SPECIAL EDITION: SEVENTH NATIONAL CHINESE CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE

In this issue of Amity News Service we are pleased to bring you reports from the Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference which was held in Beijing at the end of May 2002. This conference is held every five years and is attended by Chinese Protestant delegates from all over China. The meeting is an important one as it maps out the church’s work, ministry and general direction for the next five years. Leadership positions within the church for the coming five years were also decided at this conference.

Inside you will find statements issued by the conference participants (p.2, p.8 and p.13), profiles of the new leaders (p.6 and p.7) and complete lists of church delegates elected to the different Chinese Protestant Christian bodies at this conference (p.3, p.4 and p.5). You will also find a summary of the Work Report presented at the conference (p.9), which highlights some of the more notable experiences from the last five years and looks ahead to the years to come.

With kind regards from the editorial desk,

[Signature]

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New CCC And National TSPM Leadership Elected

The Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference took place in Beijing between 22nd - 27th May 2002. This was the first national-level Chinese Christian conference of the new century and represents Chinese Christianity moving ahead into the future while at the same time maintaining a link with that which has gone before. Building on the foundation laid by the 50th anniversary of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, this conference moved one step closer to concretely realizing the goal of "running the church well according to Three-Self principles".

300 delegates from 30 provinces (including autonomous regions and municipalities) from all over China attended the conference. Of the delegates at this conference 105 (or one third) were below 40 years old while 129 delegates were between 41-60 years old, the two groups representing 78% of all those attending. This shows that over three-quarters of all delegates attending the conference were below 60 years of age. The average age of delegates was 49.6 years old, lower by three years than at the last national conference. The percentage of women delegates at the conference (26.9%) had also increased by 1.1% over the last national conference. Significant improvements have therefore been made concerning the past phenomenon of having mostly older delegates.

The conference unanimously elected Bishop K.H. Ting as the Honorary Chairperson of the Seventh Standing Committee of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the Honorary President of the Fifth Standing Committee of the China Christian Council. In order to better care for and support the work of Chinese Christianity, Mr. Luo Guanzong and Dr. Han Wenxiao have taken on the directorship of a newly-established CCC / National TSPM Advisory Committee.

New national CCC and TSPM standing committees were elected at the conference. Elder Ji Jianhong was elected as the Chairperson and Acting Secretary General of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China; Reverend Cao Shengjie was elected as the President and Acting General Secretary of the China Christian Council. Chen Shunpeng, Deng Fucun (in residence in Shanghai), Gao Feng, Hua Yaozeng, Jin Wei and Wu Chengrong were elected as Vice Chairpersons of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China. Fan Chengzu, Lin Zhihua, Lu Mingyuan, Shen Cheng'en, Su Deci, Sun Xipei and Xiang Jianhua were elected as Vice Presidents of the China Christian Council.

The conference passed the work report, delivered by Rev. Cao Shengjie on behalf of the last standing committee, entitled "Put Down Roots And Build, Strengthen Ourselves, Move With The Times And Run The Church Well". Highlights of the work report included various encouraging achievements for Chinese Christianity in carrying out its work under the direction of the "Four Needs" (the need to uphold independence and self-determination, the need to practice love for one's country and love for the church, the need to work hard to promote unity and the need to carry out the "Three Goods"). The work report also clearly outlined the next five years' aims and tasks.

The conference also passed a resolution on "Opposing Evil Cults and Resisting Heretical Beliefs".

Facing the opportunities and challenges presented by the new century, the conference called on all Chinese Christian believers to grasp the opportunities and strengthen themselves, as well as unsurprisingly carrying out the re-construction of theological thinking and strengthening the building of CC / TSPM organizations at every level. The conference also called for improving the understanding of faith of rural church believers, increasing overseas contacts and public relations work, quickening the pace of training qualified church personnel, continuing to show concern for society, serving the masses, and being a good witness for Christ.

(* The "Three Goods" = "good self-administration", "good self-support" and "good propagation of the Good News")

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THE FIFTH STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE CHINA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

Honorary President: 丁光训 Ding Guanxun (K.H. Ting)

President: 曹圣洁 Cao Shengjie*

Vice-presidents:
范承祖 Fan Chengzu  苏德慈 Su Deci
林志华 Lin Zhihua  孙锡培 Sun Xipei
陆明远 Lu Mingyuan  项建华 Xiang Jianhua
沈承恩 Shen Cheng'en

Standing Committee Members:
安信义 An Xinyi  吕德志 Lü Dezhi
包佳元 Bao Jiayuan  罗泽声 Luo Zesheng
曹圣洁 Cao Shengjie*  毛仰三 Mao Yangsan
陈克威 Chen Kewei  覃风珍 Qin Fengzhen*
陈美麟 Chen Meilin*  沈承恩 Shen Cheng'en
陈逸鲁 Chen Yilu  沈光玮 Shen Guangwei
范承祖 Fan Chengzu  史奇球 Shi Qigu
高英 Gao Ying*  宋姬淑 Song Jishu*
巩光明 Gong Guangming  苏德慈 Su Deci
黄朝章 Huang Chaozhang  孙斌 Sun Bin
阚保平 Kan Baoping  孙锡培 Sun Xipei
李栋 Li Dong  唐卫民 Tang Weimin
林得恩 Lin De'en  全平安 Tong Ping'an
林志华 Lin Zhihua  章以强 Tong Yiqiang
陆明远 Lu Mingyuan  王俊 Wang Jun
王芃 Wang Peng*
汪维藩 Wang Weifan
吴巍 Wu Wei
项建华 Xiang Jiahua
徐维友 Xu Weiyou
薛连喜 Xue Lianxi
姚增谊 Yao Zengyi*
余建荣 Yu Jianrong
余文良 Yu Wenliang
于新粒 Yu Xinli
周蓉敏 Zhou Rongmin*

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Associate General Secretaries:
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陈逸鲁 Chen Yilu  于新粒 Yu Xinli
阚保平 Kan Baoping

Note: Of the 43 members, 8 are women
(*=Ms.)
THE SEVENTH STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE THREE-SELF PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT OF THE
PROTESTANT CHURCH IN CHINA

Honorary Chair: 丁光训 Ding Guangxun (K.H Ting)

Chairperson: 季剑虹 Ji Jianhong

Vice-Chairpersons:
陈顺鹏 Chen Shunpeng
邓福村 (驻会) Deng Fucun (residiency)
高 峰 Gao Feng
华耀增 Hua Yaozeng
金 蔚 Jin Wei*
吴承荣 Wu Chengrong

Members:
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陈志民 Chen Zhimin
邓福村 Deng Fucun
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季剑虹 Ji Jianhong
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寇有国 Kou Youguo
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李恒全 Li Hengquan
李洪玉 Li Hongyu
梁 明 Liang Ming
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马建华 Ma Jianhua*
梅康钧 Mei Kangjun
孟繁智 Meng Fanzhi
倪光道 Ni Guangdao
沈学彬 Shen Xuebin
苏伟俭 Su Weiyuan
孙锦辉 Sun Jinwei
孙兆贵 Sun Zhaogui
涂汉桥 Tu Hanqiao
王艾明 Wang Aiming
王碧嫦 Wang Bichang*
王付增 Wang Fuzeng
吴承荣 Wu Chengrong
吴建宙 Wu Jianyu
许伦胜 Xu Lunsheng
徐明涵 Xu Minghan
徐晓鸿 Xu Xinhong
颜志渊 Yan Zhiyuan
杨明明 Yang Mingming*
岳清华 Yue Qinghua
赵股柔 Zhao Xuyao
赵元灏 Zhao Yuanhao
赵志恩 Zhao Zhen

Acting Secretary General: 季剑虹 Ji Jianhong

Executive Associate Secretary General: 梅康钧 Mei Kangjun

Associate Secretary Generals:
傅先伟 Fu Xianwei
靳云鹏 Jin Yunpeng
倪光道 Ni Guangdao
徐晓鸿 Xu Xinhong
张克运 Zhang Keyun

Note: Of the 44 members, 6 are women. (* = Ms.)

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Directors: 罗冠宗 Luo Guanzong, 韩文藻 Han Wenzao

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王菊珍 Wang Juzhen*
吴爱恩 Wu Ai'en*
郑玉桂 Zheng Yugui

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高重生 Gao Chongsheng
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Note: Of the 28 members, 5 are women
(=*Ms.)

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Thank you.
Reverend Cao Shengjie, President, China Christian Council

1931  Born into a Christian family, third generation.

1953  Graduated from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. Following graduation, served in St.Peter's Church and Grace Church in Shanghai as an evangelist.


1966 -1976  
Sent to labour in a factory during the Cultural Revolution.

1979 - 1986  
Served as an assistant researcher in the Religious Studies Institute of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

1980  Began serving as the Associate General Secretary for the China Christian Council, and Chief Editor of the Chinese New Hymnal.

1988  Ordained as a pastor.


Presently serves as:
Chairperson of Shanghai Christian Council,
Vice-President of the National YWCA of China,
Vice Head of the Society of Religious Studies in Shanghai.

Family

Married to Xu Minghan, who used to be an Associate General Secretary of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China and currently serves as the Vice President of China East Theological Seminary.

Has one son and one grandson.
Elder Ji Jianhong, Chairperson, National Committee Of The Three-Self Patriotic Movement Of The Protestant Churches In China

(Elder Ji Jianhong)

1932  Born into a Christian family. As a youth, attended church-run primary and secondary schools.

1951  Executive Secretary for the Nanjing Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee

Late 1952 - 1956
   Studied at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. While studying, he also assisted at Christian Assembly (Little Flock) gatherings in Nanjing. After graduation he formally took up positions of service at these gatherings.

1959  In charge of church ministry at St. Paul's Church, Taiping Road, Nanjing

1962 - May 1966
   Studied and graduated from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. At the same time continued to lead the work at St. Paul's church.

October 1969 - October 1979
   Sent down to the countryside to do manual labour during the Cultural Revolution.

October 1979
   Brought back to Nanjing from the countryside to prepare for the re-opening of the church and the resumption of church ministries.

1980 - Present day
   Worked for the Jiangsu Provincial Church, first as a staff member, then as Associate Secretary General and later as Vice Chairperson of the Jiangsu Provincial Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee. After going on to hold the Associate General Secretary and Vice Chairperson positions concurrently, he was then elected Chairperson of this committee.

From 1996
   Also took on the following positions: Vice-Chairperson of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (National TSPM) and Head of the Commission on Church Administration, Managing Director of the Board of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, Vice Chairman of the Board of Jiangsu Christian Bible School.
26th May 2002
Elected Chairperson of the National TSPM.

Family

Married to Wu Chaoxiong - Wu graduated from Hujiang University, Shanghai, and then pursued graduate studies at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. After graduation she first worked in the offices of the church magazine Tian Feng ("Heavenly Wind"). From 1956, she worked at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary first as a lecturer, then as secretary and deputy director in the President's office. Now retired.

Eldest son: Ji Xiaohui, Professor and Head of the Dean's Office at Nanjing Medical University. Married to Shi Dianyun, Director of the Gynaecology and Obstetrics Department.

Second son: Ji Xiaoxin: Associate General Engineer. Married to Chen Yun, Worker

2002.5/6.7

Letter from Dr. Wenzao Han, Co-Director, CCC / National TSPM Advisory Committee

June 3rd, 2002

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Warm greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus!

I am writing with deep appreciation for your congratulatory messages to our 7th National Chinese Christian Conference and your many prayers for the church in China during this period of leadership transition. As many of you know now, the church in China has elected her new leadership. I want to commend my colleagues Elder Ji Jianhong as new Chairperson of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (National TSPM) and Rev. Cao Shengjie as new President of the China Christian Council (CCC). I ask for your continuing prayer for them and trust that God will give them wisdom and strength and guide them as they continue serving the church in China in their new capacities and positions.

Looking back over the past five years, I am overwhelmed by the joy and privilege of serving as President of the China Christian Council for the ministry of the church in China. I cherish fond memories of working with you all and am grateful for your support and partnership with the church in China during my term of service. Although I have stepped down from serving as President of the CCC, the Chinese church is deep in my heart. God has opened new opportunities and I will continue to serve Him as a co-director of the Advisory Committee of the National TSPM and CCC.

Please join me in praying for God's rich blessings upon the new leadership and the ministry of the church in China.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Wenzao Han

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Summary Of The Work Report Delivered To The Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference

During the Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference held in Beijing recently, Rev. Cao Shengjie, newly-elected President of the China Christian Council, presented the work report on behalf of the former standing committees of the China Christian Council and the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement. In the work report, entitled "Put Down Roots And Build, Strengthen Ourselves, Move With The Times And Run The Church Well", Rev. Cao summarizes notable events and achievements within Chinese Protestant Christianity, analyzes the current situation facing the Chinese Protestant church and outlines priorities for the next five years. Below is a summary of some of the main points taken from the work report.

Review of the last five years

50th Anniversary of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement

The work report begins by reviewing some of the achievements within Chinese Protestant Christianity over the past five years. In September 2000, a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the Chinese Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) was held in Beijing. A summary of the Chinese Protestant TSPM at fifty, entitled "Love One's Country, Love The Church, And Stride In To The New Century With One Heart" was presented at this celebration. According to this summary, the church in China has learned the following through 50 years experience of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement: Loving one's country and loving the church are the foundations behind the movement, while safeguarding the right to independence and self-determination for the Chinese church is the movement's key aim. Unity based on mutual respect protects the achievements of the TSPM, while a deeper understanding of the movement requires active participation in theological construction. Finally, the overriding purpose of the TSPM is to ensure that the church is run well.

Theological Construction

At the end of 1998, an important meeting of church leaders in Jinan (Shandong Province) called on the TSPM to enter a "new phase" of "theological construction". Following the Jinan meeting, a small group, led by Bishop K. H. Ting, was set up to promote theological construction nationally. Many conferences and discussions on the issue of theological construction have been going on within 26 provinces, autonomous regions and / or municipalities, and a good number of publications around this topic have now emerged.

This new emphasis on theological construction has also been applauded by intellectuals outside the church who are sympathetic towards Christianity. However, not all local church leaders have been enthusiastic, therefore, the CC/TSPM at all levels need to provide more guidance on theological construction.

Overseas Exchanges

Between 1997 and the end of 2001, the national CCC/TSPM received 261 overseas delegations (made up of 3,301 person-times) and sent 112 delegations abroad (made up of 295 person-times). Exchanges between Chinese and overseas Christians have focused on explaining China's interests, promoting justice and peace, and illustrating how Chinese Christians enjoy freedom of religious belief. When Chinese President Jiang Zemin invited three U.S. religious leaders to China in 1998, the CCC/TSPM played its part in hosting them. In 2000, Dr. Han Wenzao and Rev. Cao Shengjie represented Chinese Christians within a delegation of Chinese religious leaders to the "Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders" at the United Nations in New York (see ANS 2002.3/4.1). The CCC/TSPM have also issued resolutions explaining the church's position on the Vatican's canonizing of so-called Chinese "saints" (see ANS 2000.11/12.10, 2000.11/12.1, 2000.11/12.11), the Falungong cult (see ANS 2001.3/4.9) and Taiwanese independence (see ANS 2001.5/6.8).
Committee and Church Work

At the last Sixth National Chinese Christian Conference, 12 commissions were formed to oversee various aspects of church life and work, and these commissions have made solid progress over the past five years. An example is the commission for the Promotion of Self-support. The aim of this commission is to encourage congregations in relatively well-off areas of China to offer support to churches in more remote and poorer regions. By the end of 2001, this committee had transferred a total of RMB 8,338,820 (=US$ 1,007,456). Of this, RMB 6,785,000 (=US$ 819,731) had gone towards the rebuilding of 119 churches in 18 provinces and the rest had mostly gone towards subsidies for 599 theological students. Also mentioned is the work of the Rural Church Work Commission, which has been active in putting together a draft curriculum for lay church worker training and also held a symposium on this issue in 1998 (see ANS 98.11.3).

Church Worker Training

On the subject of church worker training, the CCC/TSPM commissioned Nanjing Union Theological Seminary to run a two-year postgraduate class for pastoral workers for the first time in 2001. So far, 30 young people from all over China have been enrolled for this course. The seminary also received foreign teachers to teach courses in Bible and Theology for the first time in 2001 (see ANS 2001.7/8.10 and ANS 2002.1/2.7).

Publications

By the end of 2001, a total of 28 million copies of the Bible had been printed by the CCC/TSPM, including Chinese/English bilingual Bibles and special study Bibles. Over 2.5 million copies of 55 different kinds of Bible-study aids and devotional material were also produced (1.2 million new publications and 1.3 million revisions or reprints of previously published material). Besides these materials and the continued publication of the Chinese hymnal, a couple of VCDs entitled "Joyful Celebration of Christmas" and "Chinese Christians' Praise" have been produced. The church magazine Tian Feng ("Heavenly Wind") has also been re-styled to suit changing needs.

Problems Encountered

Looking back over the past five years, Chinese society, government, economy and culture have all changed tremendously and at breathtaking speed. The CCC/TSPM have called on all Chinese Christians to adapt to this ever-changing society but the two Chinese Christian bodies have not done enough research into this issue or provided concrete guidance for Chinese Christians on how to adapt. The Chinese church faces problems on other levels too. For example, denominationalism has started to raise its head again in some places and is affecting church unity. In other places, some church leaders do not adhere to the Chinese Church Order passed at the last national Christian conference. A small number of church leaders do not allow congregations to re-elect their governing bodies at suitably regular intervals. The CCC/TSPM are aware of such problems and how they create a bad impression of the church within Chinese society.

Issues facing the church in coming years

Legal Framework

A top-level meeting of Chinese government leaders to discuss government religious work in December last year emphasized that freedom of religious belief is a basic right for all Chinese citizens (see ANS 2002.1/2.1). In other words, the Chinese government recognizes that religion is "here to stay" and can play a positive role in society. Given this guarantee of rights and freedoms, Chinese Christians need to cooperate with the government in the implementation of religious freedom policies and in protecting Chinese Christians' interests under the law. These are important pre-requisites without which the Chinese church cannot continue any other kind of healthy development.

Overseas Exchanges

With China's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the church in China will establish more friendly relations with the outside world. However, Chinese Christianity also needs to face up to the
complex international threats posed by terrorism, ethnic divides and religious extremism. It also needs to be on its guard against overseas Christian forces which are hostile to China and who abuse China's opening-up by trying to control the Chinese church and "westernize" or divide China itself. The Chinese church needs to uphold the principles of independence and self-determination.

Chinese Christians already have a bitter history of being controlled by overseas church bodies and must never return to those days. However, some anti-China overseas groups are determined. Such groups infiltrate Chinese congregations and try to stir up believers. They encourage believers to separate themselves from non-believers and they use their literature to encourage and organize believers to oppose government authorities. Hostile overseas church groups often use legal means to carry out illegal activities. For example, China needs foreign currency, so many use investment schemes to set up legal channels through which to pursue illegal activities. Others enter China under the guise of educators, artists or researchers in order to establish themselves in the country and infiltrate the church. Some join CCC/TSPM related churches and then use the lure of money and material advantages in order to create reliance and turn the congregation into one of their "strongholds". Such groups also use preaching, teaching, illegal publications, videos and websites to try to eradicating the achievements of the Three-Self Movement over past decades. As China continues to open up and reform, the Chinese church has to be careful not to go from "self-support" back to "they support".

Cults and Sects

Threats to the Chinese church exist within Chinese society itself as well as from overseas. In recent years, various cults and sects have arisen and succeeded in deceiving many Chinese Christians. Such cults tend to distort Scripture and expound heretical interpretations of Bible verses. The leaders of such cults tend to promote themselves as gods and get people to worship them and, furthermore, turn over their money and possessions to them. Often such cults encourage their followers to break laws, oppose the government and disrupt society. Cults and sects in China are most active in the countryside and in small townships where rural believers are poorly educated and know little about Christian teachings. In these areas there are also few trained pastoral workers who can guide believers along right paths.

Church and Society

A further challenge to the Chinese church concerns its adapting to a Chinese society in a period of constant change. At the top-level government meeting on religion last December, President Jiang Zemin called on religion to adapt to society. The government sees a positive role for Christians to play in society. The challenge to Christians is to enjoy their current religious freedoms while also accepting the obligations that go along with such freedoms. Chinese Christians need to learn to respect others' faith or lack of faith. They also need to be careful to hold all religious activities within the framework of the law. And Christians should enthusiastically participate in all movements and campaigns which promote common goals of building a civilized society, promoting democracy and modernization, and increasing prosperity for all.

Priorities for the future

The Work Report identifies the following priorities for the Chinese church over the next few years:

Theological Construction

The Chinese church needs to develop a body of theological thought which accurately reflects and speaks to the uniquely Chinese situation in which the church finds itself. Such a theology needs to be Bible-based and reflect Chinese experiences of faith. It needs to tie in closely with Chinese culture. Such a theology also needs to provide a framework which will allow Chinese Christians to understand their faith and effectively share it with non-believing Chinese neighbours. It needs to answer the question of how the church can be relevant to society. Such a theology can draw on the wisdom and teachings of those in the past and those overseas, but it should not be linked to any one particular school of thought or system.
Build up the organizational structure of national and local level CC/TSPM bodies

Each CC/TSPM group needs to be better organized, more connected with each other, more united and more accountable financially and morally. Any irregular behaviour or violations of the Chinese Church Order needs to be exposed.

Build up the rural church

More resources need to be devoted towards lay training. Basic literacy programs and education programs introducing basic cultural and technical concepts need to be implemented to raise the understanding and cultural level of rural believers. More guidance needs to be provided for congregations and more seminarians should be sent to spend time in poor rural areas. Anti-cult measures also need to be worked out and implemented.

Strengthen contacts and publicity with overseas groups

Suitable publicity channels need to be found (including putting the church magazine Tian Feng online) which can help interpret the Chinese church to an overseas audience. More contacts with overseas theological scholars and church leaders should be encouraged with the aim of introducing the efforts of the Chinese church in constructing its theology and sharing experiences in the areas of theological research, education and church work.

Accelerate the training of church workers

This is especially the case in the areas of theology, church administration, publishing and publicity, and foreign language skills. Seminaries such as Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and other schools need to be strengthened in their capability to meet the necessary requirements for offering further training for their own faculty as well as training for grassroots pastoral church workers. More opportunities to study overseas will be sought, with an improved selection procedure to make sure those who go abroad have concrete aims which reflect the needs of the Chinese church.

Show compassion for society

The CCC/TSPM continue to call on all Chinese Christians to observe Christian morals and ethics while respecting traditional Chinese virtues in order to be good witnesses for Christ within Chinese society. Christians need to continue to pray for world peace, environmental protection, the war against drugs and the reduction in the spread of diseases such as AIDS. And Christians need to take part in a variety of movements and causes which will benefit those around them while showing concern for the weak and disadvantaged within society.

Closing words

"God has now brought the Chinese church into a new millennium. Our eyes are blessed because we have seen so many new things evolving. We are an independent church, determining our own path and building ourselves within a socialist motherland which is opening up and reforming. We are in an unprecedented situation which others have never experienced before. This is a special blessing on the Chinese church. Now, many concerned believers all over the world are watching us carefully to see how we will develop our own theological thinking, how we will be a fitting witness to the Lord in these current times. The people of our own country are also watching us to see how we will be of use in building up spiritual civilization and advancing social morals and ethics. Our task is clear. We firmly believe that God will guide us in all this and help us march forward courageously."
Resolution on Opposing Evil Cults and Resisting Heretical Beliefs

Ever since the inhuman Falungong cult caused deaths and self-maiming, it has been ever clearer to people at all levels of society that the cult's actions disturb social order and harm people's lives and physical and mental health. Because they are anti-human, anti-social, anti-scientific and extremely harmful, evil cults are resolutely opposed by all citizens in China, including Christians.

In recent years, some cults that wrap themselves in the banner of Christianity have become very active, seriously damaging the public reputation of Christians. These include "Eastern Lightning," the "Shouters," the "Followers," the "Established King," the "Lord-god," and so forth. They ignore the nation's laws, commit crimes and do evil, ruin people's lives, and harm society. Their vicious behaviors seriously endanger the construction of socialist civilization, both material and spiritual, and social stability. With regard to this, the Conference calls on all Christians to resolutely oppose evil cults, especially those that masquerade as Christian, and to support the government's legal attempts to eradicate evil cults.

It is clear to the delegates to the Conference that those grassroots-level churches and rural churches which lack pastoral staff are vulnerable to negative influence from heretical groups. Some self-appointed "evangelists" twist the Bible and do many things that are contrary to basic Christian belief. With regard to Christians who have been cheated and led astray, in line with Christ's love, we should "save others by snatching them out of the fire" (Jude 23); but we should resolutely resist the core members of groups spreading heretical ideas.

The Conference calls on the Christian Council and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee at all levels to build on solid foundations by taking their self-strengthening seriously and to help pastoral staff and lay leaders enrich their spiritual lives, improve their moral character, and strengthen their ability to discriminate between right and wrong. In doing so the pastoral staff and lay leaders will be able to provide guidance to believers with the complete truth of the Bible, firmly oppose all evil cults and take a clear-cut stand resisting all heresies. The church in China should be both rooted in Christ and built on Christ who is our Rock and make due contribution, as Christians should, to the construction of socialist civilization, both material and spiritual, and social stability in China!

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