Dear Reader,

Recent events such as September 11th and the conflict in the Middle East remind us of how violence and terrorism can often be carried out in the name of religion. Somehow, believers of different faiths have to find a way to live in peace and harmony and to respect each other. On p2, Rev. Cao Shengjie explores what role Chinese Christians, as religious believers, can play in promoting such harmony and mutual respect.

The theme of relationships between people of different faiths and between religious believers and non believers is explored further by Rev. Deng Fucun as he reflects on President Jiang Zemin's recent call for "religion and society to adapt to one another" (p4). Ji Jianhong also looks at the relationship between Chinese Christians and Christians overseas on p5.

Later this year, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, China's foremost Protestant seminary, will celebrate its 50th Anniversary. We go behind the scenes at the seminary on p11, and hear from those who work at the seminary about the "Jinling Spirit" (p10) and plans for the future (p13).

These are exciting times for the Chinese church. By the time you read this, the church will have held its Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference in Beijing. At this conference, the direction of the church's work and ministry for the next five years will be decided, as well as leadership positions within the church. We will of course be bringing you news of this event in the next issue of Amity News Service. Stay tuned!

With kind regards from the editorial desk,

[Signature]
World Peace: Chinese Believers Must Play Their Part

The events of September 11th and other ethnic and religious wars raging around the world are a stark reminder of the dangers of religious extremism. Believers in every country need to join together to find ways to overcome differences and get along in peace and harmony. In August 2000, Rev. Cao Shengjie (Vice President, China Christian Council) was part of the Chinese religious delegation to the "Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders" at the United Nations in New York. In November 2001, she took part in the "International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination" in Madrid. At the Madrid meeting the 20th anniversary of the UN's "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief" (1981) was also commemorated.

In February's issue of Tian Feng, the magazine of the China Christian Council, Rev. Cao reflects on the issues of religion and world peace, and comments on what role Chinese Christians have to play in promoting peace.

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Religious freedom is a basic human right which needs to be respected and protected. Everyone agrees with this. In China, the 36th Article of the Constitution clearly states that "discrimination between citizens holding religious beliefs and citizens not holding religious beliefs is not allowed." Religious freedom includes the freedom to believe in religion as well as the freedom not to be believe in any religion at all. And people should also enjoy the right to believe in any religion they choose, no religion should be discriminated against.

Whether they are religious believers or not, the vast majority of people in the world long for peace and development. Unfortunately, the world is not at all peaceful and wars are constantly breaking out, most of them ethnic or religious disputes, for example in the Middle East, Bosnia, Northern Ireland. Although these wars have deep and long-standing economic and political causes as well, they are all being carried out in the name of religion. And, September 11th has once again demonstrated the horrific consequences of ethnic and religious disputes. As the Swiss Theologian Hans Küng once said, "There can be no peace among the nations without peace among religions."

At the Millennium World Peace Summit, UN Secretary General Kofi Anan affirmed the positive influence that religion can have on the world when it comes to teachings about mercy, tolerance, lenience, forgiveness and reconciliation. However, he also highlighted the "dark side" of religion where religious extremists stoke the flames of violence and hatred. At the top-level Chinese government meeting on religious work and religious policy held in December last year (see ANS 2002.1/2.1), President Jiang Zemin stressed that society and religion must adapt to one another and that religion should not be allowed to harm the state's or society's interests or obstruct non-believers' legal rights. This throws down an important challenge to Chinese Christians: how can we make sure that Christianity exerts a positive influence on China's development and promotes peace rather than conflict?
One solution may lie in making sure that we, as religious believers, do not ourselves discriminate against others of different faith or no faith. The Lord Jesus taught that we should "do unto others as you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12). This corresponds closely to the Chinese Confucian teaching "do not do to others that which you do not want them to do to you." If we wish our beliefs to be respected then we have to offer that same respect to others who don't share our beliefs. At the Madrid Conference, it was suggested that children should be taught such respect from an early age. Educators, news media and religious circles in each country should make sure this message reaches young people and prevents them from growing up into intolerant and violent adults.

Fortunately, there are some aspects of Chinese history and culture which have proven conducive to peace between people of different faiths within China. The West has a long history of violent religious conflicts, of which the church's "Crusades" to go and impose the Christian faith on the "infidels" in the Holy Land was an early example. In China, ancient Confucian culture has always placed great emphasis on "harmony" and, as a result, we have not seen any large scale and brutal religious wars in Chinese history. Since New China was founded in 1949, the state has also implemented a policy of freedom of religious faith, seeing non-believers and believers of all kinds of religions as one and the same.

Furthermore, both China and the rest of the world have seen how people of all faiths are united by their vulnerability to problems such as poverty, disease, environmental pollution and natural disasters, and how they are able to overlook their differences in their attempts to overcome such problems. In China, both believers and non-believers were affected by natural disasters in recent years and fought together to rebuild their lives and communities afterwards. This spirit of cooperation and harmony can be encouraged when it comes to respecting others.

Unfortunately, old attitudes and habits die hard. In China in the past, foreign missionaries taught us that non Christians had little value and that we should differentiate between believers and unbelievers as between the "living" and the "dead". Such teachings have had a profound influence on generations of Chinese Christians. Many Chinese believers stress the differences between believers and non-believers, even to the point of creating splits within families and communities. If we continue in this way, we are in danger of fostering extremism and becoming the cause of disputes and strife within Chinese society. We need to realize this.

In the Chinese church, we are currently in the process of re-constructing our theological thinking. As part of this, we need to consider the relationship between believers and non-believers from a theological perspective and especially do away with any destructive ideas from the past. In the final analysis, Christianity is a message of peace, yet our Good News is meaningless if it is presented alongside a message that we do not respect those who do not share our faith.
Is There Anything Good Outside Of The Church?

At the national meeting on religious work held by top-level Chinese government officials in December last year (see ANS 2002.1/2.1), President Jiang Zemin stressed the need for religion and society to "adapt and fit in with one another". This does not mean that religious believers are being asked to somehow dilute or abandon their beliefs, it means finding a way for believers and non-believers to unite and work together for the building up of China as a whole. Unfortunately, many Chinese believers find this task difficult as they do not believe "anything good can exist outside of the church."

Tian Feng, the magazine of the Chinese church, has asked several church leaders to reflect on President Jiang's speech and what it means for Chinese Christians today. In April's edition of the magazine, Rev. Deng Fucun (Vice Chair and Secretary General of the Three Self Patriotic Movement) shares his thoughts by exploring the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) and the concept of "loving one's neighbour".

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When a teacher of the Law asks Jesus "What must I do to inherit eternal life?", Jesus throws another question back at him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" In fact, the Jews at that time could recite the Law perfectly but they only knew how to obey it, not why they should obey it or how it related to God's will. At that time, Jews did not dare to neglect even one of the commandments in the Law such as observing the Sabbath or cleanliness rituals. Hence they criticized Jesus and his disciples for appearing to break the Law by picking and eating ears of corn in a field on the Sabbath and for not following washing rituals before meals. Jesus had to remind the Jews that the Law was made for man, not man for the Law.

In Jesus' time, the Sabbath, which God had intended as a day of rest to enable people to build up their strength, had instead become a shackle with which to bind people. So much attention was paid to observing the Law that understanding of the spirit and intentions behind the Law had been lost. This had reached such an extent that the scribe talking to Jesus could easily recite "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" but then had to go on to ask Jesus "But, who is my neighbour?" The scribe knew the Law by heart but didn't understand it. Jesus uses the story of the Good Samaritan to help the scribe understand the spirit of the Law he just recited.

The story of the Good Samaritan is well known and the plot is simple. In those days, Samaritans and Jews lived very close to each other but never had any contact. They were in dispute about the "correct" place to worship God. The Jews also looked down on the Samaritans for marrying people of other races and not keeping their blood and faith "pure". And yet, in the story, Jesus clearly praises the Samaritan who "was moved to pity" when he saw the robbed and beaten man and "bandaged his wounds, brought him to an inn and took care of him." Jesus instructs us to "do in this way". Meanwhile, Jesus roundly condemns the priest and the Levite who see the beaten man but pass him by and refuse to touch him.

In many ways, the story of the Good Samaritan is relevant to the Chinese church today and to President Jiang's call for religion and society to "adapt" to each other. Many believers within the church keep a distance from those outside of the church, seeing them as "unclean". Many Chinese Christians cannot accept that any goodness, virtue or truth can exist outside of the church in "society". They view their
"neighbours" in the same ways that the Jews of Jesus' time viewed the Samaritans. And they respond to their neighbours in the same way the priest and the Levite responded to the robbed and wounded man - they walk around them.

Just like the priests and Levites of Jesus' time, most believers in the Chinese church today have a passion for Scripture and many know it well and can recite it. We need to take the next step and "do in this way" what Scripture teaches us through stories such as the Good Samaritan. Only once we accept the message of this story, that truth, goodness and virtue can also exist in those outside the church in "society", can we begin to find a way to "adapt" to that society.

**Upholding Independence And Self-Determination**

Within the Chinese church there is often talk of the "Four Needs", conditions necessary for building up the church in the future. These "Four Needs" are (1) the need to uphold independence and self-determination, (2) the need to practice love for one's country and love for the church, (3) the need to work hard to promote unity and (4) the need to carry out the "Three Goods" ("good self-administration", "good self-support" and "good propagation of the Good News"). In recent editions of **Tian Feng**, the magazine of the China Christian Council, Ji Jianhong (member of the Standing Committee of the Three Self Patriotic Movement) has been reflecting on what each of these "needs" might mean for the church. Below are his thoughts on the first "need".

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Currently, there are still many groups overseas who are anti-China, anti-Chinese church and against the Three Self principles which guide the Chinese church. These groups continue to use colonial, imperialist and erroneous theological teachings to try and control the Chinese church and derail any progress our church has made towards independence and self-determination in the past few decades. Such overseas groups do not wish to see the Chinese church independent and standing on her own two feet, they want her once again to become dependent on outsiders, an appendage to their own churches, as well as an instrument of opposition to the Chinese government.

Many such overseas groups misuse the notion of "universal church" in their attempts to deny independence to churches of other countries. They claim that no church can be "independent" because it belongs to the "universal church" and is therefore accountable to other churches all over the world.

In fact, the "universal" or "cosmic" nature of the church points to the church as the eternal Body of Christ. There is only one "universal church" which includes all who have accepted Christ as their saviour, be they dead or alive, Chinese or non-Chinese, from ancient or modern times. This church is invisible, we cannot touch it or see it, it is spiritual and pure. It transcends all boundaries of time and space. The "universal church" does not exist as such in the concrete world we live in today.

There is only one cosmic, universal church, but there are many concrete manifestations of that church on earth. These churches are local in nature, confined to particular times and places. They are made up of tangible buildings and specific people. There are many examples of such churches in the New Testament e.g. the "churches among the Jews" (Acts 16:5), the "churches among the gentiles" (Romans
16:4) and the "seven churches in Asia" (Revelation 1). So, we need to distinguish between the invisible and eternal "universal church" and concrete "local churches".

Local churches are fixed in a particular time and place and exist within national boundaries. National boundaries are also decided by God: "You have fixed all the regions of the earth" (Psalm 74:17), "He created from one stock every nation of men to inhabit the whole earth's surface. He determined their eras in history and the limits of their territory." (Acts 17:26). Faith and belief are universal, they know of no boundaries in time and space. But individual believers and individual churches are constrained by time and space, they are members of a certain group, citizens of certain countries. Such churches are part of the world we live in, they exist within certain political, economic and social conditions and are influenced by these conditions.

Relations between such churches need to be equal, with no one church subordinate to another. The reason for this is because each church needs to manage its own affairs according to the local conditions around it. Furthermore, each church is able to receive guidance, blessing and direction from God's Holy Spirit directly, it has no need to receive instructions from another country's church or get their approval. "I did not take it over from anyone; no one taught it me; I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:12). God has tasks and duties for each church in each country which are unique to that church and fit the local situation in that country. The "Good News" of Jesus Christ transcends barriers, but the sharing of that Good News takes place in a concrete local context and needs to be done by local Christians within that context.

Jesus gave the Great Commission to "bear witness for me...even in the farthest corners of the earth." (Acts 1:8). God has entrusted the work of spreading the Good News in China to Chinese believers and the Chinese church - 50 years of incredible church growth in China since the departure of foreign missionaries has born witness to this. When others barge in uninvited, they are not heeding God's call. Examples of this can also be found in Scripture: "(They were) prevented by the Holy Spirit from delivering the message in the province of Asia. When they approached the Mysian border they tried to enter Bithynia but, as the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them, they passed through Mysia and reached the coast at Troas" (Acts 16:6-10). Why did Jesus prevent Paul from spreading the Good News in Bithynia? Because he was not invited or destined to work in that place. People need to be invited before they decide to work for God in a certain place.

The Chinese church opposes any attempt by another church to undermine its independence and right to determine its own affairs. We oppose any overseas groups who abuse the notions of "universal church" and the "Great Commission" as justification for interfering in our affairs. This is not to say that the Chinese church is somehow becoming "exclusive" or "anti-foreign" or trying to seal itself off from the rest of the world. We are simply asking that overseas churches respect our right to follow the unique paths which God has ordained for us and to respond to God's call in our ways, not theirs. On the basis of such mutual respect and independence, churches the world over can go on to enjoy much stronger bonds of fellowship, friendship, sharing and service to God.
Development, Environmental Protection And Faith

We often hear how we live in a "global village" and we only have one world, a world we need to take care of. At the same time, human development and scientific progress continue but often at tremendous cost to the natural environment we live in. Humankind faces a paradox: scientific and technological developments enrich our lives yet at the same time threaten to destroy the very world we depend upon for life. How to strike a balance between scientific progress and environmental protection is a pressing problem in today's world, especially for developing countries such as China. In April's edition of Tian Feng, the magazine of the China Christian Council, Shi Hanyu reflects on the role that faith may play in restoring a balance between progress and conservation.

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During the last century, human science and technology has developed at an unprecedented rate and brought with it many benefits. However, the disastrous effects of such development on the environment are plain for all to see - pollution, ozone layer depletion, global warming, disruption of natural cycles within the ecosystem and more. Such damage only threatens to get worse if we do nothing to stop it. We have no choice about this if we wish to continue living on this planet.

The scientific advances we enjoy and the accompanying environmental damage we suffer from are the work of human hands, they are the result of our actions. The driving force behind human actions is a desire to somehow change the world for the better. But if such actions go beyond the natural world's inherent ability to maintain its internal harmony then negative consequences ensue. To prevent such negative consequences, we must examine ourselves and the motivations for our actions first.

If science is to do more good than harm, it needs to be supported by a suitable philosophy which will guide its activities. Such a philosophy would point the direction for science, providing a methodological framework within which research and experimentation can be carried out. Without such a framework, such a guiding philosophy, science is in danger of getting out of control, of being at the mercy of misguided impulses and subjective needs and desires. The neglect of such deep and far-sighted philosophical underpinnings is one reason why science has been able to do so much damage to our earth in recent history. Scientists without principles are dangerous.

One of the greatest scientists who ever lived, Einstein, supported such a view. Throughout his long scientific career, Einstein shifted gradually from mere scientific observation to an almost poetic and mystical understanding of the universe and the laws which govern her. Einstein lived through turbulent times and saw for himself how science and technology could be used for both good and evil. He recognized that unless moral and ethical developments accompany scientific developments, the result would be disastrous for humankind and the planet we live on.

This is where Christian believers have a vital role to play. Christians believe that God created the universe, the world we live in and all the creatures that inhabit this world. God designed the universe so that all its component parts would function together in harmony. "He has made everything to suit its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). God placed us within the world and gave us responsibility for all things within it, this reveals
God's great love for and faith in humankind. Unfortunately, we have lost our way and have become poor stewards of the earth we live in, we have disturbed the harmony God created within nature.

If science is likened to an "engineering project" with the aim of bettering our world then philosophy needs to provide the "blueprint" for that project. Philosophy is the crystallization of knowledge and Christians believe the source of all knowledge and wisdom is God. "I am the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6). If all our activities and motives are guided by God's will, the will of the original designer and "engineer" of all created things, then harmony within the natural world can be preserved and sustained. Theology has a vital role to play here as a source of wisdom and knowledge on which philosophy and science can draw.

In countries like China, scientific and technological development are vital but this development must be "sustainable", it must not damage the capacity of nature and the environment we live in to sustain us. As Chinese theologians work at reconstructing theological thinking within the Chinese church, they should also prepare to offer ethical and moral principles which can help guide scientists towards maintaining harmony within the world God created.

Indigenization Of Chinese Hymns

An overseas visitor worshipping in a church in China might feel surprised to hear the congregations singing old familiar western hymns as part of worship. Foreign missionaries brought these hymns with them to China, translated them, and they quickly became common within the Chinese church. In a hymnal compiled by the church in China in 1938 only 62 of the hymns were original Chinese works.

Nowadays, Chinese Christian composers are producing more native Chinese hymns for their church to use in worship. In the 1983 edition of the Chinese church hymnal, 102 of the hymns had been composed by Chinese Christians, of which 56 were composed in modern times. However, this is out of a selection of nearly 400 hymns, most of which are still based on western music. In March's edition of Tian Feng, the magazine of the China Christian Council. Wang Xuexin looks at the status of native Chinese hymns in the Chinese church today.

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The church as a whole has a long history of indigenous church music. The Reformation had a profound impact on church music, breaking the "monopoly" held by Latin and giving every believer the right to praise and worship the Lord in his or her native language and music. In Europe and elsewhere, this led to the emergence of popular hymns and the proliferation of hymns from many different countries. It is only through the use of local and indigenous languages and music that church music has retained its vitality.

In this respect, Chinese hymns have also come a long way. The theologian T.C.Chao contributed many of the texts of early Chinese hymns, and Yang Yinliu and the American Fan Tianxiang worked hard to put the words to music. Among contemporaries, three pastors - Chen Zimin, Shi Qigu and Lin Shengben - have been very successful in producing hymns which are very Chinese in style but also contemporary in their appeal. Their works include: "Jesus, Morning Star" (Ye Su, Ming Liang Cheng Xin), "Winter is Past, the Rain is gone (Yi Zhu Tong Qu Ge),

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"Happy is our life" (Sheng huo mei hao ge), "I Love the Chinese church" (Wo Ai Zhong Guo Jiao Hui Ge), "Neighbours are just beside you" (Ling Ju Jiu Zhai Shen Pang Ge), "Honor God, Love Others" (Rong Shen Yi Ren) and the "Miraculous Pen of Divine Work" (Shen Gong Miao Mao Ge).

Some hymns created by Chinese composers are not necessarily "Chinese" in style but do contain certain elements which nevertheless reveal a Chinese "flavour". Such hymns include "Gracious God Our Father" (Ci Fu Shang Di Ge) or 'The Living Christ" (Huo Zhu Ji Du Ge) or "Joy in Serving" (Huan Le Fu Wu Ge).

One of the things which give Chinese hymns their unique Chinese flavour and style is the use of the pentatonic scale in their composition. Typical examples of this include "Gracious God Our Father" (Ci Fu Shang Di Ge) or "Now I Come to Thy Holy Temple" (Jin Dao Zhu Dian Ge). These are pleasant to the ear, easy to sing and are very popular among Chinese Christians. The use of the pentatonic scale may enhance the quality of such short, simple hymns but it has its limitations as well. One such limitation is that it lacks a contemporary modern air about it. There is a feeling that the music is not "dynamic" and cannot express the full range of our feelings and emotions. The music feels hampered in its development, and this is especially true with longer works.

In Chinese music as a whole, the fusion of East and West, with the East as the dominant element, is now the norm. By grafting Western musical elements onto a Chinese base that uses the pentatonic scale, musical works have been produced which are still essentially Chinese in style and essence. Chinese music has been evolving in this direction over the last century and has produced great works such as the "Yellow River Grand Chorus" (Hwang He Da He Chang) or "Song to My Motherland" (Ge Chang Zhu Guo). In these works, the use of the pentatonic scale preserves their "Chinese-ness" but they have been further enriched by that which is excellent in Western music. This produces something brand new, something that is contemporary and yet Chinese. Such fusion offers new possibilities for sacred music within the Chinese church in the future.

***Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference***

The Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference will be held in Beijing between 20th - 29th May 2002. Around 400 delegates from all over China will attend the meeting to discuss plans for the church’s work and ministry over the next five years. Leadership positions within the Chinese Protestant church for the coming five years will also be decided at the conference.

Please visit Amity News Service online at www.amityfoundation.org for coverage of the conference. We will also be bringing you this coverage in the next printed issue of ANS.
The "Jinling" Spirit

In the 50 years since its founding, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, China's foremost Protestant seminary, has seen successive generations of students and teachers pass through its doors. Over the years, a special kind of spirit has been fostered and passed on to all those who attend the seminary, giving rise to the terms "Jinling Person" and "Jinling Spirit" (The Nanjing Seminary is also known as the "Jinling Union Theological Seminary"). In March's edition of Tian Feng, the magazine of the China Christian Council, Tu Zhijin describes this unique "Jinling Spirit".

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Nanjing Union Theological Seminary began its life in the 1950s at the time when China was newly liberated and the Chinese church had recovered its independence from overseas control. At that time, resources were scarce within the church and all seminaries found it difficult to recruit students, pay teachers' wages and cover running costs. Yet there was a definite and urgent need for the Chinese church to train evangelists and pastors for the future. As a result, more than a dozen separate theological colleges decided to unite together and pool their resources into one seminary based in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. And so Nanjing (Jinling) Union Theological Seminary was born.

The fact that more than a dozen separate theological colleges were able to come together and unite into one seminary was in itself remarkable. Each of these colleges had their own history, their own practices, their own work styles and their own approaches to faith and religious practice. Some were fairly liberal in their theology whereas others were of a more conservative background. And yet, in the process of uniting, the leaders of the time did not squabble among themselves as to who was "right" or "greater" than the others, nor did they seek to undermine each other. Instead, they demonstrated a spirit of working together for the glory of God which has remained to this day at the seminary.

This lenient, tolerant spirit when faced with different schools of thought and different denominations is reflected well in a speech made by Bishop KH Ting at the seminary in 1985: "In studying theology, we need to guard against labelling other people, saying this one is 'spiritual' or 'of the spirit' while that one is not; this one is 'orthodox' and that one is 'unorthodox'. It is easy to set oneself up as judge, but this is of no benefit to the formation, enrichment or progress of one's own theological thinking. This is the attitude of one who is not open to self-improvement. When you hear something you do not quite understand, do not immediately condemn. You should make an effort to understand why this person raises this argument... We must be sympathetic, enter into the other's system and see the good intentions behind that system's efforts to answer questions. Of course, it is quite all right to disagree with an argument, but we must first understand it well, know what it is saying and what it is not saying. We should not twist or exaggerate it."

(From Love Never Ends - Papers by KH Ting, edited by Janice Wicker, 2000, p192)
Linked to the above point, the seminary has, over the years, sought to produce well-rounded graduates who are capable of understanding and taking on board many different attitudes and opinions. This too is a product from the time when the different seminaries united into one and suddenly many different voices were all being heard at the same time. Somehow, the different backgrounds and needs of all at the seminary had to be met, and this is still the case today. As a result, the seminary seeks a comprehensive approach to curriculum and syllabus design, stressing that students do not need to all develop in the same way but should be well-grounded spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically and socially. This attempt to produce well-rounded, balanced people is another aspect of the "Jinling Spirit".

Hard work is another characteristic of a "Jinling Person". The Nanjing Seminary Student Handbook stresses the need to study hard and master scriptural, theological and cultural knowledge, and to use Jesus Christ's teachings as the standard for all actions and deeds. All students take these words seriously and apply them in their lives. When you step on to the Nanjing Seminary campus, you immediately see students buried in their books or sitting under the shade of a tree thinking deeply. If you enter the seminary library you rarely find an empty seat. And at night, you often see lights on, with students "burning the midnight oil" - studying, thinking, praying.

The "Jinling Spirit" is also a spirit of service. The seminary has only managed to become what it is today through the hard work, selfless dedication and sacrifice of previous generations of staff and students over the past 50 years. This spirit is embodied in people like Professor Luo Zhenfang, who passed away not so long ago. For decades he worked quietly and diligently at the seminary, not for his own glory but in the service of God and God's church in China. Professor Luo's spirit of service lives on in many of the teachers currently working in the seminary.

Tolerance, understanding, unity, well-balanced and well-rounded, comprehensive, hard working, service and selfless dedication - these are the qualities that created Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and form the basis of the "Jinling Spirit" today.

ANS Focus: 50th Anniversary Of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary

A Day In The Life Of Nanjing Seminary

25th February 2002 was the first day of a new term at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, China's foremost Protestant theological seminary. On that day, Wang Rongwei, a reporter for the publication Tian Feng, visited the seminary and described his observations in April's edition of the magazine.

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7:45 Early morning on campus
The air is fresh and crisp. Some students are in their classrooms already, some are on the grass lawn in front of the main seminary buildings, some are in the prayer room. All are eagerly studying, absorbed in their spiritual devotions, quietly praying. This is the first morning of a new term and you can already sense the students' eagerness to get going. Each year starts with Spring, each day starts with morning. Great things can be achieved if you seize the opportunity afforded by new beginnings.

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8:00 Morning prayers
Vice Principal Chen Zamin leads morning prayers in the seminary chapel. He shares reflections with the whole student and teacher body on the following scripture passages: "You crown the year with your good gifts; places where you have passed drip with plenty" (Psalms 65:11). "It is a land which the Lord your God tends and on which his eye rests from one year’s end to the next" (Deuteronomy 11:12) “So make us know how few are our days, that our minds may learn wisdom" (Psalm 90:12)

Professor Chen encourages students to seize every opportunity given to them to study hard and equip themselves as the future of Chinese Christianity. He also encourages students to actively participate in preparations for the 50th anniversary of the seminary later this year.

8:40 Flag-raising ceremony
Once a week the whole staff and student body gather around the flagpole at the front of the seminary to observe the raising of the Chinese five-star red flag. This is an expression of patriotism on the part of those at the seminary. It also demonstrates that education at the seminary is not merely about spiritual and theological achievements, a fine moral character and a healthy body. The seminary also seeks to foster a new generation of church workers who support the Chinese Communist Party leadership, love their socialist motherland and support the "Three Self" direction taken by the Chinese church. At the same time, it wants to equip future evangelists and pastors with a sense of loving their country and loving the church, so that they can pass on such values to those they minister to in the future.

9:40 Registration and lessons
Students register for the new term and lessons begin in earnest. The seminary has now recruited foreign teachers to teach classes in English to postgraduate students (see ANS 2002.1/2.7). The aim here is to raise the overall competence of postgraduate students and equip them for the demands of the new millennium. The contribution of foreign teachers also helps to attract talented postgraduates to the seminary and turn it into a first-rate base for theological education in the future.

10:00 In the Dean’s office
The Acting Dean of Studies, Wang Peng, supervises office colleagues who are busily stamping documents and processing all the students who have arrived at the school for the start of the new term.

10:35 Library
Three students are in the process of borrowing books: Zhang Rongqiang (3rd year BA student from Sichuan Province), Shao Dongli (3rd year BA student from Anhui Province) and Wu Bing (3rd year postgraduate student from Liaoning Province). Since the three students had no classes scheduled at that time, they thought they would come to the library to look for some study material.

Wu Bing describes why he came to the seminary to study. He had noticed that young believers in the church didn't have a deep understanding of faith and that the church lacked young pastoral workers. After graduating from university, Wu could easily have taken his pick of good secular jobs but, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he came to study theology instead so that could serve the Christians in his hometown in the future. Sharp, bright and clearly-focused students like Wu Bing can be found everywhere on the seminary campus, all of them making good use of every minute there in their thirst for knowledge. They are the hope of the Chinese church.

12:00 Lunch
Lunchtime had arrived so over to the student canteen - a clean environment, tasty food and all at a reasonable price. This is all thanks to the hard work of the seminary support staff who work unobtrusively in the background. Even during meals, students don't miss any opportunities - several are found talking with the foreign teachers so as to improve their ability to sustain an English conversation.

14:00 1st Year Classroom
Professor Mo Ruxi is in the middle of teaching English to 1st year students. She is full of energy and gives a lively lesson. Earlier in the day the Tian Feng photographer took a picture of her preparing her lessons, she was totally engrossed in what she was doing and totally oblivious to the camera lens. There are many teachers like Professor Mo who bless the seminary with their talents and dedication.
14:45 3rd Year Classroom
Foreign teacher Faye Pearson is giving an oral English class to 3rd year students. Faye's approach to teaching involves more than just imparting knowledge orally to students in class. She goes beyond this and combines her words, gestures, actions and deeds as an example to her students not only of oral English but also how to be good, true and genuine human beings.

Mid-afternoon: Back in the Dean's Office
Acting Dean Wang Peng comments how successive generations have passed through the seminary and left their mark on it. Current seminarians tend to feel very proud about being inheritors of the legacy of the older generation and work hard to make themselves worthy of this task. After graduation, most students go out to the "frontline" as messengers of the Gospel but some remain at the seminary and join the ranks of teachers. These students are new to teaching but do not feel at all discouraged by that fact. They advance by feeling their way and improving as they go, they feel no disgrace at being "new" to their job as they feel that they are fulfilling God's mission for them. These new teachers are taking on their shoulders part of the responsibility for the future of the Chinese church, they are the inheritors of the older generation who founded Nanjing seminary in the first place.

The Dean's office is mostly concerned with the "hardware" of the school, making sure facilities and procedures are in place to allow things to run smoothly. Equally important, however, is concern for the "software" of the school, creating a suitable environment where students not only receive knowledge but also can mould their personalities, their moral and ethical values, and cultivate their unique God-given talents. For Wang Peng, this task is just as important as making sure the "machinery" of the school is working smoothly.

16:30 Departure
Time to return to the Tian Feng offices in Shanghai. The sun is going down, the sky darkens and the seminary lights up. After supper, the students all go to the library to commence their evening studies. For the hope of the Chinese church, the day is not over yet...

ANS Focus: 50th Anniversary of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary

Interview: Training Theologians For The New Millennium

Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, China's most prominent Protestant seminary, will celebrate its 50th anniversary in November this year. Ms. Wang Peng, who previously completed postgraduate studies at a seminary in Neuchatel, Switzerland, is now Acting Dean of Studies at the seminary. In March 2002, Ms. Wang shared some of her insights and views with Anity News Service.

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Wang Peng started by introducing the graduate-level in-service training class that started in 2001 and is aimed at key lay leaders and pastors with several years of working experience. "We hope to raise their academic qualification to the M.A. level," Wang explained. Currently, more than 30 students from 25 provinces are enrolled in the programme. Of the 28 courses, two thirds deal with theological and church-related topics like Old Testament research, systematic theology and church management. The remaining third comprises various aspects of general education such as psychology, church history in the context of world history, China's religious laws and regulations etc. Participants meet three times per year, several weeks at a time. Like other graduate students, they are required to submit papers and take exams.
"We have realized through this training programme how the needs of a pastoral worker in, say, Qinghai, vary from those of a Shanghai church worker." Wang remarked. "China develops at a very uneven pace, and the social realities of churches along China's coastal areas and of those in the interior are very different."

This is where Wang Peng sees a connection to the ongoing effort of reconstructing theology. "Again, we see that the questions that have to be addressed in this process depend greatly on the background of those engaged in building theology." In rural areas, sects, heresies and superstition often challenge the faith life of congregations, while pastoral workers in wealthy urban areas have to answer the question of how to combine social development with a Christian lifestyle." Accordingly, every church worker needs to incorporate his own background into his theological reflections."

Current efforts to promote theological reflection must also strengthen theological research as opposed to merely pietistic Bible studies intended for believers' instruction, Wang noted. "We want to cooperate more closely with scholars engaged in the study of Christianity at universities," she announced, adding that for a long time, theologians had harboured prejudices against this kind of cooperation with non-believers. One of the aims of the movement for reconstructing theology is to enhance the church's attractiveness for intellectuals, Wang noted in this context.

Meanwhile, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary is striving to produce a new generation of theologians that combines both faith and academic achievement. With its graduate programme, the seminary now receives students who already have degrees from other universities. According to the dean, the educational level of those enrolled has gone up over the past few years. In order to ensure high quality education for its graduates, Nanjing seminary has, for the first time in several decades, invited theologians from abroad to teach at the seminary for an extended period of time (See ANS 2001.7/8.10, 2002.1/2.7). Three foreign professors are currently supporting the seminary's regular staff in its graduate programme. According to Wang Peng, experiences with the visiting teachers are encouraging, and the seminary plans to continue with this practice. "We must be careful not to develop dependence on foreign teachers," she warns. "Today, unlike during the traditional missionary era, these foreign teachers are here at our explicit invitation, and they were selected by the Chinese church leadership."

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NEWSBRIEFS

Seminary Opening: In April 2002, guests from churches in Hong Kong and Macau joined their counterparts in Guangdong Province to celebrate the opening of the new Guangdong Union Theological Seminary campus. This is the only seminary in the whole of Guangdong Province at the moment.

The seminary was initially re-opened in 1986 but has been relocated three times since then and has suffered from a constant lack of campus space, facilities and teaching staff. At times, the seminary has had to borrow space in nearby churches to hold tutorials. Finally, the seminary was able to acquire 18,000 sq. meters of land in the Bai Yun District of Guangzhou and construction began in 1997. The campus took four years to complete and cost more than RMB 18 million (=US$2.175 million approx.) The seminary campus includes an Administration Building, Library, Students’ Dormitory and Chapel. At present there are 70 students enrolled at the seminary but, now that construction has been completed, it is hoped that many more will enrol in the future.

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Church Dedication: In April 2002, over 7,000 guests from around China and overseas attended the dedication of the "New Grace" (Xin En) church in Yiwu City, Zhejiang Province. Among the guests were Bishop KH Ting, Rev. Deng Fucun (Vice Chair and Secretary General, Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement and Chairman, Zhejiang Provincial TSPM Committee) and Rev. Sun Xipei (President, Zhejiang Christian Council). Construction of the church began in May 2000 and was completed in December 2001 at a cost of around RMB 10 million (=US$ 1.2 million approx.). The church stands on 9,132 sq. meters of land and can seat 4,000 worshippers.

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Symposium: On April 25-26, a symposium on the Protestant Church in China was held at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, jointly sponsored by the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and the Lutheran Theological Seminary. The symposium brought together participants from church, academic and government circles in both mainland China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Issues of common concern were discussed, including harmony between religions, cults, peace, globalization, the church and social service, trends in Protestant Christianity in China, and relations between mainland and Hong Kong churches.

Presenters included Prof. Liu Xiaoli (Shandong University), Ms. Luo Weihong (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences), Prof. Wang Xiaochao (Qinghua University), Prof. Zhu Yueji (China Daoism Institute), Dr. Li Pingye (China Association of Religious Studies), Dr. Duan Dezhi (Wuhan University), Rev. Huang Chaozhang (Fujian Theological College), Rev. Chen Yilu (Guangdong Union Theological Seminary), Rev. Wang Aiming (Nanjing Union Theological Seminary), and Vice Director Guo Fengge (Hebei Overseas Association).
Places Mentioned In This Issue Of ANS

(1) Guangzhou (Guangdong)
(2) Nanjing (Jiangsu)
(3) Shanghai

(4) Wuhan (Hubei)
(5) Yiwu (Zhejiang)