking on the road to heaven? Has your spiritual life been good these last years? Whether one is deluded by money or attracted by the devil: worldly customs just cause trouble. All of these wrongdoings only bring retribution: Did you pile them up or did you shed them? Again I ask my brothers and sisters in the Spirit: Do you pray? Do you sing hymns? Do you go to church?"

Unfortunately, this kind of inculcated Christian music is largely limited to rural congregations. Chen Zemin complains: "Some more 'enlightened' and 'established' congregations, especially in urban churches, who have developed a somewhat 'pro-western' mindset, find this type of local indigenous spirituals too 'rough' or 'vulgar' or 'not Christian enough.' Chen himself begs to differ: "I am of the opinion that these indigenous spirituals and the rural Christian "bards" represent an abundant wealth of musical resources worth tapping and collecting for further study, refinement and development." He adds a note of caution, though: "There is no question about the Chineseness of the music. But how about the message - the theological content and interpretation of the texts and lyrics? This needs more investigation!"

Chen, as one of the editors of *Huaxia Shengshi* (Chinese Sacred Music), a collection of new Chinese church music by Chinese all over the world, has included some spirituals in this collection. Four years ago, churches in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, published a collection of 304 short spirituals with Biblical texts, all composed by one singer, Ms. Tian Huiyan. And lay training classes in church music in the Wenzhou region include rural Gospel songs that have been collected from Christians in northern China. Other than that, there is very little effort within the country to research and collect rural Christian music and make it more widely known.

But the singers themselves may change that. A Gospel singer in northern Anhui, singing a variation of a Gospel originally from Shandong, makes this abundantly clear: "Take my hand, I take your hand. Together we will walk with Jesus. We don't care about our surroundings, we don't care about the way. Together we walk forward. We go from South to North, everywhere we preach the name of Christ. Good bye sisters, good bye brothers: I will go and preach the Gospel. ... Let us go East, let us go West, we won't get tired. In all of China we will preach the Gospel." [939 words]

### Melodies In The Mountains: Impressions Of Miao Church Music

(**ANS**) Mention "Yunnan Province" and most Chinese people conjure up a picture of red earth, rugged mountain peaks, valleys that look as if they have been cut out with a knife, wild rivers rushing down hillsides, and a place where it is spring all the year round. It is a place of outstanding natural beauty. However, climbing up the mountains into the clouds one discovers another kind of beauty - over 2,000 Christian churches, perched on the mountainsides and attended by 13 out of the 26 different minority groups within the province. In the April edition of the Chinese church magazine, *Tian Feng*, Du Peiliang describes his visit to a Miao minority church in Yunnan, their life of worship there and their extraordinary gift of music.
Du's group drove northwest for 100 kilometres from the provincial capitol, Kunming, to the two counties of Wuding and Lufeng. As their car wound its way up the mountainside, they saw walls made of earth and wood and the thatched roofs of Miao family homes. They also witnessed the remarkable sight of the Miao people dressed in their costumes of pure white homespun linen as they made their way to church.

Upon driving up to a white church building the sound of music greeted their ears. As they followed the sound, Miao brothers and sisters came into view along the road, with those on one side clapping the beat and those on the other singing a "Welcome Melody" composed by themselves - exquisite, lively and moving: "The Lord's good shepherds, we welcome you! Thank God for giving you a safe arrival here. The Lord's good shepherds, we welcome you! You have suffered much hardship to call on and pastor God's flock! You must be tired...."

On entering the simple church building measuring only 8 x 24 meters, Du's group found that the rows of seats were divided by an aisle down the middle, with men on the left and women on the right. Only when the congregation began their program of music, singing and worship did Du realize the reasoning behind this seating arrangement - the congregation was organized according to different voices and parts to facilitate beautiful harmonies during worship!

The believers of the church demonstrated an astonishingly high range of musical accomplishment during the various performances which Du and his companions enjoyed. This ranged from solos to choral harmonies, from self-composed folk-style melodies and songs in the Miao language to a rendition of the world-famous "Hallelujah Chorus". The performers made full use of every kind of musical technique and device imaginable, and soon the listeners began to forget they were sitting on a platform in a small village church in the mountains and felt themselves transported instead to a grand concert hall where a world-renowned singing troupe was performing.

Due to their extraordinary musical gifts, the Miao minority often composes its own tunes and words for use in worship and on other occasions, such as the "Welcome Song" mentioned above. Du and his group had the chance to enjoy several such compositions during their visit. One song contained the following message: "Reading the Scriptures and praying every day are the only ways to make progress in one's spiritual life; if you don't read the Scriptures and pray, your spiritual life will decline, shrink and die." A group of young Miao girls brought out the meaning of the words through mime as the song was sung. Later in the day, the worship leader managed to encourage a small group of children hanging around outside the church to perform another locally written piece: "Big sheep, small sheep, you feel cool and refreshed on the mountainside. Whether you eat grass or drink water, all is prepared for you by God. I am much more precious than a sheep; God watches over me even more - Praise the Lord, you good sons and daughters of God!"

The main choir in the church was made up of about seventy young people ranging from 11 to 23 years of age. However, the choir director often called upon the whole congregation to join in the singing and it soon became clear that everyone in the church was once a member of choirs past. This was confirmed by the choir director afterwards. In a word, music and singing are integral parts of the upbringing of young people there, providing generations after generation of gifted performers and whole congregations of talented singers, lending their gifts to the worship of the Lord.

Missionaries first came to the Miao minority areas in 1906 and built churches there. These missionaries not only preached the good news of the Gospel but also devised the first alphabetic system for the Miao language so that it could be written down. The first generation of believers not only had the opportunity to learn to read their own language for the first time but were also introduced to musical notation. Hence, the Miao people were able to learn many hymns from hymn books, and also learned a lot of musical techniques from their missionary teachers. At that time a saying became popular among Miao households: "Don't sing mountain songs, sing holy songs; don't spread (oral) family genealogies, spread holy music." Families learned many hymns and passed on their love for music from generation to generation.

After the Cultural Revolution and with the restoration of church activities, music in worship in Miao churches went through a high period of
revival and renewal. Every household sacrificed their chickens and sold their eggs in order to give money toward the purchase of an accordion and a simple electronic keyboard for the church. On hearing that a Miao mountain village church was going to begin services of music and worship again, believers came from far and wide with bedding and food for the journey in order to attend the services. Each service was better than the last, and usually the church couldn't hold all those who came to attend, so many sat outside. Dozens of choirs took turns at singing and the songs were recorded on a hand-held cassette player so that different groups could exchange music with each other and listen to the singing at home. Whilst visiting, Du found that the church even has a "Reception House", with beds for those who come from afar to learn from them or exchange experiences of music in worship. [1074 words]

NEWSBRIEFS

Ordinations: 24 church workers ordained pastors in Fuzhou city, Fujian Province. This brings the total of pastors ordained in the province in the last ten years to 194.

Church Buildings: After one year's construction work, Gospel Hall in Heyuan City, Guangdong Province was completed in June of last year. The church can hold 1,000 believers and also has a training building attached with the capacity to provide classroom and accommodation facilities to 40 students at a time. ** Xuying Township in Huojian County, Henan Province completed a new 540m² two-storey church with the capacity to hold 1,500 believers in March last year. After building was started it was discovered that funds would not be enough. Therefore, believers contributed money and materials and the church was completed at half the original estimated cost. ** In the past, believers in Simao County, Simao City in Yunnan Province had always used rented rooms for worship. During recent registration procedures, the local government encouraged the believers to find somewhere more permanent and they finally bought a room in a local factory. After two months of painting and renovation work the meeting point was ready for use in September last year.

97.5.8

CCC President Decrees Use Of "Inaccurate Information" In MFN Debate

(ANS) American lobbyists should not use inaccurate information and false rumors about the situation of religious freedom in China to influence the debate about extending most favored nation status (MFN) to China, says president of the China Christian Council, Dr. Wenzao Han.

Speaking to ANS in Nanjing, Han said that it was for the American government to decide whether to grant MFN to China, and for the Chinese government to apply for it. But Han said he felt strongly about the way inaccurate information about the situation of Christians in China had been used in recent weeks to influence public opinion in the United States.

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"Some American lobbyists claim that there is massive oppression of religious believers in China and that every Christian has to live in fear because of his or her faith," said Han. "This is simply not true." He added that recent and widely-spread rumors about a death sentence for a group of evangelists from Henan Province had been proven inaccurate.

Han said that while he did not want to comment on the issue of MFN, he felt that he had to speak out to put the record straight about the situation of Christians in China.

Han insisted that he did not intend to gloss over the problems that still plagued the implementation of religious freedom in China. But he pointed out that tens of thousands of Christian churches and meeting points have been registered with the government and thereby enjoy the protection of the law, allowing millions of Christians to worship freely and openly. "Last year, more Bibles were printed and distributed in China than in any other country in the world," said Han. He added that more than 18 million Bibles have been printed in China since 1980. [303 words]

Can A Good Christian Be A Good Patriot Too?

(ANS) "Glorify God and benefit the people", "Love your country and love the church". These catchphrases are frequently heard today within Chinese Christian churches. As the government tries to encourage patriotic and nationalistic feelings among the general population, such catchphrases point to the fact that the leadership and the CCC/TSPM see no contradiction between following Christ and being a patriot. However, some grassroots Christians harbor vague suspicions that being patriotic is actually not biblical or theologically sound. Others simply believe that being patriotic is being too "worldly", and hence to love your country is tantamount to no longer loving God. In order to clarify the issue, an article in the May edition of Tian Feng, the magazine of the Chinese church, describes how being patriotic is not only Biblical but also a Christian duty. It is written by Ji Jianhong, an elder of the Little Flock and a vice-chairman of the TSPM.

The article begins by stating that everyone on earth belongs to a particular nation, race and set of surroundings, and we cannot escape this fact since all these boundaries are set up and ordained by God (Psalm 74:17; Deut. 32:8; Acts 17:26). Jesus himself came down to earth as a Jew and a member of a specific tribe of Israel. Jesus had strong feelings for his country and his people, and was full of sorrow when contemplating the destruction and overrunning of the holy city in his homeland, Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37). Therefore, all Christians are called to love and protect the place on earth they have been given by God to live and work in, and that includes Chinese Christians.

Secondly, Ji questions how Chinese can call themselves patriotic if they don't uphold China's socialist system. The author argues that God demands justice and righteousness (Amos 5:21-24; Prov. 21:3), and that, of all human political systems, socialism is the one which seeks to fulfill this demand most closely in China at the moment. The article admits that socialism does have its weaknesses, and acknowledges that all human systems are imperfect. But it points out that socialism in China has come closest to embodying the principles of justice, equality and righteousness as demanded by God. This can be seen through its abolition of the class system and exploitation, its removal of oppression, its promotion of equality, its development of the economy and a democratic legal system, and its general striving for the well-being of all people. When a system's achievements correspond closely with God's call for justice and righteousness then Christians should seek to support and protect that system, the article argues.

The author goes on to say that loving one's own people is a responsibility of both patriot and
Christian. Li asks what reasons Christians could possibly have for not loving their own people, especially when Christ calls us all to love our neighbours as ourselves (Matt. 22:34-40). Thousands of people gave their lives so that modern China could come into being, and millions more dedicate their lives on a daily basis in order to help the country develop and become a better place for all. The article states that such people deserve the love of Chinese believers.

Finally, Ji argues from various Biblical sources (Rom. 13:1-5; Titus 3:1; Gal.2:10; Dan. 4:17) that Christians have a duty to respect and support those in authority and power, since rulers are only allowed to exercise power through God's own authority. Naturally, people should encourage their rulers to work for good and should actively resist those in authority who practice evil. The author also points out that a distinction needs to be drawn between the behaviour of individual cadres and leaders, which may sometimes be bad, and authorities and governments as collective bodies, which may not be bad. One should not be judged by the behaviour of the other. Furthermore, Christians have a duty to pray for their leaders.

The article concludes, therefore, by calling on all Chinese believers to see patriotism as their Christian duty and a way to bring benefits to their country and its people, thus presenting a good witness for the church within society and ultimately glory to God on high. [709 words]

Putian Church: Different Traditions, New Developments

(ANS) Putian County in Fujian Province has about 90,000 Christians. They make up more than 3% of the county's population. Of the Christians, about 20,000 adhere to the traditions of the True-Jesus-Church, while about 2,000 count themselves as members of the Little Flock.

The old church building in Putian County town gets used well. There are three Sunday services, each of which fills the 1,400-seat church, as well as services on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Every Monday night, an evangelistic meeting is held to which believers bring their non-believing relatives, friends and colleagues. In addition, there are Bible studies, prayer meetings, youth gatherings and a choir.

Christians in Putian practice three different ways of baptism: Sprinkling, immersion in a basin within the church, and immersion in a river. Unfortunately, the variety in baptisms is not conducive to church unity, but has instead led to widespread mutual condemnation among believers, says the county pastor, Rev. Zheng Jincan.

Rev. Zheng reports that many new converts have been won due to the exemplary lifestyle of many Christians as well as through faith healing experiences. The latter are experienced as liberation from superstitious bondage and financial exploitation by witches and sorcerers.

More than 100 Christian meeting points in Putian have not yet been registered because they do not meet all the conditions specified in the registration regulations. Nevertheless, they are allowed to continue their activities, and the county Christian Council is assisting them in meeting the necessary requirements.
Many Christians in Putian wish to see their children raised in the spirit of Christian values as a safeguard against rampant materialism and decadence. The church has responded to this need by establishing a Sunday School. This was started a year ago with about a dozen youngsters, and has since grown to more than 100 children aged between 6 and 12. [314 words]

Fuzhou Church Clinic Meets Urgent Needs

(ANS) The little medical clinic of Puqian Church in the inner city of Fuzhou was opened in 1990. Occupying just one large room in the back of the old church building, it is open every day. At any given time, two doctors and two nurses are on duty.

The clinic meets a real and urgent need, say church workers at Puqian Church. Government hospitals in the city are generally overcrowded, and doctors rarely have time to spend more than two or three minutes per patient. For such a consultation, patients have to stand in line for hours: First to register, then to have the bill for their medications calculated at the pharmacy counter, and then to pay. To just get some simple medications for a flu can sometimes take half a day.

Consultations at the Puqian Church clinic are unhurried, and doctors easily accessible. Not only is the registration fee much lower than in government hospitals, but poorer people who cannot afford the required 30% personal contribution to their medical bills will be treated for free.

Staff at the clinic consists of five doctors and six nurses altogether. All of them are Christians who work on a voluntary basis. While some of them are retired, others give up their two free days every week to see patients at the church clinic.

The clinic practices both Western and Chinese medicine, including moxibustion, acupuncture, and massage. Most patients are older urban residents, and many of them are Christians. [251 words]

Shouning Gets New Church Despite Many Obstacles

(ANS) Shouning County in northern Fujian Province, right on the border with Zhejiang Province, is a poor and mountainous area with a reputation for lawlessness. In recent years, Christianity has been growing in the area and there are now about 3,500 believers.

Before the Cultural Revolution, a congregation existed in Shouning County town. Its church, a small building of about 110 square meters, was taken in 1966 and converted into living quarters for two families. Despite numerous efforts by the Christians in Shouning, the building was not returned to the church. Instead, the congregation had to use a small, ramshackle building of only about 30 square meters, right next to a pigsty and a toilet, which filled the room with terrible smells.

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In 1996 the Christians in Shouning decided not to wait any longer for the return of their old building. Instead, they decided to buy a new property to use as a church. A suitable building was soon found, but it carried a price tag of 156,000 yuan, while the church only had savings of about 30,000 yuan. But believers did not let this discourage them: A funding drive was started and within a few months, almost 96,000 yuan had been raised. The proprietor of the building then agreed to sell it to the church and wait for the rest of the payment to be raised later. Now, the congregation in Shouning has a roomy three-storey building with kitchen and dining hall, offices, and a large sanctuary.

Christians in Shouning have now realized what they can achieve if they work together. For this year, they are planning to erect several small meeting points in outlying villages. And, as the county has no trained pastoral worker yet, efforts are underway to send one or two people to Fujian Theological Seminary. [306 words]

Yunnan Church Gets Help From Church Magazine Readers

(ANS) The poverty of Christians in the Dongchuan area of Yunnan Province was highlighted in the December 1996 issue of the church magazine, Tian Feng. The response by readers from all over China was overwhelming, reports Jia Liangdong in the May issue of the magazine, thanking donors for their concern and generosity.

Dongchuan, an industrial and mining area about 100 kilometers north of the provincial capital, Kunming, has more than 3,000 Christians worshipping in 2 churches and 15 meeting points. Most of the Christians and the 15 meeting points are in mountain villages that are often inaccessible by road. Many Christians are desperately poor, living in bamboo huts and wearing clothes made of sacks. In many families, there is not even enough coarse grain to eat.

But as Jia reports, publicity has really helped. Within just a few months, the Christians in Dongchuan received donations of more than 150,000 yuan as well as more than a thousand pieces of clothing. All donations were distributed to 14 village churches and benefited more than 6,000 people. The funds were used to rebuild one ramshackle primary school, to extend electricity to one village, and to start some small animal husbandry in another village. Some money was also spent to repair several village churches.

Jia states that even though the Christians in Dongchuan are poor, faith has strengthened them in their difficult circumstances. Now the community of believers in China has helped them to improve their situation, too. [251 words]
ANS Documentation: An Interview With Deng Fucun
Shanghai, 15 March 1997

As the new Secretary General of the TSPM, how would you describe its aim in the 1990s?

I think in the 1990s we really have to stress that Three-Self has to become Three-Well. That means: We need to run our church independently, and we need to run it well. We need to finance our church independently, and we need to finance it well. We need to propagate the Gospel independently, and we need to propagate it well. From Three-Self we must develop towards Three-Well.

But to look back for a moment: In the 1950s, Three-Self was proposed by a group of church leaders. At that time, there already were a few independent Chinese churches, like the zilhui, which had been founded by Chinese and were run by Chinese without any foreign help. But about 90% of the Chinese churches were established by foreign missionary societies. So in the lingo of that time, Christianity in China was a "foreign religion". And when the TSPM was founded at that time, one of its main aims was to change that perception. We wanted to become a church run by Chinese Christians. But this aim was definitely reached by the mid-1950s. Then, we had neither foreign missionaries nor missionary societies. So at that time the Chinese church was clearly an independent church, we were standing on our own legs.

But that doesn't mean that the church in China had already achieved Three-Self. Even though it was run and administered by Chinese, even though it was financed by the donations of Chinese believers, the church had not achieved what had been suggested since the 1920s: That the Chinese church should have a close, good relationship with Chinese culture. Many Chinese felt that the character of the Gospel message did not oppose Chinese traditional culture. In many aspects, Chinese culture could accept the Gospel.

I believe that this is still an important task under self-propagation today. For example, many rural Christians don't like to sing western traditional hymns. They rather like to sing Christian folk songs and chants. So if had more hymns in that style, people would feel much more at home when they worship. But with many of the foreign hymns that we use, people need to be taught and taught, and still they don't sing them well, and they don't feel that these hymns belong to them. These hymns aren't their own.

Yes, Three-Well is important. It doesn't help if we are independent, but administrate our church badly. This is not independence. Or take self-propagation: If we still proclaim some kind of westernized message, how can we say that we proclaim the Gospel well? And we want to finance our church well. Originally, we just talked about not accepting help from foreign churches. But we need to go further than that. If you go to a place like Wenzhou today, you can see that the churches there are anything but poor. But often they don't use their funds very well, in the way they should be used in the church. They build these huge, wasteful churches and they don't see that this is not what the church in China needs most at the moment. And if we go and tell them not to build in this way, they answer us: "But we have the money! God has blessed us with this, why shouldn't we build such a church?" I don't think that you can call this use of believers' donations a good use of church finances. This is why in the 1990s we really haven't finished with the goal of Three-Well. This is why we need to continue to do our work well.

What do you see as the most important task for today's Chinese church?

The number of believers has increased very, very fast, to a degree that we are almost unable to accommodate anyone more. Why am I saying this? There are so many places where there are large numbers of new believers. But if you look at pastoral work, who is there to satisfy believers' needs? Or, in some rural churches you see pastoral workers who will go up on the pulpit and not, as the Bible says, preach to those who have just begun to believe by keeping strictly to the true Gospel (2. Tim.2:15). Rather, they will speak about whatever is in their mind, whatever they have thought up themselves. The new Christians will believe all of this as the Gospel truth - and in this way, trouble will soon develop. If someone preaches falsehoods, false beliefs will follow. So it is one thing to talk about the number of believers, but another one to ask: What quality of believers are they? In these
circumstances, I think it is imperative that we in the church think of ways to build up, educate and lead these new believers that have been added to our number. We need to take care of them, we need to explain the way of truth to them strictly according to the true Gospel. This is the biggest task for the church in China today.

But to improve the quality of believers, you first need to think about how to improve the quality of pastoral workers. Most of those who are preaching the Gospel to these new believers are actually lay workers. This is why I personally believe that the most imperative, most pressing task the church in China needs to fulfill is the training of these lay workers. This is even more important than running seminaries.

Do you have a blueprint about how to organize more and better lay training classes?

Let's look at Zhejiang for a moment, because this is where I come from. We used to have a one-year provincial lay training course there. But not very many people were willing to participate in this course, rarely more than 20 per year. We felt that this number was too small.

Therefore, about a year ago we started doing five courses of 40 days each every year. Now you could say that 40 days is not exactly a long time. But it isn't short either. The point is that with many of these lay workers, you cannot really ask them to leave their jobs or their farms for a very long time. Some are farmers and have crops to see to, others are business people and cannot leave their businesses unattended for too long. Some are factory workers and cannot get such a long leave. But the courses should not be too short either, like our former county training courses of only ten days or two weeks. This is why we were looking for a time that wasn't too long or too short. We were considering 6 weeks, and then someone suggested 40 days, because this is a good biblical time. This is how we settled on 40 days. And from the five courses that we have already run we can see that this is a time length that everyone likes.

How do you know this?

For example, in these 40-day courses, nobody asks for leave from the course. Before, when we had 3 months, or 6 months, or one year, people were constantly asking for time off. But in the 40-day courses, nobody needs to ask for leave, so this is a good time frame. Furthermore: We had 60 trainees in the first course. In the second, we had to accommodate 62. The problem was, we only had 60 beds, so we had to find another two beds. So we asked the people who do the cooking for the course to go home at night, so that we could give their beds to the other two trainees. We thought we had solved that problem. But when the third course started, there were even more people! Now, in the fifth course, we already have 68. Therefore, we are asking all the course teachers not to live on campus with the trainees, but to go home to sleep, so that we can accommodate all the trainees. If the number of trainees is growing with each course, the time must be good for them. So we think that in our province, we will stick with 40-day training courses that each have at least 50 participants.

What is the curriculum for these courses?

We teach Bible knowledge, as well as evangelism and homiletics, and some law.

Why do you teach the trainees law?

You may have heard that Jiang Zemin, our president, has said three things about religious work. The first one is that religious work should be done conscientiously. The second is that religious matters should be administered according to the law. Now that our government stresses doing things according to the law, it is not good for the churches if the church workers don't even know these laws! How can we know ourselves whether we are doing things in a legal way if we don't know the law? We have sometimes done things against the law because we didn't know better. This way, the church can get in trouble. This is why we want the trainees to study a bit of law, especially those laws that pertain to the churches' activities. Only when you know the law, you can do things in a legal way.

In our training courses, we also ask officials from the RAB to come and explain religious laws, regulations and policies to our church workers. What is allowed according to the policy, and what would be illegal? We want our Christians to know this. When they go back after the course to run their local churches, they have a much clearer understanding. Some cadres do not comply with religious policy, and then our church workers can point that out to them. They can tell them: This is not right according to the regulations. This is one aspect. The other is that the church workers themselves know that what they are doing is legal and right. Or: If according
to some rules, you have to go through certain formal procedures, the trainees need to learn about them. All of this is extremely useful to the trainees when they return to their local churches.

What do you teach about the Bible?

One aspect is that we choose passages from the Old and New Testament that have something to say about the running of the church. For example, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai: We take these Biblical books and teach them in our classes. We look at how the Israelites went about rebuilding the temple. How did they do this? I have recently taught a class on Nehemiah, on how he rebuilt Jerusalem. In my class, I stressed his wisdom and cleverness. He didn't tell King Artaxerxes: "I want to rebuild Jerusalem." Nehemiah knew that the king would have known that this was the Jewish capital. Rebuilding the capital can easily imply that you want to get rid of your king. So Nehemiah didn't mention a name. He just said that the city where his forefathers were buried was in ruins, and that he was sad. This way, he could be quite sure that the king would not object to his rebuilding request. King Artaxerxes would understand that someone had the duty to rebuild the city where one's forefathers were buried. And indeed, the king didn't object. On the contrary, he said: "Very well, I will help you. What do you need?"

I believe that with this story God wants to tell us that we should do things as wisely and cleverly. When we as the church in China want to do things today, we need to find a common language with government officials and with those people around us. We should not be trying to stress or enlarge our differences. I believe that we can learn how to do things right from Nehemiah. You can learn from Nehemiah 2:18 that there were three deciding factors that made it possible to rebuild Jerusalem: The Israelites all got together, God's hand was with them, and the king allowed it.

Now that we are building the church in China today, I think there are these same three factors. We need God's gracious hand upon us. "The king's orders" - now we don't have a king in China today, but we have a government which has a policy, its laws and regulations. So we want to work within the protection and the limits of these laws. And finally, it needs everybody coming together, and then we can rebuild the church in China, and we can do it well.

In the New Testament, we mostly teach Paul's letter to the Romans. It contains all the basic truths about the Christian faith. This is a book that everyone needs to study very carefully. Afterwards, we teach the letters to the Corinthians, which helps the trainees to understand how to build the church. Our aim is to help them understand how the church should be run according to the Gospel. This way, we teach them the most important things in the shortest possible time.

I think to develop a proper curriculum for such training courses is very important. We don't need Ph.D.s to teach such classes, or even M.Th.s, as long as the teachers can explain these things clearly. As long as someone can teach clearly the things that we have put into our curriculum, it is already of great help for our trainees. I believe that it is very important to get the time frame and the curriculum right. If these two factors are right, the lay training class will be good and have good results.

But there are the provinces in the interior, where the CCs have little money and lack staff. What can the national CCC/TSPM do to help them?

Let me give you an example: Last year, the Rural Work Commission of the CCC sent a group of strong and experienced church workers to Yunnan Province to help run some lay training courses there. The Rural Work Commission has been organizing several such trips, you may have seen the reports in Tian Feng. Rev. Gao and other pastors from Wenzhou have gone to Shaanxi Province to help out there. Last year, they ran a lay training class in Hanzhong Prefecture. We have a lot of good church workers in Zhejiang, and they go north and south to help in poorer areas. This is one of the things the CCC/TSPM can do.

Recently, some Christians from the churches in Ru'an in the Wenzhou area talked to me. They had seen a report in Tian Feng about the churches in Yunnan, and they wanted to help. They wanted to strike up a partnership with one of the churches there. I think that this is something where the CCC/TSPM can help. Many church groups are willing to help poorer churches, and we could help them to identify groups and churches in need. If local churches ask us to help in this, we definitely should do so.

Recently, I was talking to some church people in Wenzhou. They thought I was kidding them...
when I told them that small meeting points in Shaanxi Province cost only a few hundred yuan to set up. I told them: "When you build your big churches and spend hundreds of thousands, you should tithe. You should give ten percent of this building's price for the building of a church in a poor area."

Whenever I go to Wenzhou, I talk to people about this problem. So by now, they have developed some feeling, they are thinking about giving those poor churches some money so that they can also have their own buildings. I believe that we should make even stronger efforts to encourage such an attitude.

Finally, I have a question of a more personal interest. In recent years, whenever I went to rural churches, I heard many stories of faith healing and driving out of evil spirits. People told me that 50% or sometimes even 90% of all new believers came to the church because of such faith healing. How do you see this phenomenon? Is it a problem, or is this God's special grace?

I see this in such a way: When Jesus lived on earth, he healed the sick and drove out evil spirits. Therefore, Jesus definitely has the ability to heal the sick and drive out evil spirits. He also had the ability to bring Lazarus back from the grave. At that time, when there were very few doctors, Jesus made use of this his ability. But Jesus said that the sick need a doctor, and so he says us clearly that when we are sick, we should go and see a doctor. If there is no doctor, I believe that God's almighty power can be manifest in healing such an illness. There is no doctor, and so people have no other way than to pray. And I believe that in such circumstances, God hears the prayer of those calling out to him. And so in some parts of China, where there is little access to a doctor - when healing happens there, I think it is a completely normal phenomenon.

But if in some better-off area, where there are doctors, people are told that they should not see a doctor, but rather just rely on the Lord to get well - if these people think that's just fine, I will pray and rely on the Lord only and even save some money! - this is a temptation. What kind of temptation? Like the temptation Satan gave Jesus in the desert, when he tempted Jesus three times. It means tempting people to take advantage of their status as sons and daughters of God, and I don't believe that Jesus wants us to do this.

Satan knew that Jesus had the power to rule over all the world, and to feed everyone. But Jesus didn't do what the Satan tempted him to do, like turning stones into bread. Jesus told him very clearly that people don't live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Therefore my view is that if you have the chance to see a doctor, if you can pay for him, and then you don't go but rather just pray for healing, then this is falling for temptation. This is my view.

But when you visit someone who is sick, you still pray with them and for them?

Of course, I believe we Christians have to receive God's almighty power in such a way: We should resemble the woman who had already seen many doctors and used up all her money, and then, when she had no other chance, she went out and touched Jesus' coat and was healed. I often say: God's beginning needs to be people's end. (God can begin only where people have come to a dead end.) If we people never stand on our own legs, if we never use whatever means and chances God has given us, but ignore them and rather always cry to God "give me, give me!", I don't believe that this is true faith. It is temptation.
NEWBRIEFS

The annual 3-month lay training class at the Longchuan Lay Training Center in western Yunnan Province took place for the eighth time this year. The class of 1997 was the biggest ever, with 145 students, 104 of them from the Lisu nationality, 33 Jingpo, and 8 Han Chinese. Trainees came from all over western and northwestern Yunnan, including Dehong, Diqing, Lijiang, Nujiang and Baoshan Prefectures.

The center raises funds to operate lay training classes by farming 15 mu (2.5 acres) of land. Students in the lay training class only pay a 250 yuan fee, but have to help work the fields.

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Two churches were reopened in Guidong County, Hunan Province, in 1986. In Shatian Township, the number of Christians had grown to over 300 in 1990. They all met in a private home, but many believers had to travel for more than 20 kilometers to participate in worship. In 1992, a central church was built in Shatian Township, with several small attached meeting points in outlying villages. The number of Christians in the whole county has now reached almost 1,000 who worship in three churches and numerous smaller meeting points. According to the local government, crime rates in villages with a high percentage of Christians have dropped dramatically.

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The Fuzhou Christian Council has established an organization to coordinate church-run social projects. The "Love and Faith Service Center" sponsors a kindergarten, an old people's home, a cemetery, a number of church-run clinics, a mobile medical team and a cooperative orchard run by Christians in the village of Xiyuan, Luoyuan County.

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Fujian Theological Seminary in Fuzhou was the first provincial seminary to be restored after the Cultural Revolution. It reopened in 1982. Today, it has 10 full-time teachers, and 80 students in two-year courses. Since 1984, 447 students have graduated from the seminary. Fujian Province has now altogether more than 600 theological graduates serving in churches. Forty of them graduated from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, and 70 from Huadong Seminary in Shanghai. Of the graduates, 263 have already been ordained, among them 46 women. With such figures, Fujian spearheads the movement to ordain younger church workers.

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Ordinations: Six pastors and a number of teachers in Wuhan, Hubei *** A male pastor from the Lisu nationality, a female pastor, 13 assistant pastors and elders, as well as 27 evangelists and deacons in Lincang Prefecture, Yunnan *** One pastor from the Yi nationality in Wuding County, Yunnan.