Dear Reader,

Autumn in most countries is the beginning of the new school term and a time to set objectives. In Jinling Union Theological Seminary, the new term started with a solemn opening convocation and service where the leaders, faculty members and students envisioned the challenges of the coming academic year (p.2). The seminary lives amidst a transitional period which entails explorations and development initiatives at different levels. Reverend Gao Ying looks into the seminary development from the vice-president’s perspective (p.3); Tian Feng Magazine publishes articles on entry requirements, graduations, and other related issues, such as theological reconstruction on grass-roots level (pp. 5, 6 and 10) respectively.

When Christian bodies set objectives to meet future challenges, Christian ethics should form the basic rationale of taking action. In addition to Christian circles, the call for high ethical values in thought and in deed is being extended to wider society. A Shanghai YMCA leader appealed to the entire Shanghai City population for protection of their social and physical environment (p.14). Fujian provincial Christian Council went a step further by applying Christian teaching into practice through spiritual and material aid to the hurricane disaster victims; contribution to rebuilding devastated churches presents for Christians worldwide an occasion of witnessing with the Chinese Church (p.11). Christian witness becomes credible when the Word becomes flesh, when faith is reflected in concrete actions.

With kind regards from the editorial desk

P.S.
Rev. Gao finished her sermon with an exhortation for everyone to find encouragement in God's blessing and their calling to serve and meet any future challenges. She prayed to God for unity and for the Holy Spirit's renewal during the academic year 2006-2007.

2006.9/10.2

Collaboration and Interaction at the Core of Nanjing Seminary Leadership

(ANS) Nanjing Union Theological Seminary is going through a period of exploration. The construction of the new seminary campus in the outskirts of Nanjing city is advancing according to schedule. The foundation work has been finished and the construction of the majority of the 10 new buildings is in process. The new campus will receive its first students in autumn 2007. In the old campus, the entire "software" of the seminary is undergoing major development. Gao Ying, the vice-president of the seminary since March 2006, is at the centre of the process. She outlines the recent developments in the seminary to an Amity staff delegation visiting Nanjing in early September 2006.

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Gao Ying was appointed the vice-president of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in January 2006. Her credentials for the current responsibilities are impressive, since her past experience includes pastoral work on the grass-root level, church leadership, international ecumenical duties and theological ecucation. She worked as an associate pastor at Chongwenmen church in Beijing in 1991-97 and resumed the pastoral duties in the same congregation as the senior pastor after spending a year at the WCC in Geneva as an intern, and three years at the Nanjing seminary as an assistant to the president of the seminary. In 2004, she started her doctoral studies in Canada from where she was called to take her current position in leadership of China's only national theological seminary.

The Nanjing seminary is preparing for the changes the new campus and increased number of students and personnel will bring forth. "In the new campus, the number of students will be increased in the next couple of years from the current 170 up to 500, and this will set new requirements for the seminary. The increase will naturally influence overall administration, library facilities, faculty and finances, which all need to be developed", explains Rev. Gao. Concrete measures have already been taken to meet the requirements.

In the domain of seminary administration, and in particular in "structural work", to use Rev. Gao's expression, a weekly executive meeting has been created. In this meeting, the leaders come together to discuss administrative and academic issues. "The collaboration between the two generations is very close. I have helped Bishop Ting to explore new programmes and I am very grateful to Presbyter Ji Jianhong [the chairman of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee and the executive vice-president of Nanjing Seminary] for his suggestions and support of new ideas through his presidency in executive meetings. As a national leader, Presbyter Ji has the advantage of being in a position to offer financial and personal support to the seminary, which is much appreciated."
catalogues are being planned, but the software and funding are still lacking. A new website is under construction.

In any institution, which has been active for more than half a century, exploration is a challenge, and in human life, the religious domain tends to be the most resistant to changes. When asked how the new ideas and suggestions introduced by Rev. Gao have been received, she replies: "When introducing new ideas, of course you need to be careful so as not to hurt others and the individual relationships and interests. I talk to people a lot, I listen to their voices and make the decisions on the basis of fair conclusions." As for her role in Nanjing seminary, she says: "I am flexible for any new assignment, and ready to serve anywhere, as a teacher or a pastor, as long as God is in charge. I received this position by God's mercy and accepted it as a call from God after prayer and contemplation. I wish to be humble, since humility is the key element in serving others and the church, and this important position gives me an opportunity to serve others."

2006.9/10.3

What Does It Take to Get in to Nanjing Union Theological Seminary?

(ANS) Nanjing Union Theological Seminary is China's foremost national-level training ground for theological students in the Protestant Church in China, but what exactly does it take to be accepted as a student there? The September 2006 issue of Tian Feng magazine (issue number 294) sheds some light on the seminary's entry requirements and application procedures for the 2007-2008 academic year.

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Nanjing Union Theological Seminary currently offers two main study programmes: a four-year bachelor's degree and a three-year master's degree in divinity. Applications for the undergraduate programme starting in 2007 are to be submitted between December 2006 and February 2007, while the deadline for applications for postgraduate study is December 12, 2006. Individuals cannot apply directly to the seminary for these courses, their applications must go through their own provincial CCC/TSPM committees who act as clearing houses for the seminary. Applicants send their application forms and a RMB 50 (=US$ 6) application fee to their provincial church councils who then forward them to the Nanjing seminary's recruitment team for consideration. The provincial CCC/TSPM committees also organise the entrance examinations for the seminary's undergraduate study programme, while those applying for postgraduate study must attend written and oral entrance exams in Nanjing itself.

To be eligible for consideration, candidates for the undergraduate programme must be between 25 - 30 years of age, while postgraduates and students transferring over from other schools must not be older than 35 when applying for their programmes. Candidates must also submit a certificate of good health from their local hospital at application time, and those with disabilities, chronic physical illnesses or mental health problems are not eligible to apply. The health certificates also help avoid the

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That knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, while knowledge and wisdom are the beginning of the way of life."

Those 55 Jinling Union Theological Seminary graduates addressed by Presbyter Ji shared the joy of completing their studies with other students graduating from seminaries and Bible schools all over China. Tian Feng’s August 2006 issue publishes the numbers of 2006 Bible school and theological seminary graduates and their respective courses; this information is presented in a table below. Undergraduate courses are 4-year degree courses, while postgraduate study programmes last for 3 years both in secular and theological institutions. Since a standardised system of qualifications for non-degree courses offered at different theological institutions is still being developed, the length of the course is indicated in the table for clarity.

**Theological seminaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Content of Studies</th>
<th>Nbr of Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jinling Union:</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>40(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>15(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanjing</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huadong</td>
<td>Undergraduate 2-year Bible course</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-year theol. studies (part-time)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sichuan</td>
<td>Undergraduate 2-year theol. studies</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhongnan</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>3-year Diploma course</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhejiang</td>
<td>3-year Diploma course 1-year further studies</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shandong</td>
<td>1-year training course for volunteers</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujian</td>
<td>3-year Diploma course</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anhui</td>
<td>3-year theol. studies</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangdong Union</td>
<td>3-year Diploma course 1-year further studies</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunnan</td>
<td>3-year theol. studies</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) 36 students obtained the bachelor in Divinity degree
\(^2\) 15 students obtained the master in Divinity degree
calling as pastors in the church. It was precisely in order to follow in the footsteps of her father and grandfather that Kou Weiwei took up her studies at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in 1998. The usual seven years required to complete the M.Div programme actually took her eight years due to family commitments, with her getting married and taking a year's leave in order to establish a family. Kou Weiwei finally graduated in summer 2006 and started her new job with the Amity Foundation a couple of months after her graduation.

Only a few weeks into her new situation, Kou Weiwei has already visited orphanages in Shandong province. She reflects on her own motherhood and the work at hand. "I spent a year with my newborn baby, but then I resumed my studies and my baby girl stayed in her grandparents' care in Dalian. Leaving my daughter behind was extremely difficult for me, I learned at that moment what it meant to have 'the heart of a mother'. In the future, I hope my child will become a good Christian, and I want to show her some rural projects."

Such visits to rural areas and her interaction with Amity colleagues have helped Kou Weiwei develop a clearer idea of her own role and mission within the Integrated Development Division of the Amity Foundation. "I wanted to work as a pastor but now I have realised that in strictly a church setting I would not have been able to help as many people as I do now. I want to share a mother's love with those AIDS orphans who are even afraid of speaking because they have encountered so much discrimination from the people around them." She recalls a passage from Matthew 25 and her return to Nanjing after the first trip to see Amity's AIDS orphan projects: "Thinking of all the children I had seen, I wrote an e-mail to my friend saying 'Today, I have really touched Jesus'."

Kou Weiwei was only 19 years old when she started her studies, the youngest student in the entire seminary. Adjusting to her new environment and to a more independent way of life was not easy. "During the first year, I was just about ready to quit school every day! I missed my home so badly, and I felt that my church background was very different from that of the others around me. At the same time, I also realised how lucky I was to have been born into a Christian family. I really wanted to overcome the difficulties, and now I realise that those first years were very important for my personal growth. I came to know a lot of young Christians and we shared Sunday services, prayer and study times together. I also learned a lot from the older students who had already gained solid experience doing pastoral work in their churches. Their presence truly inspired me spiritually. I was very surprised when I learned that these students, although superb preachers and very capable pastors, have been unable to qualify academically for postgraduate studies later on."

On entering Nanjing seminary, Kou Weiwei's future plans were very clear in her mind. She had been an active member of her father's congregation and wanted to serve the church herself as a pastor in the future. However, her marriage and her husband's appointment as a faculty member of Nanjing seminary forced her to re-evaluate her plans. At the end of her final term at the seminary, she was urged to attend an employment interview at the Nanjing-based Amity Foundation.

"I had always wanted to become a pastor, so the idea of working in the Amity office did not appeal to me at all at first. My teachers advised me to consider the job, so I
suitably qualified instructors have been formed to teach biblical views and theology to students and believers using specially-designed teaching materials.

A research group was formed to collect first-hand information about theological reconstruction in practice. The two-week itinerary of the group extended from prosperous eastern areas to Shaanxi province in central China, which ranks among the ten poorest provinces in China. Since institutions of theological education are crucial in the development of theological thinking, the research group's visits included national and regional level seminaries and local level (provincial/municipal) Bible schools and training centres. In addition to seminary staff and students, leaders of provincial CCC/TSPM committees and church personnel were offered an opportunity to present their views on the actual implementation of theological reconstruction. The following observations were made on the basis of information given to the research group in discussions at different levels:

By and large, the concept of theological reconstruction has been positively received by those involved. Many believe that theological thinking has helped with the consolidation of the Chinese Church and its Three-Self principles, while contextualisation has helped the church to adapt to rapidly changing socio-political conditions and to contribute to building a harmonious socialist society. Generally speaking, the standard of both the "hardware" and the "software" within the church has improved. Institutions now have better facilities than some years ago, and these schools have trained pastors with distinct academic achievements who currently form the backbone of local churches and higher-level administrative church bodies.

During the visits, the hosts and the members of the research group also had a chance to discuss issues which still require special attention. How to further develop a system of theological education which is based on the principle of self-governance and which can provide for the spiritual needs of different groups of people is a question that will remain at the centre of everyone's efforts. In addition, theological education will need to meet the standards set by the national educational system, with Chinese Theology evolving into a fully developed academic field capable of producing qualified personnel with specialised theological knowledge.

The research group offered concrete plans and suggestions to solve various concrete problems. Elder Ji Jianhong, acting as the head of the research group, also reminded participants of the basic concepts of theological reconstruction. He pointed out that theological reconstruction is not at all about changing the foundations of the Christian faith but is about finding better ways of proclaiming Christian beliefs. Related to ethics, it will guide the church and believers in to choosing right paths and taking right turns.

2006.9/10.7

Churches in Fujian Reach out to Hurricane Disaster Victims

(ANS) One million people had to be evacuated when tropical storm Pearl, the first storm of the season, hit the coastal areas of eastern China in May 2006. A fourth typhoon called Bills subsequently hit in June, causing damage to six provinces in eastern and central China and forcing some three million people to leave their homes. Fujian province, which lies on the coastal area of
Listening to Female Voices

(ANS) In our last issue of ANS, we reported on women's ministries and activities at grass-roots level churches in Yunnan Province (see ANS 2006.7/8.4). In this issue, we continue looking at women's ministry, this time from a higher church administration perspective, by examining the issues raised at a recent provincial-level women's committee meeting, as reported in issue number 289 of the July 2006 edition of Tian Feng.

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Developing women's ministry is an important part of overall church ministry, from individual grass-roots churches all the way up to national church levels. The Women's Committee established in 1993 by the national CCC/TSPM committee was the first nationwide Protestant church organisation devoted to women in China. Since its inception, the committee has promoted women's work by encouraging provincial CCC/TSPM committees to establish their own provincial-level women's committees and to organise specific activities targeted towards women. Currently, every level of the Chinese church participates in the World Women's Day of Prayer, and a number of seminars devoted to the topic of feminist theology have been organised in different places.

A provincial-level women's ministry activity was held on May 22 - 24, 2006 in the city of Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province. The Third Jiangxi Provincial Women's Ministry Plenary, organised by the provincial CCC/TSPM and its women's ministry, brought together 30 participants from women's committees and women's ministry groups at local level churches in the western province of Jiangxi.

The main themes of the meeting included feminist interpretations of the Bible, as well as the Bible's contextualisation within Chinese society and its meaning to women believers in China today. Participants expressed that, in general, the importance of women has been recognised by the church and their position in the church has improved over time. For example in Jiangxi, five of the province's 11 church regional administrations are headed by women and 30 out of the province's 69 county level church committees are also led by female ministers. There are no restrictions on women's ordination, and both male and female pastors are treated as equals within the Jiangxi church.

However, the participants noted that churches generally tend to lack training specifically geared towards educating women to play a more active role in church ministries, including women's ministry. One female pastor also pointed out that churches have to protect their vulnerable female members who may be facing divorce or domestic violence. According to this pastor, many ministers are unwilling to tackle the issue of domestic violence and are unable to offer guidance to those suffering from such abuse, leaving the victims feeling somewhat abandoned and distressed.

Speakers at the meeting provided biblical insights to widen the discussion on women's position and role. One pastor from Jiujiang looked into the role of women through creation, holding that women may become salt and light in their environment...
The impact may seem insignificant, but it would definitely be an improvement over currently prevailing and largely ignorant attitudes.

In present-day Chinese society, the excessive quest for material wealth has separated people from their traditions and, as a result, "culture" (moral behaviour, religion and arts) has become less important. China is a developing socialist country and yet, every year, more than 300 Bentleys are sold in China. At this pace, China will soon top the list of countries with the largest number of luxury cars. Meanwhile, for the same price as just one of these cars, the government-initiated "Back to school" programme called Project Hope could build 50 primary schools. In such circumstances, resuscitating Chinese citizens’ sense of responsibility is a pressing concern. Our yearning for justice and peace stems from our Christian faith and from our common aspirations, but it is only when this yearning finds concrete means of expressing itself that we will lead truly fulfilling lives.

2006.9/10.10

On the Relation of the Doctrinal and Ethical Nature of Christianity to the Concept of "Social Harmony"

(ANS) A recent article written by Fu Xianji from East China (Hua Dong) Theological Seminary discusses Christian doctrines and ethics in light of the current political concept of "building a harmonious socialist society". ANS presents a summary of Fu's article below as published in Tian Feng issue no 285/2006.

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Abstract: Christianity is both a doctrinal faith and an ethical religion. Doctrine is Christianity's internal essence, while ethics is its external extension, and their organic combination is at the root of all true Christianity. The ethical nature of Christianity results from its faith in a uniquely ethical God, who in turn asks all who believe in Him to be ethical and moral, upholding love, holiness and justice. Undoubtedly, the combination of these two characteristics of Christianity (doctrine and ethics) represents a positive force in the construction of a harmonious society.

Fu Xianji bases his analysis of the relationship between Christian dogmatics and Christian ethics on two fundamental assumptions. Firstly, being made in God's image, a human being has a spiritual dimension. However, because he was born of flesh and blood and lives within a material environment, the spiritual and material dimensions of the human being are inseparable. Secondly, the juxtaposition of the following two relations - man and God, and man and man - dates back to the early formation of Christian beliefs. In Mark 12: 29-31, the Scribes confront Jesus with a question concerning the most important commandment. In his reply, Jesus kneads the commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour into a single commandment, thus laying down the doctrinal basis for an intrinsic amalgamation of Christian beliefs and their earthly implementation, that is, doctrine and ethics.

As a doctrinal system, the core of Christianity has been defined and declared in different ways throughout church history. The Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian
of ethical sermons or a celestial voice without earthly extension. The doctrine expounding God’s grace and authority is the driving force of the ethics which urges human beings to enhance their own ethical behaviour (e.g. James 1:22-25). The terrorist attacks in London on 7th July 2006, carried out under the guise of religion, represent a counterexample to Christian teaching. The Ten Commandments explicitly demand “Do not kill” (Exodus 20:13), exhorting a believer to protect life, whether one’s own or others’. Therefore, an orthodox Christian cannot be involved in promoting terrorism or violence. Doctrine upholds peace and good social order first among Christians and, by extension, within the whole of society. This is in complete accordance with the concepts of the ruling government in China.

The concept of building a harmonious socialist society was first introduced at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC (Communist Party of China) Central Committee, while its fundamental features were expounded by President Hu Jintao in a speech delivered in February 2006. Hu Jintao pointed out that the construction of a harmonious socialist society strives for the building of a nation of justice ruled by law, aiming at stability and harmonious relations between people and towards their natural environment.

In the building of a harmonious socialist society, the construction of material, political and intellectual cultures are intrinsically linked. Increased productivity within socialist society will strengthen the material basis for further construction, while developing a democratic political system will enhance its political safeguards. Similarly, developing socialist society will advance its culture and consolidate the intellectual support needed for the future building of the harmonious socialist society. Ultimately, the development of all areas of society will create beneficial conditions to the construction of socialist society.

The concept of building a harmonious socialist society has brought the ruling party, government and the Christian church closer to one another, and the pursuit of common ideals has become more balanced. Christianity strives for peace and harmony, with the coming of the kingdom of God as its ultimate end. The core of the gospel of peace is God’s reconciliation with us through the death of Jesus (2 Cor. 5:19, Rom. 5:11-12). Christ on the cross “destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14-16). Peace should prevail among Christians first (2 Cor. 13:11; Rom 14:19), but not be confined to Christian circles (Rom. 12:18), because Christians are messengers of reconciliation and peace (1 Cor. 7:15; Matt. 5:9; 2 Cor 5:20). Even so, we are not to act rashly but follow Paul’s example in sharing the gospel in Athens (Acts 17:16).

Peace with other people should not be achieved at the cost of moral ethics. The epistle to the Hebrews says: “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). In building a harmonious society, a concerted effort is required to assist the ruling party and the government in the combat against corruption and vile social practices. Christian enterprises, such as good church management and the development of theological education, primarily build up the body of Christians but also essentially contribute towards building a harmonious society. A Christian church or institution pursuing biblical ideals in their internal and external matters may represent, in miniature, a preview of God’s kingdom on earth.
Nigerian archbishop, Most Rev. Peter Akinola visited TSPM/CCC headquarters on July 20, 2006 together with the archbishop of Ibadan ecclesiastical province in Nigeria, the Most Rev. Joseph Akinfenwa. Apart from Shanghai, the archbishops' itinerary included the bureau of State Administration of Religious Affairs, Catholic and Protestant (Yanjing) Theological Seminaries in Beijing, and Jinling Union Theological Seminary and Amity Printing Company in Nanjing. The visit was initiated during the encounter between the church leaders of the two countries at the installation ceremony of the Archbishop Dr. John Chew in Singapore.

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**Ecumenical.** A Chinese religious delegation attended the Eighth World Assembly of Religions for Peace held in Kyoto, Japan, on August 24-25, 2006. Before their departure, the delegation was met by Jia Qinglin, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. Rev. Cao Shengjie headed the group of representatives of the Chinese Protestant Church. Religions for Peace is a global network of interreligious councils and groups founded for building peace and advancing sustainable development; China is a member of the Asian Council of Religions for Peace. A more detailed account of TSPM/CCC participation in the assembly will be published in the 2006.11/12 issue of ANS.

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**Social Service Ministry.** Jinqiao village in Jiangxi Province celebrated the completion of Luoping Hope school on September 5, 2006. The school construction project was a joint venture of the Social Service Department of CCC/TSPM with overseas partners NMZ (Nordwürttembergische Missionszentrum) and ABC (American Baptist Churches). Rev. Deng Fucun attended the completion ceremony. For details, see: http://www.chineseprotestantchurch.org.cn/en/news/200609-20.htm

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**Training.** An oral English Workshop for Chinese pastors and seminary instructors was organised for the third time in Huangshan, Anhui province. Participants practised their English skills for five weeks with a team of teachers from the US by discussing cross-cultural matters, leading devotions, preparing speeches and practising interpretation from English into Chinese. Rev. Cao Shengjie and Rev. Kan Baoping attended the closing celebration led by Rev. Bao Jiayuan to mark the completion of the course on August 8, 2006. Ronald Midkiff, the foreign teachers' team leader, congratulated the participants for their good results and persevering spirit.