Dear Reader,

China’s missionary past remains an ambiguous topic, both for Chinese and foreign Christians. While the commitment and deeds of individual missionaries are appreciated by many Chinese Christians until today, there are also voices that remind us of the unfortunate link between those foreign forces that made China into a “semi-colonial” country in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the missionary societies of the times.

Edited by Luo Guanzong, former Chairman of the National TSPM, the Chinese church has now published a book that re-examines this period of China’s missionary past. It is noteworthy, though, that Christianity had already been introduced to the Chinese during three previous historical periods and under different socio-political frameworks, starting with the Nestorians and continuing later with Catholic missions. Luo’s book was launched with considerable publicity in November of 2003 and will certainly evoke more reactions in the months to come. You find a summary of the book and first reactions on p2 and p3.

Another focus of this edition of ANS is the growing emphasis within the Chinese church on service as an integral part of the Gospel. With Chinese society going through numerous transformations, there is indeed a huge need of social services of all kinds. On p9, we present one of China’s newly emerging Christian philanthropists, while Rev. Mei Kangjun, editor of Tian Feng, offers a general perspective on the relationship between evangelizing and serving (p6). And finally, theologian and psychologist Wang Xuefu offers a glimpse at the discipline of psychological counselling, which is being newly introduced to China’s pastors (p10).

With kind regards from the editorial desk,

[Signature]

If you read Chinese, check out the Chinese Protestant Church's website. Surfing to

http://www.chineseprotestantchurch.org.cn

will give you access to latest news and views from the China Christian Council and the National TSPM Committee.
Luo Guanzong Re-Examines China's Missionary History

(ANS) Luo Guanzong, editor of the newly released anthology Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future headed the National Three Self Patriotic Movement until May 2002. His latest publication re-examines China's missionary past from a Chinese perspective. In the following article, which appeared in November's edition of Tian Feng, Luo introduces his book.

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This book comments on the historical fact of how imperialistic forces used Christianity to invade China. After the founding of New China, when the Chinese church launched the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the sinful abuse of Christianity by the imperialist forces was brought to light. Most of the material available on that topic are speeches made by foreign missionaries or government officials. There had been many voices who demanded a Chinese compilation of these documents. These demands led to the publication of Remembering The Past As a Lesson For The Future, where original materials are used in conjunction with political and historical explanations to give the necessary background information. Covering the missionary involvement in China's modern times, the book spans the century from the First Opium War to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Throughout this whole period, missionaries were involved in Chinese politics and used their missionary activities to serve their respective governments in their invasion of China. Instances of this behaviour are discussed in a number of articles.

Additionally, Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future contains a number of contributions dedicated to specific events, for example the Anti-Christian Movement (1922-1927). Mainly supported by students and intellectuals who set up anti-Christian organizations, the movement criticised Christianity in speeches and articles. Apart from a debate about the question of religious freedom, some of the main arguments brought forward were: Religion and science are incompatible and Christianity constitutes a form of superstition; Christian doctrine and the Bible contain many elements that contradict science, and Christians launched the crusades in historical times.

One question discussed during the Anti-Christian Movement was the presence of missionary-run schools in China, and whether these schools constituted a form of cultural exchange or cultural invasion. The documents analysed in Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future show that the real aim of providing education in China was to nurture a number of future Chinese leaders who would be loyal to their foreign benefactors, thus cementing foreign control in political, economic and cultural matters.

The Chinese reaction to this foreign dominance were calls for more Chinese influence within the church. These calls found their expression in the Movement For Autonomy and in an initiative aimed at the inculturation of Christian faith.

The book then continues with a look at the missionaries. How should their involvement be judged? On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the TSPM, the national church leadership already noted that the abuse of Christianity for the
imperialist aims of foreign powers did not automatically make all foreign missionaries into imperialists. Rather, the performance of individuals should be judged according to the historical facts, and the good deeds that served the Chinese people will not be forgotten. Many missionaries worked very hard to spread the Gospel, engage in health work, social services, cultural exchange etc. There were also those who protected Chinese citizens during the Japanese invasion.

It is a historical fact that imperialism used Christianity to invade China, and the materials collected in this book underline this from four different perspectives: The positions taken by the missionaries and the officials from their respective governments corroborate this view. Secondly, the close relationship between missionary activities and imperialism has been admitted by foreign church leaders. Thirdly, Chinese activists started to reveal the nature of foreign missionary involvement after the May Fourth Movement. And finally, Chinese church leaders joined in the critique of missionary activities that were not in line with Christian principles and that helped to protect the imperialist invaders.

To provide further background reading, a number of previously published documents have been compiled in an appendix. With our publication of this book, we do not only look back, but hope that the past will serve as a guiding lesson for the present and the future. To this day, forces opposed to us use Christianity to conduct activities of infiltration, and in order to destroy their activities, we need to raise our vigilance.

2004.1/2.2

**Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future: Reactions**

(ANS) The publication of Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future created numerous reactions across China's religious circles. Church leaders, religious affairs officials and academics all joined in the choir of those welcoming the publication, recognizing it as a valuable resource on China's Christian history. Below, we bring some excerpts from the reactions printed in November's edition of Tian Feng.

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What is the relevance of Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future in times of globalization? Is it still adequate to publish a book dedicated to missionary history in China and its links to imperialism? In her introduction of Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future, Rev. Cao Shengjie, President of the China Christian Council, underlines the book's value for future generations. Without reference material such as the book, it would be impossible to understand the past, Cao notes, adding that without the correct understanding, the Three Self Movement would lose its roots, and it would be difficult to maintain a spirit of autonomy.

Through the lessons learned from the past, Chinese believers today will be better equipped to discern right from wrong. While the church, like the rest of Chinese society, wants to open up to the outside world, this has to be done in the right way to avoid mistakes. Until today, there are some who want to re-establish denominationalism in China, while others think that believers need not respect state laws.
“Some people think that we have talked already more than enough about China’s imperialist invasion,” Bishop K.H. Ting notes, adding that after reading Luo Guanzong’s latest publication he feels that the book looks for truth in the facts. Chinese seminary students today do not share the memories of the country’s past, and K.H. Ting expresses his hope that many students and faculty of China’s seminaries and Bible schools will study the new book. In his short review, K.H. Ting also points out the changes that have taken place in western missiology over the past fifty years, creating a "New Missiology" and "cultural exchanges" in lieu of the one-sided forms of mission that dominated the past.

Representing the State Administration of Religious Affairs, Ye Xiaowen congratulates Luo Guanzong and his co-workers on the new book, thanking them for their contribution in the field of religion. In his speech delivered at the book launch, Ye warns about the continuing threat from foreign religious groups that try to undermine Chinese religious autonomy. As China walks into the world and the world opens up to China, the book could serve as guidance for Christians, Ye observes.

Prof. Chen Yiming from Shanghai welcomed the book as being of "academic and educational value". The consultant to the Shanghai Academy of Religious Studies also expressed his hope that the book will be studied by scholars of ethics and religion.

2004.1/2.3

Strengthening Ties: National Church Leadership Visits US And Canada

(ANS) Shortly after taking over the presidency of the CCC, Rev. Cao Shengjie announced that one of the main tasks lying ahead of the Chinese Protestant church was to integrate it further with the ecumenical movement. Together with Presbyter Ji Jianhong, Chairman of the TSPM, Cao and her colleagues have already undertaken numerous trips in pursuit of this aim. In December's edition of Tian Feng, Xie Sheng recounts about their latest trip to North America.

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To further promote understanding and friendship between foreign churches and the Chinese Protestant Church, a nine-member delegation from the national Chinese church leadership visited North America in October 2003. Led by Presbyter Ji Jianhong, Chairman of the National TSPM, and Rev. Cao Shengjie, President of the CCC, the delegation toured ten cities in four weeks. Institutions visited included national offices from 14 mainline denominations and 10 theological seminaries. The delegation made numerous presentations on the topics of theological reconstruction, the situation of the Chinese church, and religious policy in China.

The visit kicked off with a seminar at Immanuel Seminary in Toronto, Canada. Attended by church representatives, teachers and students of theology, the meeting helped many of those present to approach Chinese faith life and the reconstruction of theological thinking for the first time in a systematic way. Many of those present said that the presentations by Rev. Cao and Presbyter Ji left them inspired to go to China and visit Chinese churches.
A second highlight was the possibility of meeting representatives from the Chinese church in New York. On a previous visit of one of the delegation members to New York, one pastor of a local Chinese church had declared that there was no religious freedom in China. Given this history, the opportunity to interact with members from the church left the delegation excited, but also nervous. In the end, the meeting turned out to be friendly and well attended - the "meeting in a small group" had over 70 participants. The next day, a number of newspapers reported the meeting in a relatively balanced way.

The Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia hosted another meeting, this time of more academic nature. Again, the focus was theological reconstruction. After the keynote speech from Presbyter Ji, Rev. Ni Guangdao from Zhejiang Provincial Christian Council added a grassroots perspective about "God Is Love" and the problem of "Believers Versus Non-Believers".

On October 22, the delegation held a press conference attended by major radio and television networks. Hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Washington, the press conference started with a video presentation by the Chinese guests, which was followed by a question and answer session. Among the questions raised was the church's relationship with the government and also with the "underground churches". In their response, Presbyter Ji and Rev. Cao presented the viewpoint of the Chinese church: "In China, there doesn't exist an underground church, the church is the church and there is no differentiation between 'above ground' and 'underground'. Regarding those congregations that have not registered yet, we try to help them in whatever way we can. They often come after hearing about us from already registered meeting points, and we always encourage them to register and position themselves under legal protection."

A lunch meeting at Fuller Seminary, an influential evangelical seminary in the western U.S., closed the rounds of visits and meetings. Again, the personal encounter served as an eye-opener for many listeners who had harboured doubts regarding the idea of theological reconstruction.

Ever since the reconstruction of theological thinking was set on the agenda of the Chinese church, a number of foreign observers have been sceptical, wondering whether this initiative would neglect biblical truths or redefine the basic faith. The trip was very successful in helping to explain the reconstruction of theological thinking to outside observers. "The reconstruction of theological thinking currently pursued by the Chinese church is a contribution to the church ecumenical," a bishop from the Anglican Church of Canada observed.

At the same time, there were plenty of opportunities to explain China's religious policy. In the past, Chinese church delegations abroad tended to shy away from talking about religious freedom as "too political" a subject. During this trip, Rev. Cao spoke on more than ten occasions about the Chinese policy of religious freedom, explaining the protection under the basic law and talking about recent policy developments like the acceptance of the "long term existence" of religion.
Finally, the visit to Northern America helped to spread understanding about the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). Because in the past, visits abroad were often made by delegation members in the capacity of CCC representatives, many of those meeting the delegation in October had only very vague ideas about the TSPM. The delegation used the opportunity to explain the aims and principles underlying the Three Self, underlining at the same time their interest in maintaining friendly relations with churches overseas.

2004.1/2.4

**Spreading The Message Through Preaching And Serving**

(ANS) In June of 2002, the National CCC/TSPM set up a Social Service Department aimed at bringing together local social service activities in a more systematic way. At the same time, the church leadership hopes that the new department will inspire more local churches to initiate their own social service projects. Rev. Mei Kangjun, Editor of *Tian Feng*, shares some reflections on the topic in December's edition of the magazine.

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As Chinese Christians, we are concerned with spreading the Gospel among our fellow citizens, to let more people experience God's care for all human beings. At the same time, the church needs to serve the people.

China is in the midst of the transformation from a traditional to a modern society, a process that affects not only social structures, but also attitudes and values. As a social entity, the church ought to uphold norms and actions that are in line with society. Therefore, our social face should manifest itself in our work that benefits the spreading of the Gospel and serves the people.

Bishop K.H. Ting writes about how to understand the relationship between preaching and serving: "The saving grace of Christ does not belong to an individual, but to society. The relationship between the Gospel and social service is related; the Gospel should have a strong message of service." He continues to point out that the Gospel is a message of happiness because it proclaims a loving God, a God who wishes for harmony between him and his people. This harmony is the precondition for harmony between human beings: Once people are at harmony with God, they will have a motivation to improve their relationship with other people.

Among the social service projects of the Chinese church are clinics, homes for the elderly, drinking water projects and the support of primary schools. These all go to show that in China, serving through preaching and social service complement each other effectively.

God bestows wisdom and abilities onto his people, and as he calls on them to love their neighbours, he gives them the right to be loved likewise. The resurrected Jesus demands from all those within the church to go out into society and make all people his followers.
The Social Service Department of the National CCC/TSPM committee, which was established in June of 2002, is an important means to make the social service work undertaken by Chinese congregations more systematic. God's will manifests itself continuously in history, and as we are serving the humblest of persons we may come to realize that in order to know God we have to serve him.

When we reflect on the fact that the Gospel should carry a strong message of service, this leads to the question: What is the difference between ordinary social work and social service? Ordinary social work is done according to systematic regulations, and in the international context, most social work is done by social organizations and non-governmental organizations. Social work serves those in personal crises, takes care of those gone astray, helps to smooth family relations and so on. The stabilizing function of social work lies in its ability to help people overcome their difficulties and prevent the emergence of social problems. Social services performed by the church derive their spirit from the idea of mutual love, from prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, from a Christian faith perspective, helping and caring for those in need become important social responsibilities that at the same time are a way of preaching the gospel through deeds. The church exists within society and we should see ourselves as servants, not lords, in this environment.

We acknowledge that the church has an influence on society, but if we limit ourselves to seeing the church as merely saving souls, this shows ignorance. Without service, we cannot carry on the mission of Jesus Christ himself, who was a healer not only of bodies, but also of souls, and whose healing was not confined to individuals, but directed at society as a whole.

In August 2002, in cooperation with the Social Service Department of the CCC/TSPM, churches in Henan donated wheelchairs to a number of physically impaired people. This is a beautiful testimony of how social service is a direct way for the Chinese church to relate to the weaker segments of society and to contribute to social harmony. This form of preaching in a specific cultural context helps us to communicate with even more people and to truly serve others according to God's will.

In our social service, we firmly believe that every single person is entitled to a rich life, and since God gives us the task of living harmoniously with our neighbours, we should let God's love shine through even more in our care for others. Through our social service, we may encounter all kinds of social problems, and rather than relying only on God, we should also try to help to solve them. For example, Hubei churches initiated an "English Language Ark" for all those students who were not doing well in their English studies.

In its social service, the church will certainly be influenced by the environment it works in, such as political, economic or cultural circumstances. Still, the following principles should always be part of our social service: a life that emulates and believes in Jesus Christ, a testimony full of mutual love, and cooperation with non-Christians.
Establishing An Appropriate Understanding Of The Bible

(ANS) After focusing on the problem of salvation and justification by faith, China's ongoing efforts at theological reconstruction have entered a new phase. At the centre of the current discussion is the question of the "correct" biblical view. While many Chinese Christians tend to understand the Bible in a very literal way, there are also voices that call for a more contemporary reading of Scripture. In December's edition of Tian Feng, Li Dong from Sichuan Theological Seminary gives his view on the subject.

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Some people have recently raised concerns over the tenet that not everything in the Bible is God's word. According to these voices, such a view gives green light to the liberal adding and deleting of passages. If this was possible, the Bible would indeed cease to be the Bible. Of course, different translations of Scripture will make it impossible for every edition to have exactly the same number of words, but if we take the same edition of the Bible as a basis, how can there be talk of adding or deleting words?

On the other hand, if we accept that nothing can be added to the contents of the Bible, we may as well abolish the teaching of homiletics, for doesn't a sermon constitute exactly this - an adding of words to a selected passage of the Bible? Such a literal interpretation of the Bible would also imply that we are only allowed to read the original texts.

At the grassroots, there are in fact some people who do not accept the consultation Bible commentaries because they feel that these versions contain too much "human input". These believers perceive the great contributions in Bible interpretation provided by some scholars as an alteration of Scripture.

So, how do we understand the biblical admonishment not to add or delete things (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Jeremiah 26:2, Revelation 22:18)? Today? First of all, God's words are universal truths, they are authoritative and holy, and any efforts to alter them will be futile. As for the problem of "adding and deleting" things, it is a headache that the people who wrote the Bible created for us. For example, there are two passages about the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament. They differ in both wording and content. How are we, today, going to verify one or the other? And how do we know what was God's inspiration and what was the writers' contribution in those passages? Similar problems can be found in the gospels, where Matthew makes numerous additions to Mark's version and so on.

In Matthew's gospel, we find the following quote relating to Jesus' relationship to the Jewish law: "Remember that as long as heaven and earth last, not the least point nor the smallest detail of the Law will be done away with - not until the end of all things."(Mt 5:18) If we rely solely on this quote to understand Jesus' attitude towards the traditional Jewish law, we may see him as a conservative. However, other passages in the Bible clearly show that Jesus wanted people to live according to the spirit of the traditional law, not the law in its literal sense. The conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees especially illustrate his new understanding of the traditional law.
Secondly, it is important to note that the traditional Jewish law absorbed influences from all over the Middle East. The laws collected in the Old Testament are identifiable as products of their time, and they gave order and structure to Jewish society in a specific environment. Later on, these laws were modified in the Talmud, thus reflecting the ability of the Jewish religion to adapt to different times.

As the Bible contains both God's word and the words of humans, some people might ask us to distinguish one from the other. In fact, this is not necessary, because the Bible would be incomplete without the human contributions that serve to bind together the episodes and words describing God's will.

The Bible reflects God's words and inspirations given to different people in different times. As such, God's words to his people as well as their interpretation may have been limited by the constraints of the times. Still, what is so problematic about admitting that the Bible also contains the words and thoughts of the humans who wrote it? Martin Luther once said that in the manger, there was not only the Holy Child, but also straw. Yet the dirty straw in no way diminished the holiness of the child lying on it.

Moreover, the words of humans in the Bible help us to explore the faith journey of people in ancient times, and we will discover that there are many similarities and only small differences to our own experiences.

2004.1/2.6

Back to the "Future": Christian Philanthropist Sets up Education Foundation

(ANS) Philanthropy, both private and corporate, is a rather new phenomenon in the People's Republic of China. Throughout decades, many mainland Chinese were not wealthy enough to make significant financial contributions to the wider public. This is rapidly changing, and among the newly emerging financial elite are also a number of Christians. December's edition of Tian Feng portrays one such generous donor, Jiang Minde from Fuyang City in Zhejiang.

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Since 1985, he has given more than 14 million RMB [US$1.69 million approx.] in donations for charities. Most recently, during a big fundraising event in Fuyang City, he announced the establishment of a "Future Foundation" aimed at supporting students in need. The generous benefactor is Jiang Minde.

Born in a mountain village outside of Fuyang in 1946, Jiang shares many tough experiences with his contemporaries. But unlike many of his generation, Jiang searched for God, and derives the inspiration for his philanthropy from his Christian faith.

In 1984, Jiang Minde started to produce "Future" child nutrition. Today, his yearly production has reached 8,000 tonnes of "Future" rice noodles, and the annual production is worth 6.5 million RMB [US$ 785,300 approx.] Although he is more than wealthy himself, Jiang has kept a simple lifestyle, wearing modest clothes and living in ordinary employee's lodgings. He says: "My money comes from God, it was given
to me by God for safeguarding. Hence, I cannot spend it recklessly, but ought to help those in need. As long as I have enough to eat and for my own needs, it is sufficient." And his own needs are modest. Yet, when it comes to others in need, Jiang is extremely generous.

During October's fundraising event, Jiang confessed that he had long harboured the dream of building a university in Fuyang. "... But now I am old and regret that I will not reach this goal. These past few years, a number of friends of mine have left this world very suddenly. This has made me realize that I should do what I want to do in the time that is left, otherwise I will regret it." Jiang's interest in supporting education stems from the fact that "a nation's competitiveness is closely linked to its human resources," as he points out. With the interest gained from the funds created by him, 100 needy university students are to be supported each year.

Jiang recalls one particular incident that fuelled his desire to set up a foundation for poor students. He had been informally supporting a student, Xu Hangfang, when the young man suddenly appeared in his office: "I've always wanted to meet you in person, but never had an opportunity. I have a wish: In the future, when it will be possible for me, I also want to give something back to society in the way you do." Jiang was deeply moved by this visit and reckoned that money invested in this way was well spent: If every beneficiary adopts an attitude like Xu Hangfang, a huge network of social benefactors can be established.

"God loves all people on Earth. This includes both those who are believers and those who currently are not believers. God's love is all-encompassing and unselfish. God loves those who believe in him and those who do not believe in him yet. With my work, I want to genuinely represent the Christian spirit of love to our neighbour," Jiang summarizes his motivation.

ANS Feature:

Modern Times: Introducing Pastoral Counselling In The Chinese Church

(ANS) With China's society changing at a breathtaking speed, more and more Chinese find themselves gasping by the sidelines. Unemployment, migration, newly emerging urban poverty, changing family structures and eroding traditional values are some of the factors that contribute to the emotional problems they are experiencing. Counselling services are urgently needed, a fact that has gained growing recognition by the churches. A new emphasis on the pastoral aspects of the minister's vocation and training courses in pastoral counselling are making their way into China's seminaries. The following article summarizes a speech given by Wang Xuefu on the occasion of Nanjing Seminary's 50th anniversary in November 2003. Wang, a Nanjing Seminary graduate himself, trained in psychological counselling in Andover Newton Theological Seminary in the US before returning to Nanjing. He now teaches a course in pastoral counselling at Nanjing Seminary.

While care and concern for parishioners have a long tradition in the church, the introduction of psychological principles into pastoral counselling only started in the 20th century. The church is a community united in faith, but at the same time it is a community consisting of many different individuals. These people do not turn into saints upon their

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conversion to Christianity; rather, as life takes its course, they may encounter problems in their personal or spiritual growth. Traditionally, the church would assist in such cases through offering some Bible-based advice, but confronted with the plurality and complexity of personal problems, this may often seem insufficient.

In China, numerous social changes are affecting individuals, and in response to this development, psychological services are in the process of being set up. As a social entity, the church is affected as well. Christians may face increasing competition and the threat of losing their jobs, they may face complex human relations or marital problems and so on. If a pastoral worker is able to help effectively through his care, this will also help to increase the individual's trust in God. A basic training in pastoral counselling will therefore benefit pastoral workers.

There are those who think that once a person is a Christian, he or she will not encounter personal problems any more, or at least not suffer from related psychological problems. "Aren't faith and prayer enough to solve all problems?" they ask. While prayer is beneficial indeed, the sick person will still have to go and see a doctor. Likewise, prayer cannot relieve all psychological burdens, and the concerned individual will need the help of a pastoral counsellor. We should be careful not to label these persons as "not faithful enough".

Some people say: "Somebody who has a correct faith and has established a real relationship with God will not have any problems." In fact, this is an aim that can only be reached after much striving and if a person receives care that encompasses the physical, emotional, social and other sides of his or her personality. When God enters the life of a person with a twisted personality, it will be extremely difficult to establish a healthy relationship between that person and God. For example, some people call themselves "Jesus". From a faith perspective, we will treat this as a heresy. Psychology, however, offers another explanation for this phenomenon, which is a personality disorder rooted in childhood and life experiences. A person with such a personality will produce a warped response to God, but pastoral counselling offers us a possibility to lead the person onto the right track.

Of course, all human personalities are not perfect, but we are created by God for a continuous process of perfection in cooperation with God. And while pastoral counselling makes use of psychological methods and theories, we also rely on our biblical faith to accompany this process. The person we encounter in the counselling situation is not only a social being, but also a person created in the image of God, somebody who deserves love and respect. Pastoral counselling is special in that it comprises all areas of life: children's education, relationships and marriage, work-related problems and so on. And a second characteristic unique to pastoral counselling is that the church in itself is already a healing body.

The Bible is an important resource in the pursuit of pastoral counselling. From the perspective of pastoral counselling, the Bible itself is already a book that relates how God assists human beings in their spiritual and personal growth. The theologian Teilhard de Chardin describes the relationship between God and humans as one resembling a parent and his
children. While a person does not give up his or her free will after knowing God, he or she does not want to act against God's will after knowing his love.

Somebody who accepts the Christian faith thus is still in a process of creation. As counsellors, we can assist this process, working with both the recipient of our counselling and God.

In the counselling situation, we adopt an attitude that is similar to God's attitude towards us: full of love and respect. The counsellor can never force the client to anything, nor can he make decisions on behalf of him. Just like the growth of a tree cannot be forced, but has to follow natural circumstances, the counsellor must let the counselled person grow on his own.

As a concept developed in the West, pastoral counselling comes from a western cultural background and now forms part of practical theology. It derives its inspiration from two main sources, namely those fields related to psychological counselling and the Bible. In Asia, pastoral counselling has often pioneered psychological counselling in wider society. In China, the development was the other way round, and secular counselling institutions appeared much earlier (starting from the 1980s) than pastoral counselling, which is emerging only now.

2004.1/2.8

NEWSBRIEFS

Hymnal. "New Hymnal" , the hymnal currently used in most Chinese churches, has already a history of 20 years. Over 10 million copies have been sold. Following suggestions from believers as well as the church's Sacred Music Commission, the national church leadership is now planning a new edition of the hymnal. The National CCC/TSPM Committee calls on all believers with the gift of composition to submit suitable hymns. June 30, 2004 is the deadline.

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Art against SARS. Pastor Tian Suliang from Danxian in Shandong Province used his unique skill of papercutting to produce artwork against SARS. He distributed over 50 papercuts among friends and colleagues, some of the pieces bearing slogans like "With scientific prevention, we will defeat SARS". He also spent more than 500 RMB [US$ 60 approx.] of his personal money to print leaflets with basic preventive information, and distributed them on two Sundays to fellow citizens in his area.

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Bible Studies. Following Bishop K.H. Ting's call for a "correct view of the Bible", churches all over China engaged in seminars dedicated to the question. In Hubei, the Municipal CCC/TSPM Committee of Wuhan dedicated its fifth seminar on theological reconstruction to "The View of the Bible". Among the subtopics discussed from December 10 to 12, 2003 were "The Bible and traditional Chinese
culture," "Faith and action" and "Justification by faith". In November 2003, Hubei Provincial Christian Council had already conducted a seminar focusing on the correct view of the Bible.

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Book Launch. Following the launch of Remembering The Past As A Lesson For The Future, a number of provincial churches organized seminars to welcome the publication. Churches in Hubei, Sichuan, Guangdong and the Northeast (Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning) acknowledged Luo Guanzong's book with discussion meetings.
Places Mentioned In This Issue Of ANS

1) Fuyang (Zhejiang)
2) Nanjing (Jiangsu)
3) Shanghai
4) Danxian (Shandong)
5) Wuhan (Hubei)