Deng Fucun On Building Theology

(ANS) Rev. Deng Fucun, head of Zhejiang Provincial Christian Council, reflects on the meaning of building theology in January's edition of Tian Feng. His commentary is placed in one of Tian Feng's most prominent positions, the "Pastor's Commentary," preceding the magazine's contents.

"Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God - what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect." (Romans 12:2) From this passage we learn the following, Deng Fucun starts his commentary: God's orders do not change - it is we who have to change. We must explore God's will and change our own intentions accordingly.

The ongoing debate about building theology has caused uneasiness among some Chinese pastors, Deng continues. They fear a watering down of our basic faith. To deal correctly with this fear, we must understand the following: What constitutes our basic faith? And what does theological reflection mean?

Deng then reminds us that our basic faith is clearly condensed in the "Apostle's Creed" and the "Nicene Creed." Over the centuries, new theological ideas have been measured by their compliance with the doctrine formulated in these creeds. What changed were heresies, not Christian faith, Deng underlines.

As times change, different faith and moral issues emerge, forcing the church to react adequately. Reflecting on such issues in the light of our basic faith constitutes theological thinking, Deng explains. Theological reflection relates to our faith, but is not identical with it. In different eras, certain Biblical truths can be underlined or rather neglected.

As we engage in building theology, the basic criterion is the adaptation of religion to society. Building theology must make a theological contribution to the problem of how to combine love for the church and the country, Deng explains.
He then underlines another important task for Chinese theologians: After having torn down the "hat" of being a "foreign religion," Chinese Protestantism must be careful not to put on a new "hat": the "hat" of sectarianism. Deng sees the successful elimination of the threat of sectarianism as part of running the church well.

Building theology must be a process that allows for pluralism, Deng continues to explain his view of building theology. The church needs to uphold church unity, avoid foreign interference and listen to different opinions in mutual respect, the author concludes.

Sects and Heresies - A Global Problem

(ANS) Girls murdered in Kenya, live human sacrifices in Bolivia, mass suicides in Korea, Switzerland and Uganda, terrorist attacks on the underground in Japan and 86 dead after the siege in Waco, USA. As Jin Yan writes in January's edition of Tian Feng, the magazine of the China Christian Council, all of these horrific events have one aspect in common: they were all perpetrated by cults and sects. The fact that numerous countries has seen an increase in such incidents in recent years makes this a global problem that requires a global response, Jin believes. In November last year, over 50 delegates from around the world converged on Beijing to discuss the problem of cults and sects at a symposium sponsored by the China Committee for the Advancement of International Friendship in cooperation with the Beijing's People's University.

Professor Xu Rulei from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary represented the Chinese Protestant Christian church at the symposium. Xu pointed out that China has endured its own fair share of suffering due to the influence of sects such as the "Yellers", the "Established King" sect, "Eastern Lightening" and, more recently, Falungong. Xu estimated that the number of people who had died as a direct result of their involvement with Falungong has now surpassed the 1,500 mark, with over 600 others known to have gone insane as a result of their connections with the cult.

Professor Xu isolates certain characteristics common to the behavior of all sects. First of all, he says, most disciples of a sect have the desire to follow some kind of "ringleader" in whom they vest absolute power. This leader also claims for him- or herself absolute authority in all matters. Secondly, members of sects are often required to carry out a whole host of illegal activities on behalf of and to benefit the leader of the cult. Finally, Xu notes, sects and cults use any and every possible means to control and restrict their followers, seeking to destroy their individual will and identity and keep them in some form of bondage or slavery.

At the symposium, international delegates reported how they had begun to implement certain measures to combat the influence of sects in their respective countries. Measures include setting up "anti-cult" bodies to monitor the activities of sects, passing laws to better identify and protect the victims of sects, and carrying out widespread propaganda to alert people to the dangers of cults. In its own ongoing battle against the influence of cults and sects, China established its own "Committee for the Combating of Sects" soon after the symposium last November,
reports Jin. The committee will be a public body made up of representatives from religious, academic and scientific circles and, as Jin notes, the committee is welcomed by Chinese Christians.

"The church has its role to play in fighting sects," Professor Xu noted at the symposium. As an example, he talked of how many sects make use of the notion of the "End Times" to scare believers and cause them to take refuge in a sect in order to escape coming wrath. Xu notes how the church can play a role in rescuing people from such fear by offering sound teaching on such matters, assuring them that God's love and justice will prevail and that the end will usher in a time of perfection and fulfillment, not annihilation. Xu believes that the church must study and then counter the teachings of sects, using truth to rescue people from deception.

Gruesome Gothic - He Qi On Chinese Church Architecture

(ANS) The reopening of churches, followed by a rapid increase of Christian believers, has led to a massive wave of church construction all over China. Most of the newly-built churches are designed in neo-gothic style, He Qi notes. In January's edition of Tian Feng, the magazine of the China Christian Council, the professor for Christian Art at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary comments on this development.

Western neo-gothic or imitations of it have become the predominant styles for contemporary Chinese church design, He Qi starts his article. But is this style adequate for modern-day China? Any type of architecture reflects the mood of its time, its philosophical, cultural and economical trends, the author reminds us. As the "house of God," churches have always played a special role in architecture. Christians of all ages spent money and efforts on them, seeking to build their unique theology in stone.

Western neo-gothic is a product of the "back to the Middle Ages" movement that started in late 18th century Europe. It represents the relatively affluent Western churches of the time and their adaptation of the Middle Ages. It is a historical style that does not represent contemporary China, He Qi argues.

When Protestant Christianity arrived in China in the 19th century, missionaries brought with them the neo-gothic style favored by their contemporaries. Accordingly, some of the oldest Protestant churches in China were built in this fashion. For He Qi, they clearly are a symbol of Western imperialism and its spiritual and material influence on people. With a design so alien to Chinese eyes, China's neo-gothic churches helped to engrain the image of Christianity as a foreign religion in people's minds.

Today, nobody builds neo-gothic churches any longer - except the Chinese, He Qi notes. He recounts his visits to contemporary churches all over Asia. In post-colonial Asia, there is not a single modern church shaped after neo-gothic models, He underlines. Only in China has neo-gothic again become the fad of the time. In He's eyes, the ones to blame are not architects, but pastors and church workers with certain preconceptions about what a church should look like.
Recently, He Qi witnessed the surprised reaction of a representative from the Asian Christian Artists Association: "Why does a church upholding the principles of the Three Self build such westernized churches?" the delegate asked when confronted with one of Nanjing's newer churches. "It is Western from outside, but Chinese from inside" his fellow guest politely remarked. But, He Qi points out, for any work of art - including church buildings - outside appearance and inner values should go together. In building a church, theological reflections, characteristics of the time and local conditions should be blended together. Neo-Gothic churches, however, only reinforce the idea of Christianity as a Western religion without contributing any new theological thoughts.

He Qi closes his article with an appeal for indigenized church buildings. Indigenized church architecture would not only free people from their Western image of Christianity, but could also help shape a genuinely Chinese Christianity, He is convinced.

2001.1/2.4

Chinese Christian Art Travels To Austria

(ANS) The Chinese Christian art scene is slowly, but steadily developing. After the third national Christian art exhibition in 1999 (see ANS 99.11/12.6), selected works were shown in Austria in autumn of last year. The Austrian exhibition, which included works by both Catholic and Protestant artists, was the first occasion for Chinese Christian art to be shown collectively outside of China. Until then, only exhibitions produced by individual accomplished artists had traveled abroad. A writer going under the pen name of "Art Lover" sums up the successful event in January's edition of Tian Feng.

From September 17 to October 30 of last year, visitors to the classic "Harrach" palace of Vienna could delve into "Contemporary Chinese Christian Art." The exhibition, jointly organized by the prestigious museum of Fine Arts, the Austrian Chinese Friendship Society and the Amity Arts Center from Nanjing featured very diverse art work. Among the pieces shown were oil paintings, calligraphy, paper cuts, traditional watercolors, wood carvings and deco-paintings. Fan Pu, renowned for her paper cuts and director of the Amity Christian Art Center, personally attended the exhibition in representation of the Chinese artists. She was accompanied by Wang Zhiming, specializing in traditional Chinese painting, and Ding Fang, a western-influenced oil-painter. To give an impression of traditional Chinese artists at work, Fan Pu and Ding Fang regularly demonstrated their artistic craftsmanship to visitors.

Apart from allowing many visitors a first glance at Chinese Christian art, the exhibition also proved to be an excellent occasion to make Chinese Protestant Christianity better known to the Western public. The question most frequently asked was "Can Christianity be public in China?" Invited by Viennese churches to introduce Chinese Christianity and its art, Fan Pu shared some of her insights and experiences with the local public. Finally, a conference dealing with the image of man in Asian and European cultures provided additional background information.
The ground breaking exhibition, the first of its kind in Europe, aroused the interest of other organizations. The Dutch Chinese Friendship Society has already expressed an interest in organizing a similar exhibition. For the Austrian Friendship Society, the exhibition was extremely fruitful. The society hopes to take a mixed Catholic-Protestant church group to China in early 2001 and is already working on the next event: A Chinese Christian folk art exhibition to be held in Salzburg is planned for next autumn.

2001.1/2.5

Jobless, But Not Hopeless: How Christians Should Deal With Unemployment

(ANS) With the closing and restructuring of state-run enterprises, millions of Chinese face various forms of unemployment. Staff as young as forty-five are forced into "early retirement", while others are "laid off" or "waiting for employment." How should jobless Christians deal with this issue? Tian Feng writer Yu Li asks. The magazine of the China Christian Council discusses the problem in its December 2000 edition.

Early retirement, the changing and losing of jobs have become increasingly common in China, Yu Li starts her article. She then continues to highlight the multiple tensions unemployment brings for those affected: To see oneself out of job does not only entail economic hardship, but also brings about numerous psychological strains, most notably a feeling of unworthiness. Even in China, where unemployment is largely due to systemic factors, personal abilities play a role in the decision of who will be laid off, leaving the jobless in a state of frustration.

Ways to cope with unemployment tend to be very different from person to person, Yu Li continues. While some people manage to throw themselves fully into a new job or embark on a hobby, others have to make do with part time work. Unfortunately, there are also those who lack physical strength or see the performance of menial tasks to be degrading. Blocked by their mental attitude, they end up staying at home, feeling useless. Some are so depressed they even fall ill, Li recounts.

Christians, however, should cope with unemployment in a more positive way, the author maintains. As "travelers on earth," the environment we have to live in as well as matters of our career are decided by God, Li reminds her readers. Christians must not worry about their physical security (Mt 6:25). Difficulties we encounter are intended by God to be a lesson in faith, Li Yu says, adding that Christians must not despair and feel hopeless. Instead, they should develop new skills based on their special abilities. Mentioning the professions of some of the apostles, Li also points out that manual labor and simple tasks are nothing unworthy. Of course, any new career or job chosen by Christians should be legal and in line with Christian tradition. Li mentions the profession of a craftsman of idols as inappropriate for a Christian.

Working eagerly and with joy, Christians help themselves and others, Li concludes. Finally, she reminds readers that prayer for the flourishing of the economy is another means for Christians to cope with China's economic reforms in a positive way.
A Portrait Of Jiangsu Vocational Bible School

(ANS) Due to the severe lack of clergy in the Chinese Protestant church, lay workers play a central role in upholding day-to-day parish life. The training these lay workers receive varies considerably according to local conditions, the training available and, of course, students' personal abilities. The following portrait, taken from January's edition of Tian Feng, pictures a high-quality Bible school aimed at training professional church workers.

Jiangsu Vocational Bible School was set up by the provincial CC/TSPM committee and is, technically speaking, part of it. Situated in the eastern part of Nanjing, the school occupies more than 14 mu [0.9 hectare] of land, with buildings offering four thousand square meters of living space. With its dorm and canteen, the school can house 160 to 200 resident students. A library is under construction.

The school has 24 members on its teaching staff. A wide array of subjects is offered which fall into five big categories: Biblical courses, systematic theology, practical theology, cultural subjects and political courses. Students can choose between one year theological training or two-year and three-year courses leading to vocational degrees. The three-year program requires the students to take fifty courses altogether. Right now, there are 78 students enrolled. The school hopes to form them into well-rounded personalities who will "love the country and the church, support the principles of the Three Self and devote themselves fully to church work."

The Backbone Of Rural Church Life: Church Workers in Huaiyuan, Anhui

(ANS) Numerically speaking, there is one pastor for every 10,000 Protestant believers in China. This dire situation is aggravated by the fact that clergy tend to be concentrated in the cities and many of them are way beyond retirement age. This situation leaves day-to-day-running of many rural congregations in the hands of trained lay workers. In January's edition of Tian Feng, Tang Yongquan reports on his impressions of rural church workers in Anhui province.

Tang bases his article on his experience from April 2000, when he assisted the church in Huaiyuan county, Anhui province in training church workers.

With more than 30,000 baptized Christians in a population of about 1.25 million, Huaiyuan county has a percentage of 2.5% Protestant Christians. This number is well above the national average of 1% Christians. Currently, Huaiyuan has 107 functioning churches and meeting points, with 30 more waiting for registration. Church life in Huaiyuan is obviously flourishing.

Yet when it comes to clergy, the situation looks different. Of the two pastors in Huaiyuan county, one is eighty years old. They are assisted by a single elder. Given this situation, it is the devoted work of dozens of trained lay workers that keeps
congregations in Huaiyuan alive and going. And, while other parts of Anhui were badly hit by sects like the "Established King," churches in Huaiyuan managed to stay virtually trouble-free. How was this possible?

Church representatives in Huaiyuan recognized the need for trained lay workers very soon after the reopening of churches. As early as in 1982, the church started offering training courses for lay workers. Programs were then gradually expanded. Today, the most comprehensive training available in Huaiyuan consists of a ten-month training course spread over two years. Making use of the low agricultural season, students devote five months of the year to full-time study. These efforts have paid off: Today, every church and meeting point in the county has two to three well trained church workers.

What are the requirements for students wishing to participate in the two-year training program? Apart from passing an entrance exam, students must also be recommended by their local church. Once they are in school, students are subject to a fairly regulated school life. For many of them, it is not only the time involved that poses a problem. Raising the money for tuition can also be difficult. Students pay 60 Yuan RMB [US$ 7.5 approx.] a month for their living expenses. Besides, they contribute 40 pounds of grain or flour a month for their nutrition.

Despite all technical difficulties, the training is rewarding for the students in more than merely an academic sense. As Tang Yongquan reports, the lay worker training program contributes greatly to students' personal growth. They tend to become more aware of their function as role models, causing them to reflect upon their own behavior. Tang remembers the case of a woman who decided not to file for divorce as she had intended before she entered the program. Students also realize the difficulties of preaching and the importance of cultivating good relations with non-Christians around them. In Huaiyuan, they participated in social activities like road construction and visits to old people's homes.

The author recognizes that good relations with society at large also depend on the local Religious Affairs Bureau and United Front Department. Fortunately for the Christians in Huaiyuan, local cadres in charge are very supportive of normal religious activities.

Tang summarizes his reflections as follows: The stability of church life at the grassroots depends almost entirely on the work of trained lay workers. In order to enable them to fulfill this task properly, they must be trained up to certain standards. If church workers are well trained and give good example through their personal lives, they can not only maintain church life, but even become the source of future church growth.

2001.1/2.8

**Sounds Instead Of Silence - How to Improve Church Sound Management**

(ANS) You have to read the sermon from the preacher's lips? A wonderful vocal solo is lost amid sounds of a shrieking microphone? For those all too familiar with these problems, Wang Enyuan offers advice in January's edition of *Tian Feng*, the magazine of the China Christian Council.
While smaller newly-built churches in China usually occupy 200 to 300 square meters, the largest ones cover up to 1,500 square meters. Huge buildings like these certainly require efficient sound systems to enable believers enjoy worship services without acoustic problems, Wang Enyuan introduces the topic.

In fact, most Chinese churches already use microphone systems. However, the results are often not ideal, either because the equipment is faulty or because it is not used properly. Proper use of a sound system starts with assigning this task to a certain person, Wang continues. After receiving some basic training, the person in charge should develop a routine for worship services. Wang gives some hints on how to prepare for a service and clear up afterwards, like testing the system before each service and making adjustments where necessary.

Wang then goes into some technical detail to offer advice on some of the most common problems: how to maximize the volume of a not-too-powerful system, how to avoid the echo effect, etc. As Wang points out, many problems can be reduced or eliminated by very simple means. Just by shortening the distance between the speaker and the microphone, a tremendous improvement of acoustic quality can be achieved.

Wang also acknowledges the limitations of practical help in a short magazine article. He closes his article inviting readers with special problems to approach him directly in order to exchange technical know-how.

2001.1/2.9

A Visit To Guizhou Provincial Bible School In Panxian County, Guizhou

Guizhou, China’s poorest province with a population of 36 million, is situated in the southwest of the country. Many of the province’s 200,000 Protestants are ethnic minorities who live in extremely poor, mountainous regions. Their acceptance of Christianity is due to the efforts of missionaries who ventured into these remote areas decades ago. Katrin Fiedler reports from a visit to the provincial Bible school in Panxian.

"In Guizhou," goes a saying, "there are never three clear days in a row, nobody has got three pennies in his pocket, and there are no three feet of level ground." While the latter two are unfortunately true, we are unusually lucky with the weather. As my colleague Jiang Conglin and I make our way through Panxian’s dirty little alleys up a hill, the sun is shining from a bright wintry sky. "Welcome, welcome" the congregation greets us.

We have arrived in a big room on top of a five-floor building. Since the local parish does not have a proper church building, services are celebrated in the Bible school. Ordinary meetings during the week will attract around twenty to thirty worshippers. Today, on the last Sunday before Bible school students depart for their Spring Festival vacation, around seventy Christians have gathered. Taking a closer look at them, I discover that this is indeed a most colorful congregation. The majority of the students belong to Chinese minority nationalities and wear indigenous clothing on this festive occasion. As I learn later, the bulk of students are Miao people, one of China’s more numerous minorities which can be divided into subgroups like the "Big Flowery Miao," the "Small Flowery Miao" and so on.
Miao people are well-known for their singing proficiency, and their rendering of indigenous Chinese hymns and Handel's "Hallelujah chorus" during the service give ample evidence of this. Accompanied by a single accordion, their voices have the range and volume of trained singers. But it is not only their wonderful singing that makes this congregation special: Unlike most of the churches dominated by Han Chinese, here the ratio of men and women is balanced. This is a direct result of the congregation's ethnic setup: "Members of ethnic minorities like the Miao convert collectively. If the head of the family becomes a Christian, the rest of the family follows," Tang Mingdao, son of the local pastor, explains.

The Protestant church in Panxian dates back to missionary times when the China Inland Mission was active in the area. The Bible school today is probably the biggest church enterprise ever situated in this town. And still, in comparison with other rural areas, Protestantism is developing rather slowly in Panxian: "It is difficult to evangelize successfully", Tang Mingdao reports. "Local people prefer their traditional beliefs and superstitious practices." Today, there are less Christians in Panxian than before the Cultural Revolution.

Subjects taught at the Bible School are similar to those of other Bible schools throughout the country: Catechism, ecclesiology, church history, the life of Jesus and Biblical books, with special emphasis on John, Acts, Romans and Corinthians.

Panxian Bible school can accommodate only 24 of its 70-plus students. For security reasons, women are lodged in the school, while their male classmates have to rent rooms outside. Unfortunately, this not only places a financial burden on male Bible school students, but also limits the number of female students that can be accepted. They live in crowded quarters: two big rooms, each filled with four triple bunk beds and the personal belongings of twelve women who make this room home for two years.

To enter Panxian Bible School training, students need a recommendation from their local church and must have at least junior middle school education. For applicants from especially poor, remote areas, sometimes exceptions are made and primary school graduates can be accepted. To date, Panxian Bible School has seven teachers on its staff, five of whom are graduates from Sichuan Seminary; two others received degrees from China Southern Theological Seminary.

How much do students pay for two years of full-time tuition? Our hosts remain vague regarding tuition fees. As they explain, students' contributions are fixed according to their financial situation. "Some pay nothing at all. Sometimes, students will bring food if they can't raise any money" teacher Zhou Shizhong explains. "Some fellow Chinese Christians read in Tian Feng about our school. They were so moved that they decided to support us with donations," Zhou's female colleague Wang Yiru chimes in. Obviously, Panxian Bible School exists to a large extent on donations. Until now, 164 students have graduated and returned to their home churches.

In the afternoon, a talk with some of the students reveals what their home villages look like. My question about the villages they will return to prompts a litany of appeals for help. For sure, these students do not convey an attitude of begging - their matter-of-fact descriptions just show how much remains to be done in their home places. "Our church is on the point of collapsing. It is very dangerous," one student reported. "In my village, eighty percent of the children do not go to school," a man from Shuicheng county mentioned. Another explained: "Our school building is so decrepit that children do not come on rainy days." For those without proper clothes and heating, even an ordinary cold can certainly turn into a nasty illness.

The students close our visit with more singing and dancing. Their performance of singing in different mother tongues, jumping and swinging legs leaves our hosts in disheveled, laughing excitement. "I think some pop stars modeled their performances after the Miao," my colleague mutters.
The Church in Dafang County, Guizhou: Past And Present

Horse carts and humans hidden under large bundles of wood: Dafang county in Guizhou province is a poverty-stricken area. Even the county "capital" Dafang has very little motorized traffic. Life seems hardly touched by developments from the outside world. Yet, as ANS editor Katrin Fiedler learned during a recent visit to Dafang, encounters with foreign missionaries have had a significant impact on life in town. Decades later, their deeds and devotion are still well remembered.

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Dafang's first encounter with Protestantism goes back to 1887, when foreign missionaries reached the town. In 1910, another batch of missionaries arrived, a group of Germans. With them, they brought a Christian from Hunan who served as their interpreter. Together, they managed to establish not only a congregation, but various social services. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Christian community was very active in social work. In its heyday, Dafang church ran a school, a home for the elderly, a clinic and an orphanage. But the German missionaries died in the 1930s and the civil war brought all remaining Christian activity to an end. Was this the end of the story? One missionary eventually came back: the Hunanese translator.

The only survivor of the original batch of missionaries, he had lived through the Chinese liberation and made his way to Hong Kong. Soon after church life was resumed in China, he came back to Dafang for a visit. He died where he had lived: in 1997, during a second visit to the town where he had worked as a young man, he passed away, aged 103. "He died so peacefully... Even in his death, he still served as an example of faith for our brothers and sisters... For his funeral procession, there was a long queue, winding up the whole mountain," Chen Xueyan, the local evangelist, reports.

Now, he is buried on a mountain overlooking Dafang, together with his four German co-workers. And if they could see how church life here has developed after the Cultural Revolution, they certainly would feel pleased. Churches in Dafang were reopened in 1982. Today, Dafang county has about 7,000 Christians, most of whom gather in meeting points scattered around the county. Apart from one elderly pastor, Chen Xueyan is the only seminary-trained evangelist. This means a lot of traveling for her, and she can visit each meeting point only once or twice a year. Within the city itself, there are four meeting points and one church building which was returned to the local congregation in 1986.

One very unusual thing about the church in Dafang is its detailed statistics posted openly in the town church building. Statistics from 1992 reveal that most of Dafang's Protestants are Han Chinese, with the Yi constituting the biggest national minority represented. The general level of education among Dafang's Christians is very low with illiterate persons comprising the largest group. "Even some of the choir members cannot read and write", evangelist Chen reports.

For Chinese standards, church members in Dafang county are rather young - between 30 and 60 -, followed by the 18-30-year-olds. "Sixty is rather old for this area," Chen Xueyan explains. Again, we are reminded of the harsh living conditions in this rugged mountainous area. The annual per capita income in Dafang is less than 800 Yuan RMB, which means many have to make do with as little as 300 Yuan RMB per year. [US$ 37.5 approx.]

Dafang Christians have recognized the widespread need for help and engage again in social work. Apart from running a small clinic, they support students from impoverished families. Chen Xueyan is full of energy and plans, and the Religious Affairs Bureau and United Front Department are very eager to support her commitment to the poor.
"Why are government officials so supportive of Christian social work?" we ask. Chen replies, "They know of all the social work the church did in missionary times. This has left a very good image of the church."

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NEWSBRIEFS

International Exchange: From October 21 to November 1, 2000, a Chinese church delegation visited Sweden and Denmark. In addition to Dr. Wenzao Han, President of the China Christian Council, delegation members included: Rev. Bao Jiayuan, a vice president of the CCC; Li Enlin from The Amity Foundation; Kan Baoping, Vice President of Yanjing Theological Seminary; the head of Shandong Provincial Christian Council Gao Feng; and Rev. Zhou Rongmin from Shanghai's West Church. Delegates enjoyed numerous occasions for exchanging experiences and mutual sharing in Uppsala, Stockholm and Copenhagen.

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Publications/Media: Chinese Christians who wish to combine faith and fun can now do so with a newly released Karaoke-VCD. The disc, produced by the commission for church music of the China Christian Council, features Christmas hits sung by a church choir. "Joyously Celebrating Christmas" are available from churches and Bible distribution outlets all over China for ten Yuan RMB [US$ 1.25 approx.].

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Women: A committee of female church workers from Hebei province met on October 12, 2000 to "exchange and share experiences regarding women church workers and theological reflection." The meeting also decided to set up a network for female church workers in Hebei.

The church in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province has set up a women's committee. Xishuangbanna Autonomous Prefecture is predominantly inhabited by members of the Dai minority (known as "Thai" in other parts of Asia). The women's committee was set up on the occasion of a lay training program for women church workers. The program, lasting from September 7 to 15, 2000, was attended by 32 church workers, with another 120 ordinary believers as listening guests.
Places Mentioned In This Issue Of ANS

1) Nanjing (Jiangsu)
2) Huaiyuan (Anhui)
3) Panxian (Guizhou)
4) Dafang (Guizhou)
5) Xishuangbanna (Yunnan)