**Dear Reader,**

The Bible can be seen as the lodestar on the path of the Chinese Church towards more open encounters with Christians worldwide, since the Bible was the theme of the historical exhibition on Chinese church ministry displayed in Los Angeles, Atlanta and New York this spring. During the Bible Ministry Exhibition tour, Chinese Church leaders met with thousands of fellow Christians in the US, and the American public had an opportunity to see live expressions of Chinese Christianity at their doorsteps.

The exhibition, introduced on p.2 of this issue, is a landmark in the history of the Chinese church which only less than 30 years ago started its recovery after the Cultural Revolution. At present, CCC/TSPM delegations participate in ecumenical meetings and events, such as the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre (p.3), and the installation of Anglican Archbishop Chew in Singapore (p.13). Internally, the religious circles and their work are recognised by the government (p.5), and the church is engaged in developing its social involvement (p.10) and theological education (p.8).

There are overseas observers, however, who adopt different stances on recent developments in the Chinese Church. ANS summarises on p.4 the letter written by the Overseas Department of the Chinese Protestant Church in response to a US report on Chinese religious freedom. Another way of seeing the situation is presented in a Chinese-English bilingual compilation of articles by overseas scholars and friends of the Chinese Church contemplating Bishop Ting’s life and impact on Christianity in China. Theresa Carino’s review of the book called “Seeking Truth in Love” is on p.11 of this issue.

With kind regards from the editorial desk

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Chinese Church’s Bible Ministry Exhibition Tours the United States

(ANS) "The Bible is the foundation of our faith and our daily spiritual food," were the words used by Reverend Cao Shengjie to open the Chinese Bible Ministry Exhibition at the Crystal Cathedral in Los Angeles on April 27th 2006. For the first time in the history of the Chinese Protestant Church, living expressions of Chinese Christianity were on display outside of China in this unique format. Between the months of April and June, the Chinese Bible Ministry Exhibition was shown in Los Angeles (Crystal Cathedral), Atlanta (Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church) and New York (The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine).

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The history of this tour goes back to 2004, when this exhibition called "A Lamp to My Feet, A Light to My Path" was on display for the first time in Hong Kong. After two years of careful preparations on both sides of the Pacific, the exhibition was finally opened for the first time on the North American continent. Exhibits, photographs and multi-media presentations illustrating different stages of Bible printing and distribution in China were the most visible but not the only part of the entire exhibition programme planned by the local hosts and the Chinese sponsors. In between the official viewings of the exhibition, representatives of the China Christian Council/Three-Self Patriotic Movement and accompanying Chinese religious authorities held meetings and seminars with their American counterparts, scholars and other dignitaries. Chinese guests also preached in local churches and paid visits to overseas Chinese Christian communities.

The Bible Ministry Exhibition and its associated programme of events had clear aims, namely, to raise the American audience’s awareness of the development of the Chinese Protestant Church, to build friendly relations, and to share about God’s blessings and grace in China. Right from the first seminar held at Asua Pacific University, L.A., on April 25th, the growth of Christianity in China, the role of the Bible in Chinese congregations and religious freedom have been discussed at a variety of meetings and in news reports. Before the final stop of the exhibition in New York in June, the exhibition had attracted more than 11,000 visitors.

The exhibition also presented an occasion for the American visitors to catch a glimpse of cultural expressions of the Bible within Chinese Christianity. Paintings, woodcarvings and paper cuts with Christian motifs were on display at the exhibition, and musical performances enlivened the opening galas. Professional Chinese musicians played traditional Chinese instruments, and a group of minority Christians, dressed in their ethnic costumes, attracted attention by performing hymns and folk music in their own language. In addition, joint concerts at the exhibition site and in surrounding churches by American, Chinese and Lisu minority musicians offered an occasion for cultural exchange.

Many distinguished guests visited the exhibition and its various opening ceremonies. In their addresses, some acknowledged that there are misconceptions in the United States about Bible distribution and Christianity in China, but the Bible Ministry Exhibition has helped to clear up these misunderstandings by showing how Christ’s cause is being promoted in modern China. Others expressed the need for building friendly relationships between the churches of these two nations. Former President
Jimmy Carter, who attended the opening gala of the exhibition in Atlanta, hoped in his address that both Chinese and American Christians could pray for each other and, under the highest concept of salvation and eternity which binds us together, overcome cultural, geographical or other barriers which might cause separation.

For detailed news coverage of the exhibition, see the China Christian Council website: http://www.chineseprotestantchurch.org.cn/en/news.html

2006.5/6.2

Chinese Protestant Church Attends Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches

(ANS) With over 10% of all participants coming from the region (source: CCA News, March 2006), Asia made a substantial contribution to the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), held in Porto Alegre (Brazil) between 13th - 23rd February this year. In addition, 27 Asian delegates, including two female delegates from China, were elected to the WCC's Central Committee during the assembly. Tian Feng (Issue 293) reports on the gathering.

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With its theme of "God, in your Grace, Transform the World", the first WCC assembly of the 21st century summoned churches and Christians worldwide to confront poverty, tackle economic inequalities and remedy violence and injustice within the world. Over 4,000 participants from all over the world re-affirmed their commitment to pursuing unity within the worldwide church and to bearing a Christian witness to the whole world.

The program for the 10-day assembly included theme-related seminars, committee meetings, Bible studies and daily devotions, workshops and valuable time for informal dialogue between believers heralding from vastly different backgrounds. Delegates also had the opportunity to worship at local Brazilian churches on Sundays. Topics raised at plenary meetings centred around economic injustice, church unity and Christian identity, interfaith dialogue and overcoming violence. In addition, the assembly highlighted a special concern about growing fundamentalism within member churches threatening the unity of the worldwide church. Statements were also issued on nuclear disarmament, reform of the United Nations, inadequate water supplies in different parts of the world, as well as terrorism and counter-terrorism.

Having been a member of the World Council of Churches since 1991, a delegation from the China Christian Council also attended the gathering in Porto Alegre. The delegation was made up primarily of national church leaders, including the President of the CCC, Reverend Cao Shengjie, Ms. Chen Meilin, Reverend Gao Ying, Reverend Kan Baoping, as well as members of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. The Chinese delegation organised a meeting on 20th February entitled "Involvement of the Chinese Protestant Church in Society" where Rev. Cao Shengjie presented an overview of the current situation within the church in China to WCC delegates. Pastor Gao Ying gave an address dealing with the role of women within the Chinese church, while a faculty member of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, Wen Ge, shared reflections on the church's current development from a young Christian's perspective.
A lively question and answer session at the end of the meeting reflected delegates' keen interest in developments within the Chinese church.

Further highlighting the growing influence of the Chinese church within the global church, Pastor Gao Ying was re-elected to the WCC's 150-member Central Committee at the assembly, while Ms. Chen Meiilin was elected to this body for the first time. Chinese delegates took these elections as an affirmation by the international church community of their efforts to run the Chinese church well and safeguard unity in Christ through the application of Three-Self principles.

A Letter to the "United States Commission on International Religious Freedom"

(ANS) In August 2005, at the invitation of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA), the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom visited China and met with the Chinese church leaders who gave an introduction to the current situation of Protestant churches in China. On their return to the United States, this commission then published a report entitled "Policy Focus on China" which surprised the Chinese church and elicited a response from the CCC/TSPM's Overseas Relations Department. The full text of the letter was published in issue number 281 of Tian Feng magazine, and can be accessed in its entirety in English at the following website: http://www.chineseprotestantchurch.org.cn/en/news/200601-1.htm. ANS presents a summary of the main points of the letter below.

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The "Policy Focus on China" did not reflect many of the truths witnessed by the commission during their visit, and its description of the religious situation in China is far from objective. The key tone of the report is that "the space for political openness, public activism, and greater civil and individual freedoms is narrowing in China", "the government of China has engaged in systematic and egregious violations of freedom of religion" and "the Chinese government, as a matter of policy, monitors, controls, and represses the activities of members of all religious communities". The CCC/TSPM expresses surprise at these conclusions and does not know on what basis they were drawn.

The experience of the Chinese church is that it is enjoying more and more religious freedom and receiving more and more support from the Chinese government. In the past 25 years, more than 55,000 churches and meeting points have been re-opened or newly constructed, as well as 18 theological seminaries and Bible schools and a large number of lay training centres. Over 8,000 seminary students have been trained, most of whom have returned to their hometowns in rural areas of China. The church has also published over 36 million copies of the Bible, 10,000 hymnals, 7 million devotionals and 2.5 million audio-visual resources. Meanwhile, the new campus for Nanjing Union Theological Seminary is under construction. All these achievements would have been impossible without good religious policy and active support from the Chinese government. It is true that religious policy is not implemented successfully and uniformly in all areas, but the overall situation is one of continuous and rapid advancement. Chinese Christians feel they have more space in society in which to operate and that the Chinese government is encouraging religious believers to make contributions to society. China is a country with increasing freedoms.
The report states that "Chinese leaders have to refrain from teaching involving the second coming of Jesus, divine healing, the practice of fasting, and the virgin birth because these doctrines or practices are considered by the government to be superstitious or contrary to the Chinese Communist Party's social policies." Despite such a view being popular overseas, Chinese Christians have not experienced any of this in practice, and in fact many overseas pastors also have the experience of being invited to preach in Chinese churches without any restrictions being placed on them. Many churches in China recite the Apostle's Creed as part of their weekly services. And the 100 Questions and Answers on the Christian Faith published by the China Christian Council clearly states that "Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary" and "Christ will return to earth, as He Himself promised." Before baptism, all catechumens must pass a catechism test which includes information about the virgin birth, the second coming of Jesus, etc. Furthermore, the report continually mentions how some religious believers in China are accused of being "counter-revolutionary" and put in to prison, yet the term "counter-revolutionary" was completely removed from Chinese Criminal Law as early as 1997. So it is not certain just what information the commission is basing its report upon.

The report calls on the Chinese government to abide by Article 18 Item 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion". However, the 3rd item of this article also states: "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedom of others." Chinese Christians enjoy freedom of religious faith, but this freedom also comes with a responsibility and obligation to respect the rights of others and abide by the law. The Bible itself says "do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil". Some people do harmful things to others in the name of religion, and they are then punished not for their faith but for violating laws. Even in America, citizens cannot escape punishment for breaking laws just because they hold a certain religious faith.

The CCC/TSPM calls on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom to give up its prejudices and draw conclusions based on truth.

2006.5/6.4

Religious Leaders Invited to Zhongnanhai over Chinese New Year

(ANS) A few days before the Chinese Spring Festival this year, leaders of the five main religious bodies in China were invited to the Chinese government's headquarters at Zhongnanhai in Beijing to meet with politburo member and chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Jia Qinglin. Tian Feng issue number 281 contains a news report originally published by China's Xinhua news agency on this meeting.

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Zhongnanhai is the name given to a complex of buildings near Tian'an Men Square and the Forbidden City in Beijing which serves as the headquarters for Chinese government leaders. On 22nd January this year, heads of the five main religious bodies in China, including Christians, gathered at this leadership compound to exchange new year's greetings with one of the top
government officials in the country, Jia Qinglin.

During the meeting, Jia reflected on the progress that has been made concerning religious affairs in China in recent years. He recalled the basic foundations for religious work laid down by former leaders Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin and moved on to more recent developments, such as an attempt to further standardize and regulate the management of religious affairs through the recent publication of the new "Regulations on Religious Affairs" (effective from 1st March 2005, see ANS 2005.3/4.1). As well as reiterating the efforts made by the Chinese government in the area of religious affairs, Jia also emphasized the part religious bodies themselves have played, noting their contributions towards building a more harmonious socialist society and implementing improved training programmes for young religious personnel. Looking to the future, Jia expressed the hope that religious believers would continue to contribute to China's overall development and play their part in moving forward together with the rest of the country.

Jia commented how ties with overseas religious bodies have opened up and broadened in recent years, but he reminded the religious leaders of the need to maintain independence and self-reliance in the face of outside influences which could prove harmful to national security and stability. As a significant group within society, Jia also stressed the need for religious bodies to continually examine themselves and look for ways of improving both their internal structures as well as outside communication with other sectors of society.

Finally, Jia commented on the vital importance of training high quality religious personnel for the future healthy development of religious life in China, and urged religious leaders to place training programmes at the top of their agendas. In particular, he highlighted a need to raise up a new generation of religious leaders who, like their predecessors, maintain high religious, moral and academic standards, who love their country and their faith and are willing to work in harmony with political authorities while, at the same time, possessing the respect of the wider community in general.

2006.5/6.5

Exposing the "Disciples"

(ANS) One of the greatest dangers facing the Chinese church today, particularly in rural areas where believers have little education and grounding in their faith, is the influence of heretical sects. One such sect is the "Disciples" group (or Mentuhui in Chinese) and, in an attempt to raise awareness about this group among Chinese believers, Tian Feng issue number 281 presents a concise summary of the sect's main characteristics.

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The Disciples sect came into being when a peasant farmer from Shaanxi Province convened a meeting of followers in February 1989 in Shaanxi's Yao County and established himself as president or "High Deacon" of the new organisation. The group took its name from its core of "12 disciples" but is also commonly known as "The Narrow Gate of Wilderness" due to its refusal to attend registered churches, or "The Church of the Two Rice Bowls" due to the various nutritional restrictions it
imposes in some areas. The founder, Ji Sanbao, died in a car accident in December 1997 and was replaced by Chen Shirong, also from Shaanxi Province.

Ji Sanbao is worshipped by members of the group as a "God-appointed Christ" and "Son of God", to name just a couple of the titles he chose to bestow upon himself. While he was alive, Ji claimed to have fasted solidly for a period of 32 days, as well as having the power to perform miraculous healings, raise people from the dead and forgive people their sins. Disciples' regulations stipulate that everyone must pray in Ji's name, and that seeing Ji's "light" is a sign of God's true presence in their lives.

The Disciples teach that Jesus's second coming is near and that an all-consuming fire will descend from heaven and cause the earth to explode. They believe that only those who believe in Ji Sanbao's redemptive powers will have the ability to avoid this disaster, enter heaven and enjoy eternal life. When conversing with potential converts, Disciples members evoke the torments of hell awaiting all those who have not seen Ji's "light".

As with many sects, the Disciples use a mixture of their own teachings and various distorted Bible quotes in order to convince and win over new converts. They mostly operate in poor rural areas and know what the people in these areas need and want to hear. For example, in such areas, access to medical facilities is limited or non-existent, so Disciples members make appealing promises about healing through prayer and without the need for expensive medical consultations, promises which are instantly attractive to poor rural folk. Similarly, many of the speeches and published material of Ji Sanbao were written using common language and examples taken from typical rural settings, including stories of domestic animals dying, grain stocks being all used up and illness striking down a family. In this way, sect members instantly connect with their listeners and draw them in. All sect members are expected to carry out proselytising activities among their family, neighbours and friends and, while country dwellers are the main targets, the group is now also starting to make inroads within China's cities.

Secrecy is key within the Disciples sect, with a complicated hierarchical structure which is not usually revealed to the average sect member. The High Deacon has overall authority, while regular "deacons" control activities at their level and below, with no channel available for ordinary sect members to communicate upwards with higher level leaders within the sect. Members and leaders at various levels are not permitted to use their real names in communication, and leaders are not usually given oversight of their home regions in order to further protect their identities. Most of the group's activities are said to take place under the cover of darkness.

The sect is particularly dangerous because it specifically preys on the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the communities in which it operates. Promises of miraculous healings and bumper harvests without the need for expensive fertilizers and pesticides offer hope to the impoverished who cannot afford such things. At the same time, sect members are coerced in to donating money, rice and domestic animals in the name of charity in order to help fellow members facing difficulties. The group is reported to have raised some RMB 10,000 (=US$1,250 approx.) in this manner in 2001 alone, with the majority of donors barely able to afford their donations but unable to resist the exhortation to "grant small favours for the winning
of new souls". Mismanagement of funds is reportedly common among the leading core of the sect.

Through trusting in the teachings of the Disciples sect, there are reports that many members have died due to waiting for miraculous healings instead of seeking out proper medical assistance. Similarly, heretical interpretations of the Bible's teachings on the "Bread of Life" have caused many believers to neglect their fields and domestic animals and to squander their resources in order to prepare for the expected last days and their entry to the kingdom of heaven. Chinese church leaders see such examples as a cause for concern and harmful to wider society and are therefore eager to alert people to the dangers of this sect.

Henan Bible School Adjusts to Changing Times and Needs

(ANS) Traditionally, the Chinese approach to education has emphasised a teacher-centred approach, the acquisition of knowledge and rote-learning, and has overlooked the development of the whole person and life skills. This traditional approach has also been followed and practiced by theological educators in the church and is still prevalent in many of China's seminaries and Bible schools today. However, times and needs are changing, and the church's Bible schools are starting to respond to these changes. In issue 281 of Tian Feng, the Editor Mei Kangjun reports on how one theological training institute, Henan Bible School, is seeking to adjust its ways in order to better provide for the needs of the flock it seeks to serve.

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Henan boasts a Christian population of at least two million, which accounts for roughly one-seventh of all Christians in China, and the province also has over 6,000 points of worship. However, there are only around 100 ordained pastors serving this huge flock, and their workload is exceptionally heavy as a result. Henan Bible School was founded in 1980 and has so far trained over 1,200 theological graduates who are now scattered over 18 cities and 150 counties throughout the province and go some way towards helping ease the situation. However, the fact remains that Henan is in great need of trained and competent church workers, and the Bible School has recently been adjusting its approaches in order to meet this need.

The needs of Christians in Henan are certainly acute. It is estimated that some 90% of churches in Henan lack personnel with formal theological training, while some 80% of believers in the Henan church have a low level of education and a very basic understanding of their faith. For these reasons, since the 1990s, heretical sects have been taking hold and wreaking havoc in various locations throughout the province.

Combating such problems is not only a question of getting more theologically-trained church workers out into the field but also ensuring that these graduates have received adequate training which equips them to pastor their flocks. In order to do this, the Henan Bible School has been making changes in terms of its management, its curriculum and course content and its pedagogical approach. For example, the two-year students' present syllabus now contains over 40 different courses, and the proportion of biblically-based and practically applicable courses has been revised. Meanwhile, the school is constantly seeking to develop new courses, for example,
"Politics and Three-Self Principles", "Worship Studies", "Pastoral Counselling" and so on, which specifically target the particular conditions and situations in which the students will later find themselves.

The school currently has nine full-time teachers and, with the exception of the political studies teacher, they are all theological graduates from major institutes in China and Asia, and they are all continuously encouraged to update their own qualifications whenever the opportunity presents itself. In order to raise standards at the Bible school, a new evaluation system has been introduced for both teachers and management, which fosters a greater sense of responsibility amongst staff towards their own work and which serves as a good example to students to take their own studies more seriously.

Perhaps the greatest change made at the Henan Bible School in recent times is the attitude towards students. There is now a greater emphasis in the school on recognizing students' individuality in terms of their aptitude, abilities, backgrounds, skills and personalities. The school strives to follow Bishop Ting's call to treat theological students like parents treat their children, not being too demanding nor trying to "force" the growth of the students. Developing the students' all-round abilities, analytical and problem-solving skills and innate talents is now seen as just as important as acquiring knowledge, and various activities have been introduced to foster this through more joint group activities, such as organizing devotions together or serving one another through hair-cutting, tailoring, making repairs, each according to the students' skills and talents.

Such adjustments in the life and work of Henan Bible School are already starting to bear fruit. In the 1980s, a church was opened in a county in the eastern part of Henan but lacked any theologically-trained workers to pastor it, so church work has more or less been paralysed and stagnated in this location for many years. Recently, a graduate from Henan Bible School was sent to that church and was very quickly able to adapt to the local situation, analyse the situation and provide relevant services and teaching to the Christians there. The principal of Henan Bible School, Reverend Hu Junjie, believes that such a success story is only possible due to the reforms and adjustments that have been made in the training offered at the Bible school in recent years.

Such considerations are not unique to the situation in Henan. According to statistics from 2005, there are currently a total of 24 theological seminaries and Bible schools in China, with over 150 full-time staff currently training around 1,700 students. 6,000 students have graduated from such institutes in the past and some 5,000 of these are still working in local congregations. Efforts are continually being sought to raise the overall quality of theological education throughout the whole of China, such as working in collaboration with teacher training colleges and universities on research projects and advanced studies and finding ways for the qualifications of theological graduates to be more widely recognized within the overall education system. The efforts on the part of Henan Bible School to raise its own standards in order to meet current local needs is one part of this wider movement to raise the quality of theological education in China.

2006.5/6.7
In Hunan, Visions Can Come True

(ANS) Where social service ministry is concerned, the Hunan church has very much adopted a proactive approach, supporting special education projects for the disabled and hearing-impaired, and building several church-run clinics within different counties in the province. In May 2006, ANS editor Elisa Nousiainen had the opportunity to visit some of the Hunan church’s social service projects and learn more about them in conversation with Hunan Christian Council’s president, Reverend Yao Zengyi.

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From the outside, it looks like any other four-storey building, complete with the usual hardware stores on the ground floor plying their wares. If it weren’t for the large sign above one of these stores, you would never guess that inside more than 20 teachers and 95 students were busily learning speaking and lip-reading skills. Opened in 1998, this centre was set up to provide small-scale rehabilitation support for hearing-impaired children. The founder and driving force behind the centre is Wang Xueying, herself a mother of a disabled son who felt dissatisfied with the options available to her at public education institutes and so decided to do something about it herself.

The centre is an excellent example of a well-run project and, according to Reverend Yao, succeeds because it is motivated by and based on genuine love. Mrs. Wang initially started the project on her own but when the Hunan Christian Council heard about it, they were touched by her deep concern and love for disabled children and decided to help her find premises for her project and furnish them. Today, Mrs. Wang runs a well-established centre with professional and dedicated staff, serving as a means for handicapped children to learn skills enabling them to function in regular public schools and lead a normal life.

Naturally, love on its own is not enough to manage a project successfully. Rev. Yao notes that, in many rural churches, people may act out of Christian love but find implementing a social service project difficult, often due to their own low level of education. Furthermore, in poor congregations, projects are often short-lived because they initially rely on outside support but then do not develop their potential to generate their own funds and becoming self-sustaining once the outside support has ended. Then there are cases where churches try to take on projects for which they do not have the required training and background, for example, when they try to help families with drug-related problems. Love needs to be combined with people with personal and professional skills, and partners need to have a keen awareness of these factors when assessing any potential project.

Despite such limitations, there are many church-run social service projects in Hunan which have improved the quality of life for people in remote areas of the province, including disaster relief and church-run clinics. Reverend Yao tells the story of one lay worker in a rural area who had a vision to provide his church with a proper meeting place. So, he contacted Reverend Yao and asked for a loan to purchase a multi-storey building in his local town for this purpose. The plans were well thought out so the loan was granted. This believer then bought the building, renovated the interior and sold off part of the building at a substantial profit. Now this believer has cleared all his debts, the church congregation occupies one whole floor of the building and a church-run clinic has been set up on another floor.
As Reverend Yao talked, a young girl with a slight mental health problem entered her office, sat down and quietly listened to our conversation. The girl was in her late teens and felt at home in the Hunan Bible Institute and in Reverend Yao's office, where she is not laughed at like outside but just accepted as she is. Her presence underlined the genuine concern and love which Reverend Yao talks about and which Hunan Christians put into practice in their social service projects.

2006.5/6.8

Introducing "Seeking Truth in Love"

(ANS) An excellent guide and commentary on Bishop KH Ting's writings by scholars from Asia, Europe and North America, the bilingual volume "Seeking Truth in Love" is now available at bookstores in China. Compiled and edited by Wang Peng, Dean of Studies at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, the 393-page book was published in February, 2006 by the Religious Culture Press. Priced at 48 RMB (USD $6.00), not including postage, copies are also available from the CCC/TSPM office in Shanghai.

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The theology of K.H. Ting, the spiritual head of the Protestant church in China, has defied labelling. Having led the church over five decades, Bishop Ting has had his fair share of criticism from the extreme right and the extreme left, yet his writings appeal to both evangelicals and "ecumenicals" alike. As the comments and analyses of fifteen authors and scholars from around the world attest, his writings are responses to the demands of the times spanning five decades in China's turbulent contemporary history.

The bilingual volume "Seeking Truth in Love" compiled by Wang Peng is a very welcome addition to the growing number of books by and about Bishop K.H. Ting (or K.H. as he is affectionately known to his friends.) It provides biographical details and insights that help throw light on the many and less known influences on K. H.'s life and theological perspective. We learn that K.H. is not a dialectical theologian, that he has an appreciation of natural theology, that he does not put much emphasis on the concept of original sin but stresses the goodness of human nature.

The articles, written by theologians and other scholars from Asia, Europe and North America, help us to appreciate the enormity of the tasks confronting the Christian leadership in China. K.H. has faced difficult challenges with quiet strength and wisdom. In his "A Chinese Contribution to Ecumenical Theology," Philip Wickeri notes that K.H. is a "Christian thinker who loves the church and a Christian theologian who loves China." He has a remarkably consistent vision of Christian faith in the Chinese context and has guided Chinese Protestant churches through being part of a patriotic movement to being a "church in formation." His position as Vice Chair of the NPPCC (National People's Political Consultative Conference) allowed him to push the boundaries of religious freedom in China and to serve as an advocate for reform and change at the highest levels of government. Elaborating on this, Danny Yu in his article highlights Ting's contribution to church-state dialogue on legal rights for Chinese Christians and for religious believers as a whole, including seeking fairer treatment of Christianity among academe.
As a Christian leader, K. H. has challenged Chinese Christians first in responding to the Chinese revolution and today, to the demands of modernisation in a highly secular society. The central theme of his theology is "Love" which has held a strong appeal to those disappointed and disillusioned by the Cultural Revolution in China. He stresses the healing role of the church in a post-Cultural Revolution China where God's redeeming love binds, unites and renews, overcoming suffering and conflict. His themes of reconciliation, forgiveness, seeking the common ground rather than emphasizing the differences, have an appeal not only for the Chinese but strike a responsive chord with Christians overseas.

Several authors in this book point to the innovation and creativity of Ting's theology. K.H., the visionary, is always far ahead of his time. Raymond Whitehead points out that as early as 1979, Bishop Ting had talked of the need for theological reconstruction, something that has only emerged as a movement in the Protestant churches nearly two decades later. According to Whitehead, "Ting commented then that the inherited theology (from Western missions) was "alienating, revolving around the exclusivity of belief." It was only after thirty years, in the light of historical change that Chinese theology has "shifted to the pluralistic language of practice."

For K.H., local theology has global significance and is not simply "Chinese" theology. His Chinese-ness stems from constant engagement with the Chinese context and is not an artificial attempt to incorporate "Confucian" elements or what Western scholars would see as "Chinese" elements into a "normative" theology. K.H. is free from trying to please a Western-educated audience. He writes mainly for Chinese Christians even as he tries to interpret the experiences of the Chinese church to audiences overseas.

We are grateful to Wang Peng for putting together this volume. It will go a long way in helping audiences both in China and overseas to further appreciate the significant contributions that K.H. Ting has made to the Church in China and to Chinese theology.

Theresa Carino

NEWSBRIEFS

Jia Qinglin visits Nanjing Theological Seminary. On April 24th this year, politburo member and Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Jia Qinglin (see ANS 2006.5/6.4) paid a visit to the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary campus in Nanjing (Jiangsu Province), accompanied by the governor of Jiangsu Province and leaders from Nanjing's municipal government. The delegation was received by Bishop K.H. Ting, Presbyter Ji Jianhong and Nanjing Seminary staff representatives. During the visit, Jia affirmed government support for the new Nanjing Theological Seminary campus currently under construction. The new campus will receive its first students in autumn 2007.

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Mainland Chinese Church Leaders attend the Installation of Archbishop Chew in Singapore. In February 2006, Presbyter Ji Jianhong (Chairman of the National Three-Self Patriotic Movement), Reverend Cao Shengjie (President of the China Christian Council) and Ye Xiaowen, Director-General of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) attended the installation ceremony of the third Archbishop of the Province of the Anglican Church in South-East Asia, Dr John Chew. Ever since the 1980's, Archbishop Chew has demonstrated his support for the mainland Chinese church through his numerous visits to China. He has shown concern for the smooth development of a self-governing and independent Chinese church and has cared for numerous Chinese students studying under him as Principal of Trinity Theological College in Singapore.

In Singapore, overseas Chinese account for the majority of the population but only a few have received a Chinese education. Archbishop Chew is the first Archbishop of Singapore who has grown up within a local Chinese congregation, and his respect for Chinese culture was evident throughout his installation ceremony with the 1600 guests singing a hymn composed by a Chinese Christian. During a recent meeting with the President of Singapore, Archbishop Chew presented a special copy of a bilingual English-Chinese Bible printed by the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing (Jiangsu Province) in order to highlight the printing of over 40 million Bibles in China.

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Anhui business provides Holy Communion bread for the Chinese Church. A factory located in Anhui is currently the only place in China manufacturing specialized equipment to produce Holy Communion bread for the Chinese church. This equipment has obtained a national patent and enables one person to process 1,000 pieces of bread an hour. Orders from congregations can be placed personally using either postal or bank remittance, and prices range from RMB 1,400 (US$175) to RMB 1,980 (US$247), depending on the design and the raw material used in production.
Places Mentioned in This Issue of ANS

1. Zhongnanhai (Beijing)
2. Yao county
3. Henan Bible School (Zhengzhou)
4. Hunan Bible School (Changsha)
5. Nanjing Jinling Union Theological Seminary (Nanjing)
6. Factory for Communion Bread Equipment (Chaohu)