In this issue:

Editorial 2

Interview with Rev. Chen Yilu, Executive Vice-President of NJUTS 3

Gao Feng Speaks on the Fifth Anniversary of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” 7

How the New Hymnal Supplement Came to Be 9

China’s Voice at Edinburgh 1910 13

God Brings Me Joy and Peace 17

News
CCC/TSPM and United Bible Societies Celebrate 25 Years of Bible Publication at Amity Press 19

The Rev. Chen Yilu (right), newly appointed Executive Vice-President of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, receiving his appointment from Elder Fu Xianwei, Chair of the TSPM, in March this year. Read an interview with Rev. Chen in this issue. (photo: Li Jiefen)

“My biggest challenge is to inspire faculty and students and to build a team so we can all work together for the future of the seminary.”
Dear Reader,

In this issue, we are very pleased to have an interview with Rev. Chen Yilu, the new executive vice-president of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS). (The news of the changes in leadership for Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS) on March 1st appeared in our March 2010 issue.) Rev. Chen is no stranger to theological education—he serves concurrently as president of Guangdong Union Theological Seminary in Guangzhou and as head of the CCC/TSPM Commission on Theological Education. Dr. Theresa Carino, former editor of ANS, interviewed Rev. Chen in Nanjing recently; we have also included an excerpt from another interview that appeared in the June issue of Tian Feng, the church magazine. Together these provide our readers with a fascinating look at Rev. Chen’s educational views and vision for the future of NJUTS.

Rev. Gao Feng, president of the China Christian Council, spoke at a forum in Beijing to mark the fifth anniversary of the implementation of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs.” In his brief remarks, included in this issue, Rev. Gao called the implementation of the Regulations “an important step for Chinese society in its development of a legal framework for religious affairs.” He urged Christians to use the opportunities thus gained to further strengthen the church and improve religious activities.

In 1979, churches formally reopened for worship for the first time following the Cultural Revolution. Four years later, in 1983, what has come to be known in English as the New Hymnal was published. Rev. Dr. Cao Shengjie, president emeritus of the China Christian Council, was part of the team that prepared the first volume and served on the editorial committee for the new Supplement. Her thoughts on producing this new collection of hymns is included in this issue.

In this centenary year of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, Gu Mengfei reflects on the presence and participation of Chinese Christians and the important role played by the young Cheng Jingyi, at the time a 28-year old assistant pastor at Rice Market Church in Beijing. He spoke for the brief allotted time of seven minutes, yet delivered a strong and memorable call for greater independence for the Chinese Church.

Finally, Yan Xiyu uses a Chinese rhetorical structure to analyze a biblical Psalm, drawing from it a moving reflection on the importance of attaining joy and peace in life.

In order to bring more news and—in the form of photos—views of the Protestant church in China, the photos throughout this issue serve as mini-news items in themselves. We hope readers enjoy the greater variety this makes possible.

Correction to misprint in March 2010 issue. On page 3, the article, “Reflections on Urbanization and Church Development,” stated that there were 5.5 million church buildings in China. The figure should be 55,000.

Many thanks to our translators for this issue: Emily Dunn, Suzanne Rowe, and Kurt Selles. Photographs are courtesy of www.ccctspm.org and Li Jiefen.

Janice Wickeri
Strengthen, Expand, Improve:
New Developments at Nanjing Seminary

An Interview with Rev. Chen Yilu

Rev. Chen Yilu was named Executive Vice-President of the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS) on March 1, 2010. Concurrently the President of Guangdong Union Theological Seminary, Rev. Chen brings with him many years of experience as a theological educator and seminary administrator. He heads the Commission on Theological Education of the National CCC/TSPM and is also the Associate General Secretary of the China Christian Council. A graduate of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, Rev. Chen completed an M.A. in Theology at the Hong Kong Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1994. Soon after that, he became vice-president of Guangdong Seminary in Guangzhou. He is also the Chair of the Guangdong Christian Council and TSPM. He was interviewed for ANS in Nanjing on May 29, 2010 by Dr. Theresa Carino.

How has the student population at the seminary changed in recent years and what significance does this have for the church? In addition to training students for the ministry, does NJUTS have a role in producing theologians able to dialogue with Christian and non-Christian intellectuals?

The student profile at NJUTS has been changing quite rapidly in recent years. In the past, entering students were mostly high school graduates. Now we see an increasing number of college and university graduates are enrolling at the seminary. Supported and endorsed by local churches, many of the students are from urban areas, which means a rise in academic levels and quality. Some of our students are children of pastors, the second generation in their family committed to the ministry. In recent years there has also been a rapid rise in the number of women in seminaries, and this has created a gender imbalance we hope will gradually be corrected.

Nanjing Union Theological Seminary currently has 216 students from all over China and we are hoping to increase that number to 250 by 2011.

Leadership formation is very important. We want students to serve at the grassroots and acquire valuable experience before they can think of assuming leadership in the church. Seminary graduates should understand what some of the needs are before they aspire to be leaders. This requires patience; they cannot presume to become leaders soon after graduation. At the same time, outstanding senior students from other seminaries and bible schools will be invited to transfer to NJUTS. This will provide a better mix of students, and aid in broadening empathy and experience. We want students to be more service-oriented and committed. They should learn how to preach good sermons. There is a great need for such ministers in the church. Ministers need a healthy attitude; they must provide comfort and counsel to those in need of help. In my experience, students from rural areas have a higher sense of commitment and dedication.

Curriculum reform
Curriculum reform is crucial to strengthening the quality of our seminary graduates. For instance,
the quality of biblical studies at the seminary has been quite inadequate and has to be improved. There is also a great need for students to have courses on church administration and pastoral counselling to equip them for church ministry in our increasingly complex society. There will be an emphasis on practical theology, with more courses on counselling and leadership training for students. Continuing education will be offered for serving pastors who graduated some time ago. They may enroll for a Master's in Ministry, and self-study courses as well as certificate courses for lay leaders will be available.

What are the plans for faculty development in the coming years? Will more faculty be sent abroad for training? What are the prospects of a Ph.D. being offered at NJUTS?

Faculty development

At present, many faculty are of a similar age. If they all retire more or less at the same time, there will be a problem. Added to this, there is a wide age gap between the older and younger generations of faculty.

We do have plans for a Ph.D. program, for our concern is to raise the quality of theological education. At the moment, we only have three faculty with doctorates, and three more who are expected to return with Ph.D.s from studies overseas. With their return, we will be able to begin our doctoral program. Naturally, faculty development is a top priority. For existing faculty, short-term training overseas is helpful, but does not provide a long-term solution for upgrading the quality of theological education. Our plan is to send graduates to Hong Kong or overseas to complete postgraduate degrees in spite of the longer time required. In addition, we will increase the number of faculty from HK and overseas. We welcome visiting professors.

Library development

Having a good library system is essential for the seminary's development. Steps are being taken to have a trained full-time librarian. A plan is being developed to apply a systematic approach to library acquisitions and our library collection is refining its cataloguing system. It is not just the number of volumes but also the types of books that matter. Faculty will be required to submit their reading lists so that we can acquire the necessary books and references for various courses.

The U.K. Bible Society will support the establishment of a Resource Center for Biblical Studies at NJUTS where research on the Old and New Testaments can be encouraged and deepened. Fuller Seminary in the U.S. has also committed to donating books and providing visiting lecturers on pastoral counselling. We will network with other seminaries and hope to develop more access to an Internet database for the library. In Hong Kong, five seminaries have a shared network. We want to develop an inter-library network for the sharing of resources and hope to link up with these seminaries in Hong Kong.

Publications

There are plans to increase the number of books and periodicals published by the seminary.

Faculty will be encouraged to publish and overseas scholars could also have their work published in Nanjing. The Nanjing Theological Review will establish an editorial committee to help raise the quality of the journal.

What are the challenges that remain and what kind of changes do you hope to bring about in the next 5 years?

There is a need to strengthen administrative and financial management. More transparency and accountability will be introduced into the management system. There will be efforts to control basic costs just as fundraising efforts for the seminary will be intensified.
In human resource management, there should be improvements so that we can have the right people for the right jobs. I have received a very warm welcome from both faculty and students. Thus far, they have been very supportive and committed to the development of NJUTS. My biggest challenge is to inspire them and to build a team so we can all work together for the future of the seminary.

Strengthening relationships with churches and church-related organizations such as the Amity Foundation are high on my list of priorities. These relations are very important for the development of the seminary.

What are the plans for the old campus and what kind of help is still needed for the new campus building and facilities?

Contributions and material support would be most welcome for the new seminary. More than half of the students (around 100) studying at the seminary are in need of scholarships amounting to 10,000 RMB per student per annum. We are still in need of new tables and chairs, air conditioners, and library books. Plans are afoot to landscape the surroundings to provide a “prayerful” environment and atmosphere befitting a seminary.

We are exploring various possibilities of using the old campus in the heart of Nanjing city. We hope to start a counselling center there and rent a portion of the campus to suitable organizations. The old chapel could become a place of worship for international fellowships. In the future, there is a possibility that some space could be used as a rehabilitation center for the physically disabled and the elderly, but that will come later.

Do you see a deepening of relations and further cooperation with the ecumenical movement in the coming years? In what ways do you think the seminary can participate in ecumenical exchanges and in discussions about Christian response to social challenges?

The church is growing very fast in Asia – much more than in the West. We used to focus on relations with Europe and the U.S., but now feel there is also a need to develop our ties with Asian churches. In 2011, for instance, we plan to visit seminaries in India.

We also hope to improve relations with the Amity Foundation and work together in responding to social needs. After all, our long-serving and now Honorary President, Bishop K. H. Ting, is also one of the Foundation’s founders. Seminary graduates will be encouraged to work in Amity and we would also like to see ways in which Amity could be involved in the Seminary.

More from Rev. Chen Yilu

The church monthly magazine, Tian Feng (June 2010), also carried an interview with the new Executive Vice-President of NJUTS, conducted by Dao Sheng. Parts of that interview are translated and summarized here.

Rev. Chen was asked about the difficulties and shortcomings the seminary faced and whether he felt confident these could be overcome.

NJUTS does have accumulated problems, the most obvious being the use of people, the right person for the right job (as mentioned in the previous interview above). Furthermore, the number of support staff seems excessive in relation to the number of faculty, finances are limited, and administrative methods out of date. There are individuals among our colleagues who feel they have been hurt, and for them the negative mood outweighs their enthusiasm for the job. Our need at present is for healing and rebuilding. At the same time, I want to make clear that by stating these difficulties I am not negating the contribution of the elder generation nor seeking to tarnish the seminary’s reputation. I am saying that we face new challenges and new needs. NJUTS does need to transform itself: reinvigorate its soul.
build a firm foundation, lift the mood on campus, raise academic capacity, improve administration and financial management, and improve the educational system. We need to let the golden lamp stand that is NJUTS shine more brightly. Rev. Gao Feng, the new president, and I feel we can make NJUTS well run. Our confidence comes from our reliance on God and the support and love of colleagues, alumni, and brothers and sisters in the church.

With the new campus, there has been an improvement in “hardware;” does the seminary’s “software” need improvement as well?

First, we must thank the Party and government for their support in helping us build this new, larger campus. However, our “hardware” is not yet “hard” enough. Repairs and rebuilding are needed in our new buildings, and we need additional as well as updated equipment. As for “software,” that needs strengthening in the areas of faculty (more Ph.D.s needed); further library development; strengthening of administration and financial management; and improvements in the educational system. In terms of finances, people outside the seminary often think that because it is a national-level institution it must be rich. Actually, I tell everyone that currently NJUTS is in financial difficulties—our expenditures are greater than our income—and we look to God for guidance.

There’s an old saying in China that literally says that the new boss brings three torches, or new policies. What would yours be?

The first would be spiritual life; if this is on track, everything else follows.

The second is hope: we must affirm the importance of each and every member of staff and improve their working and living conditions.

The third is the torch of blessing: NJUTS has produced a large number of graduates and many of them are quite accomplished, but the seminary has been lax in keeping in touch with them. Alumni do not know what the seminary’s needs are. We want to stress working with alumni. We want to light the torch of blessing for our alma mater.

For subscription fees or any voluntary donation to cover the production and postage expenses of the ANS, please mail a check with your name and address to the Amity Hong Kong Office. Please make your check payable to “The Amity Foundation, Hong Kong, Ltd”.

For other ways of donating, please visit the Amity website: www.amityfoundation.org/index.php

Thank You!
The Regulations on Religious Affairs took effect on March 1, 2005. The text of the Regulations may be found on the ANS website at http://www.amitynewsservice.org/page.php?page=1289. The forum to mark the anniversary was held in Beijing on April 10, 2010 with Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu attending.

The formal promulgation of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” five years ago was a major event for our nation’s religious circles and the government departments that work with them. It marked further progress in the strengthening of those areas of China’s legal system which pertain to religion, and attracted widespread interest both within China and overseas.

After the “Regulations” were issued, the CCC/TSPM devoted much attention to them and conscientiously organized to study them. Leaders such as Wang Zuo’an, the Director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA), were invited to give supplementary lectures at study sessions. The national CCC/TSPM passed a “Resolution on Studying the ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs’,” which required CCC/TSPM committees throughout China to study and implement the “Regulations” so as to strengthen Christians’ legal sense and heighten their awareness of the need to love their country and abide by its laws.

With the widespread dissemination and study of the “Regulations” over the last five years, the legal awareness of Chinese Christian believers and clergy has continually strengthened. Their awareness of the need to love their country and abide by its laws has been on the rise, and they have increasingly understood that they should go through proper channels and use legal methods to uphold their legal rights. When a church in Henan province was demolished in 2008, for example, the church used the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” as a legal weapon. With the assistance of local government departments, they were able to resolve the issue appropriately and arrange the rebuilding of the church whilst also preserving social harmony (see Tian Feng no. 10, 2009).

Many people overseas know very little about China’s policy of freedom of religious belief and the situation of its religions, but are deeply prejudiced due to the longstanding biased propaganda and misdirection of certain Western media outlets. After the “Regulations” were promulgated, people in other countries also studied them seriously; some even held research forums on China’s religious policy, laws and regulations, and in doing so exerted a positive influence. But for all sorts of reasons, such as ideological differences – in particular, the great misunderstanding and deep-seated bias in the West regarding China’s religious policy and religious situation– we in religious circles still have a long way to go in terms of foreign relationships and publicity.

The state’s aims in formulating the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” were simply to guarantee freedom of religious belief for its citizens, safeguard religious and social harmony, and standardize the management of religious affairs. By defining the rights and responsibilities pertaining to religious groups, venues of religious activity, and religious citizens, the “Regulations” standardized the administrative behavior of government administrative management departments. This was also in accordance with the imperatives of administration in accordance with the law and building the government on the rule of law. Thus, the formulation and implementation of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” was an important step for Chinese society in its development of a legal framework for religious affairs.
Religious Affairs Regulations

The “Regulations on Religious Affairs” have produced gratifying results in the areas of publicity, study, and implementation over the last five years. However we must also be objective and realize that their execution and implementation has not been without its blind spots and weak links. For this reason, we must strive even harder and use the opportunities presented by the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” to further strengthen ourselves, to improve religious activities so they will be more regularized, healthy and orderly, and to make our own contribution to social harmony and China’s social and economic development. ♦

(Rev. Gao Feng is President of the China Christian Council.)

Translated by Emily Dunn from Tian Feng No. 365, May 2010

The Shanghai Community Church and Mu’en Church set up Volunteer Services Stations within their church grounds during the recent Expo 2010 Shanghai. Staffed by pastoral workers and church members, visitors, both Christian and non-Christian, were assisted with information, directions and other services.
How the *New Hymnal Supplement* Came to Be

*Rev. Dr. Cao Shengjie*

**From “New Hymnal” to “Supplement”**

When the churches resumed worship services thirty years ago, the most needed materials were Bibles and hymnals. After the establishment of the China Christian Council, this was its foremost mission. In those days, the editing was done at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and Sicheng Church in Hangzhou, in hopes of speeding up the process. Thanks to God’s grace, that New Hymnal is widely used at many churches across the country. Several newly composed hymns including, “Christ the Everlasting Lord,” “Winter Has Passed,” “Holy Night, Blessed Night,” “God Be Praised at Early Morn,” etc., have even been translated and used by churches overseas.

There will always be new hymns, just as there are old hymns that have been sung by Christians for generations. As the church develops, Christians need more hymns to sing. The CCC/TSPM accepted the Sacred Music Committee’s 2003 proposal that a new hymnal be printed. Originally the plan called for publishing a “revised” version, a complex plan that would involve selection and revision of songs from the New Hymnal, as well as copyright issues. But rather than abandoning the New Hymnal that had been in use for years, the final decision was to print a “Supplement” to be used along with the original New Hymnal.

As the name makes clear, its purpose is to supplement the New Hymnal. Editing and classification of hymns was done along lines similar to those used for the New Hymnal. At the same time, new categories were added and there are more songs in each category, including favorite hymns for all generations and more contemporary compositions.
Hymns are Basic to Worship

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, the Israelites, the chosen people, as well as the redeemed People of God who formed the Church, have been worshipping God with songs. The Old Testament recorded the singing to God after God had led the people out of Egypt (Ex. 15:1-21). David arranged for the Levites to sing in the tent with the ark and in the temple (1 Ch. 15:16-24, 16:4-6, 25:1-31). In the Psalms, the ‘Songs of Ascent’ are hymns that the Israelites sang when they were processing on their way to celebrate the feasts. In the New Testament, Jesus sang with His disciples (Mark 14:26). Paul educated the Christians to ‘teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God’ (Col. 3:16). The Psalms, the plainsong in the medieval period, and the hymns after the Reformation are all integral elements in the history of Christian worship.

When we refer to corporate worship, it should be clear that it is all about God and God-centered. We cannot follow our own inclinations but must do what is pleasing to God. Secondly, it is an expression of praise and worship to God but not a means of entertainment or a cause for self-satisfaction. Thirdly, everyone should participate and express the same conviction and obedience to God. Music in worship must meet these criteria, too.

Chinese churches have undergone remarkable development in recent years. Since theological training provides for little systematic training in worship, the churches seem to have neglected preparation for worship. Some churches view worship as an occasion for listening to the Word of God only; besides prayer, a few familiar songs will be sung, but full use has not been made of suitable songs to offer everyone’s adoration, thanksgiving, intercession, and dedication to God.

For example, songs for “praise and adoration” should be selected for the beginning of the worship service. Everyone stands and sings with the spirit of “entering His temple with gladness.” Psalms, the Lord’s Prayer, Amen, etc. can be recited and sung as well. In special seasons like Christmas, Good Friday, or Easter, special songs should be used. If hymns are chosen to compliment the theme of the sermon by the pastor, more suitable songs would be needed to deepen the message of the day. The New Hymnal has been tremendous in this regard and the Supplement has provided us even more choices. In order that everyone may sing with unified and harmonious voices to express their heartfelt worship in spirit and in truth, it is of primary importance to teach people to sing the hymns. Some hymns may be unfamiliar for the congregation, or may be more difficult to sing. In this case, the liturgist should learn the songs himself or herself first and try their best to teach the congregation so everyone can sing from their own hearts. Some churches have hymn-practice sessions before the worship services; this definitely helps Christians to familiarize themselves with the hymns.

Singing Hymns Well

We often choose hymns that are melodious, simple, and easy to learn, without paying much attention to the lyrics. In fact, the first important thing for a good hymn is sound content. If the lyrics are rich, profound, and inspiring, and are matched by a good melody, it will be even more meaningful for the congregation. If the content is not healthy, even a simple tune will not offset undesirable effects in the singing process.

Hymns are like a textbook for the Christian doctrines and a hymnal’s content should be accurate and true to the faith. When we are singing a hymn about the triune God, we are singing the...
wonderful work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Supplement has added a category for “The Journey of our Savior Jesus” and it is all about reciting the important events of Jesus in His earthly life and to highlight the relationship between those events and our spiritual growth.

The Supplement has added songs, e.g. “Spread the Gospel,” to the category of “Church Life” for the use in church gatherings, and it has also added ‘Prayer for Peace,’ “Serving Society,” etc. to the category. This is because Christian lives in this world need to follow Christian ethical principles. How we view the development of society and act in response according to the teaching of the Bible is an essential part of the church life. In that category, “Family and Children,” suitable for Christian daily living, has been added, too. Some people consider these personal matters; but in fact, these are all related to Christian ethics, which needed to be taught by the church with care. These are all related to church life.

Besides the use of hymns in a worship service, Christians also need to use hymns in their personal devotions, not only as meditation and thanksgiving, but also as an expression of our prayers to God. It is important to nurture Christians and enable them to learn to think deeply about the message of the hymn, and to sing with devotion, passion, and spirit. Hymns of praise should not be sung at a slow tempo or in weak and dragging voices. Hymns for searching the soul should not be sung at a fast tempo, or merely mouthing the lyrics without heart.

Hymns Composed by Chinese Christians

The New Hymnal includes 106 hymns composed by local Christians, about one-fourth of the total of 400 hymns. When the decision to print the Supplement was made, the Editorial Committee called for submissions of hymns from all across the country through Tian Feng, the church monthly magazine. Sixty-one of the hymns received in this way were selected and comprise one-third of the total of 200 hymns in the Supplement. Seven hymns included are previous compositions by Chinese Christians.

With regard to lyrics, the criteria for the selected hymns emphasized the expression of the composer's spiritual understanding, along with complete poetic elements. Some of the hymns have been revised in collaboration with the editorial team to preserve end rhymes that make the hymn easier to sing. The lyrics of some hymns, e.g. “The Seven Words of the Cross,” have been rewritten using a melody from the existing “Here on the Cross,” in order to use the original wording from the Bible.

Tunes mostly follow the traditional meters. We have not used folk melodies, because though folk tunes are familiar for the people and therefore easier to sing, people will associate them with the original folk lyrics, making them unsuitable for praising God. Since the trend is toward contextualization of hymns in China, we really hope that there will be more tunes in the Chinese music-style mode. The Supplement has made some breakthroughs in this area, but we need to do more.

The Christians who have been involved in lyrics and tune writing for the Supplement come from a variety of backgrounds, including elderly pastors and laity, staff from provincial- and city-level Christian Councils and TSPMs, young seminary graduates, ministers, and lay Christians, pastors from the rural area, and Christians overseas. All of us have a common goal—to praise God with hymns.

A Personal Note

I remember my own involvement in editing the New Hymnal, when the editorial department had been working days and nights. I can still hear us proofreading—really 4-part proof-singing! More than 20 years have passed, and I have to thank God for the opportunity to edit this new Supplement with my colleagues. Although we are older now and
our eye-sight, memory, and energy are not what they were, we have been so blessed to be part of this divine work.

The workload of the editorial team has been very heavy. Re-translating or revising the lyrics while respecting the composers’ original intent requires a thorough study of the original lyrics. Translated lyrics must not only be easy to understand, the poetic rhyme must be preserved as well. A change in one word will make necessary the changing of several sentences or structures. The two main responsible staff always had to take work home and translate the draft for team discussions afterwards. Even punctuation marks had to be thoroughly discussed.

The team read two thousand drafts. We did not choose anthems intended for choirs, choruses which were too simple and short, or those with prose, rather than poetic, lyrics. In addition, for the selected songs, we also had to make some necessary revisions, write harmony, and contact the composer by letter or long-distance calls to obtain their consent to the amendments.

Due to the limited human resources of the Sacred Music Ministry of the CCC/TSPM, the large amount of work of getting copyrights, etc., the Supplement was not published according to the original schedule. As the leader of the editorial team, I am truly sorry. However, the passionate support and fellowship of my Christian co-workers has so encouraged me to do my best to finish this task. Sacred Music teachers like Prof. Geshun Ma and Prof. Zemin Chen have shown great care for this publication. Dr. Angela Tam in Hong Kong has provided valuable advice for our lyrics revision. Prof. Jianzhong Wang of Shanghai Conservatoire has devoted a huge amount of time to revising the harmony of the newly composed hymns. Prof. Emily Brink in the U.S. has assisted with copyright issues. And in order to get the Supplement published in 2009, the members of our editorial team worked day and night right up to China’s National Day (October 1). And senior editorial team members have even proofread with the aid of magnifying glasses. May God remember all their hard work.

The Supplement is not perfect, but my prayer is that God will prosper the development of the music ministry in the Chinese Church and that the Holy Spirit will inspire more and more Christians to write and sing hymns which are more suitable and inspiring, to the glory of God’s holy name.

Tian Feng, November, 2009.

If you are interested in Chinese theology, read the Chinese Theological Review (CTR). CTR provides an excellent follow-up of theological discussion in China.

Find details on the Amity News Service website: www.amitynewsservice.org
China’s Voice at Edinburgh 1910

Gu Mengfei

Over 1200 representatives from 159 Christian missionary organizations around the world gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland, between June 14th and 23rd 1910 for the World Missionary Conference which became known as the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. The Edinburgh Missionary Conference, “symbolized the start of a new period for the European and American missionary movement,” because in the conference it was recognized that “missionary organizations working alone could no longer complete the missionary call.” All churches, organizations, and denominations needed to have mutual respect, working together, and giving testimony to unity in the church, in order to “spread the gospel across the whole earth within a generation.” The Edinburgh Conference is seen as the starting point of the worldwide Christian movement.

China, the world’s largest mission field at the time, could not be left out of the Edinburgh conference, which was, after all, a missions conference. China was represented at the conference in two ways: first, through Western mission societies and missionaries working in China; and second, through the involvement of Chinese Christians themselves.

Western missions and missionaries working in China participated in preparations before the conference, the meetings themselves, then in follow-up work. The conference was made up of eight commissions on different topics; missionaries working in China attended many commission meetings where reports were drafted and revised. The British Presbyterian Church missionary in Shantou, John Campbell Gibson, was chairman of the commission, “The Church in the Mission Field”. China missionaries took part in a wide range of commissions, and during the meetings themselves they held a gathering of “China missionaries” attended by 200 people from a wide range of mission organizations and places. During discussions at the “Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World” commission, amongst the 34 speakers, 25 were evangelists from mission fields, but only nine were from China.

But overall Chinese Christian involvement was more impressive. Amongst the approximately 1215 official delegates, only about 19 non-Western delegates were from the “younger churches” or “the mission field churches.” Of the eight Asian delegates, three were from China. They were Rev. Cheng Jingyi, assistant minister of the London Missionary Society’s Beijing Rice Market Church; Professor Dong Jing’an, the acting president of the University of Shanghai and a professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary; and Zhang Tingrong, a Presbyterian from Shanghai. Apart from these three official delegates, the famous Christian doctor, Ms. Kang Cheng, who was studying in England at the time, and a Ph.D. surnamed Wang (C.C. Wong) also attended the conference. There were in total, therefore, five Chinese Christians at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, and they all took the opportunity to speak or respond during the conference, presenting a Chinese perspective on topics such as the establishment of the Chinese church, the elimination of denominationalism, the call for unity in the church, Christianity and Chinese culture, and Christianity and nationalism. Dong Jing’an was a Christian scholar with a profound background in Chinese literature and culture; when he ascended the platform dressed in traditional Chinese clothing, all eyes followed. Speaking on “Relationships with unbelievers,” he called for encouraging Chinese Christians to study their
own traditional culture in order to promote the early indigenization of Christianity in China, for Christianity needed to take on an indigenized form rather than be seen as an import. Only in that way, he said, can Christianity be connected to local people. He thought that Chinese people should in no way reject the study of Confucian classics; that is Chinese national culture, and as such has permanent value. He said that Christianity should not attempt to replace Confucianism, but rather should fulfill and perfect it. If one lives Christian ethics, he pointed out, this will benefit, supplement, and perfect the guidance offered by Confucian principles at every level of society—individuals, families, and communities. He also thought that Christian principles could satisfy Buddhist principles of holiness, self-sacrifice, and discernment (interpreted as separating oneself from sin, while at the same time avoiding the Buddhist doctrine of misgivings regarding one’s fate in life). For this reason, he called for Christian schools in China to have more teachers versed in Western and Chinese wisdom. Zhang Tingrong understood clearly that China was on the eve of huge changes. In the “Missionary Message in Relation to the Non-Christian World” commission he introduced the situation in China, pointing out that in four or five years, or perhaps even in only three years, there would be fundamental changes in China. He believed that, “China is currently putting off the old but has not yet grasped the new. The Chinese soul is bewildered and empty; this is a great opportunity for Christ to enter the Chinese soul.” He made an earnest invitation to the churches of the world to take immediate action, uniting in their efforts for the work of the gospel in China.

One afternoon, Dr. Kang Cheng gave a speech to female delegates about the situation and needs of Chinese women. The young Dr. Wang participated in a committee entitled “Missions and Governments,” speaking as one who is both Chinese and Christian, expressing a clear-cut nationalist stance. He attacked the unequal treaties, criticizing the way spreading the gospel was manipulated by colonial invaders, admonishing missionaries not to meddle in Chinese domestic affairs, undermining Chinese sovereignty.

Dr. Wang said that the more missionaries drew support from unequal treaties and resist the Chinese government, the less effective was their motivation and reason for their missionary work in bringing people to faith, and added frankly that in the minds of many Chinese people, missionary work was linked with power, military force and violation of China’s sovereignty. He admonished missionaries, pointing out that they should not in any circumstances and especially not in the so-called missionary cases, act as “umbrellas,” protecting Chinese Christians from the law. Chinese people preparing to convert to Christianity should have this clearly explained to them as a matter of principle. He thought that a person should not rely on the protection of a certain religion but should rather observe the laws of the country in which he lived. He stated firmly, “From the beginning, it should be understood that … China has her religion … and that all Chinese people, Christians or non-Christians, should all be loyal to their country. The powerful nations of Europe, America, and Japan should respect this country and treat her with justice.” He also put forward a suggestion that some portions of conference reports stating that China discriminated against Christians should be amended.

The Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference Records say that Dr. Wang was a good Christian with strong nationalist principles. “From his concise speech, it can be seen that the church is currently becoming the Chinese church, and that this is the only way that China can be won for Christ.”

Not yet thirty years of age, Rev. Cheng Jingyi was perhaps one of the youngest delegates at the conference, but addressed the assembly twice, expounding in particular on his proposal to establish a “supra-denominational, completely independent and united” Chinese Church. This left a deep impression on the conference.
In discussions with others who also came from mission churches on the topic, “The Church in the Mission Field,” Cheng Jingyi expressed the very strong hope that Chinese Christians would build the church themselves. He told a parable: This is like a young girl carrying a small boy. It looks difficult and maybe people would say, “That young girl is carrying a heavy burden.” She, however, would firmly respond, “He is not a burden. He is my brother.” In the same way, although not easy, in no way is it a burden for the Chinese people to build the Chinese church, rather, “It is our honor and our joy.”

Thanks to the hard work and appeals of delegates from China, India, Japan and Korea, the conference approved the recommendation that local gospel workers, should to a large degree, complete the work of establishing local churches. “The Church in the Mission Field” commission presented a written report saying, “Mission field churches must be seen as transitional and not permanent,” and as for the relationship with the mother church, “The nature of the relationship between the two is temporary.” However, the report still approved the mother church’s right to some control, saying, “If there is too little control, the church will go in the wrong direction; if there is too much control, it will lose the motivation to develop.”

Cheng Jingyi’s famous speech at the conference occurred during Commission 8 discussions on “Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity.” He began by saying, “As a representative of the Chinese Church, I speak entirely from the Chinese standpoint. We may, and we may not, all agree, but I feel that it is my duty to present before you the mind of the Chinese church as frankly as possible.” He passionately declared that the Chinese church yearns for unity, doesn’t need denominations, and that the difficulties in unity quite frankly came from Western denominations.

“Since the Chinese Christians have enjoyed the sweetness of such a unity, they long for more and look for yet greater things. They are watching with keen eyes, and listening with attentive ears, for what this conference will show and say to them concerning this all-important question. I am sure they will not be disappointed. Speaking plainly, we hope to see in the near future a united Christian Church without any denominational distinctions.”

To this end, he called on Western churches, mission agencies and missionaries to comply with the viewpoint of Chinese Christians and to participate in the testimony of the Chinese church rather than impose their desires on Chinese Christians. Failure to do this would mean that “the Chinese will remain always a mysterious people to you.”

Rev. Cheng elaborated further, saying that Christ’s church is the church of the world, not divided into nationalities. The church is “one family under heaven”, and the Chinese church is one member of that family. Chinese Christians are not interested at all in Western denominationalism; not only do they gain no pleasure from factions, in fact most of the time, they suffer its bitterness. As far as Chinese people are concerned, everyone wants unity. This is not just because China is a country that places great value on harmony in society and in families, it is also because unity is truly helpful for building up the Chinese church to nurture and govern itself. It will enable the Chinese church to establish itself as a strong entity, to withstand heretical trends which come from without and to overcome weakness from within. He pointed out that, “The difficulty in building unity in the Chinese church mostly comes from Western friends, not from ourselves.”

“I would, if you would allow me, make one suggestion, i.e., that this conference will recommend that the Continuation Committee, when appointed, make careful investigation, and will consult all the Chinese pastors and Christian leaders, and obtain from them a free and frank expression of their opinion as to the needs of such a united effort, and the best method to bring this about. For, after all, ...
it is not your particular denomination, nor even your particular mission that you are working for, but the establishment of the Church of Christ in China that you have in view."

Finally, Cheng Jingyi appealed, “In conclusion, let us go with our divine Master up on the top of the Mount of Olives, and there we shall obtain a wider, broader, and larger view of the needs of the church and the world.”

The 1910 Edinburgh conference provided the first chance for Chinese Christians to state their position on the international stage, expressing the Chinese church’s own voice in front of the churches of the world. Because there were so many conference delegates, each person only had seven minutes to speak. Even adding together the time allocations for all Chinese delegates, the time available was short. However, in this short time, the forceful voice of the Chinese delegates reverberated loud and clear. Their words reflected China’s national character, China’s church, and China’s people, as well as presenting a clear and different view of the development of the Chinese church. 100 years have since passed, and as we listen again to history’s resonating echo, we are inspired and enriched.

Looking back over the past 100 years, looking ahead to the next 100 years, the road of the Chinese church is being laid with a sense of holy and eager expectation. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we strive to build a good church according to the three-self principles, giving testimony to God’s promise that, “The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house.” (Haggai 2:9) ♦

Translated by Suzanne Rowe from *Tian Feng* No. 364, April 2010.

A 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck near Yushu in Qinghai province Tibetan Autonomous Region on April 14, 2010. The national CCC/TSPM sent a letter of condolence to the Christian Council and TSPM in Qinghai, and Christian Councils and TSPMs, churches, seminaries and bible schools around the country expressed sympathy and concern for their compatriots in Qinghai. Prayer services were held and donations collected; the CCC/TSPM Social Service Department and the Amity Foundation organized early relief work and delivery of much needed food and shelter in spite of frigid conditions in the high mountainous areas where the quake struck. The photo shows students and staff of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary at a candlelight prayer service for victims of the quake.
God Brings Me Joy and Peace

Yan Xiyu

When we think about prayer in the scriptures, we usually think about the prayers concerning extraordinary circumstances. Actually the Bible's teaching about prayer is not limited to the extraordinary. The Bible also contains many ordinary, everyday prayers, like Psalm 4, for instance.

Despite its even tone, we can see several transitions in the psalm. Examining these transitions, I see four different sections in this psalm, with verse 1 being the first section, verses 2-3 the second section, verses 4-5 the third section, and verses 6-8 the fourth, and final, section. Interestingly, as it turns out, it is possible to use the Chinese rhetorical approach of qi, cheng, zhuoan, he, or, “opening,” “development,” “change,” and “closing” to understand the structure and movement of this psalm and its message.

Qi or “Opening” (verse 1)

“How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?”

The greatest distress is not that of being without food and clothing, but rather the distress of having no future, the distress of being without a shred of hope. This kind of hopelessness is the kind of distress that David experienced. David is trying to express here that even though he had passed through a difficult time, God used these difficult circumstances to raise him up higher and to allow him to see further.

The phrase “O my righteous God” and the word “distress” both allow us to see the closeness of David’s relationship to God.

Cheng or “Development” (verses 2-3)

“How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?”

In the first part of the psalm, David is dealing with his relationship to God by addressing Him as “O my righteous God.” When we come to this second section, David turns his attention to a group of people that he addresses as “you people.”

In this section, we first of all want to understand whom David is addressing as “you people.” Who are these people anyway? Looking at the phrase from a common sense point of view, “you people” seems to refer to a group in the upper levels of society. Perhaps today we might call them the “elite” of society. Is this whom David is addressing? Through consulting a number of different translations, I have decided that David is not necessarily addressing the elite of society. Instead he simply calls them, “you people.”

Yan Xiyu
An Everyday Prayer

What then does the label “you people” imply? From the meaning of the sentence, it is not hard to see that “you people” most likely refers to a group of people who think of themselves as above others. That is a little bit like our reference today to people who love to teach virtue to other people. These kinds of people love to wag their fingers and point out the petty faults of genuinely pious people like David and others like him. These kinds of people are hard to take.

Please pay attention here: when David is praying and saying these words, he is not venting complaints to God. What he clearly wants to know is why are they doing these things? Of what significance are these things? Why do they stand on high wagging their fingers at him in criticism? David indicates, “I am a pious person. Pious people are those who return to God and those who belong to God.” In other words, those who are devoted to God receive God’s love.

In this kind of relationship, when a person prays to God, God hears their prayer. In these verses, it appears on the surface that David is focusing on “these people,” but upon closer examination it is clear that David is using these people to offer more detail about his own relationship to God.

Zhuan or “Change” (verses 4-5)

“When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent.

In the cheng or “development” section of the psalm, David refers to “you people” in order to elucidate more clearly his own relationship with God. However, while mentioning “these people” and their problem, David takes the opportunity to admonish them. In these two verses of the zhuan or “change” section of the psalm, David admonishes these people on four points.

1. “In your anger, do not sin.
   It is possible to think of “anger” and “sin” as a pair of twin brothers. A person who fears neither heaven nor earth can easily stumble into sin. So, someone who has fear does not sin. Chinese people often say that someone who believes that “heaven is watching” takes care not to break the law. David wants these people to have this kind of fear.

2. “Thoughtful” and “peaceful”
   Someone who is devout is certainly thoughtful and at peace. A person who wants to be thoughtful certainly needs time for quiet. The people that David is referring to in this psalm love to be in the position of teacher. They love to lecture others on virtue all day long. As a matter of fact, these kinds of people never give their own souls a rest or a chance to be reflective in the presence of God. Those serving the church as evangelists should pay careful attention to this point, so that in teaching others all day long they are careful not to neglect their own relationship with God.

   In creating our Chinese characters, our forbearers made some interesting choices. For instance, the character for “busy” (mang, 忙) has the radical for “heart” (xin, 心) on the left side, and on the right the character for “death” (wang, 死). This character for busy not only reminds us that when we feel busy we are probably not accomplishing anything significant, but also to be careful about being too busy. For, as the saying goes, “nothing is more lamentable than a dead heart.”

   In David’s view being a teacher of virtue is easy, but to be a thoughtful and peaceful person is very difficult. However, being a thoughtful person at peace is essential to having a good relationship with God.

3. “Offer right sacrifices”
   It is important to offer sacrifices to God, but it is not material objects that God is keen on receiving. As Psalm 51:16 says, “For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.” Here David indicates that what God really desires is righteousness. Righteousness is a term often on our lips, but frequently we use this word to put demands on others. That is to say, we take the phrase “God is righteous” as a standard for judging other people. Actually the term righteousness
should be used to judge our own behavior, which is God’s most important requirement of us. God does not require us to offer the righteousness of other people; he only requires that we offer our own righteousness.

4. "And put your trust in the Lord"

Putting one’s trust in the Lord is both the certain outcome of the three previous points as well as their necessary condition. A person who genuinely belongs to God must of necessity be able to control her anger, to be thoughtful and at peace, and to offer right sacrifices. This kind of person truly belongs to the Lord.

He or “Closing” (verses 6-8)

“There are many who say, ‘Oh that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord!’”

In this psalm, David is offering many suggestions to “these people.” No doubt, however, some of them were asking themselves, “What is the benefit of doing all of these things?” But this is not only a question for David’s time. When we present the Gospel to others, most likely many will say, “What benefit is there in trusting the Lord?” This kind of skepticism is not limited to unbelievers, however; it is very likely that many Christians raise the same question.

Speaking straightforwardly, David relates two benefits in belonging to the Lord: one is “joy” and the other is “peacefulness.” The happiness of the person belonging to God surpasses that of a bumper crop of grain and new wine. It surpasses the happiness of the wealthy. And speaking about “peacefulness,” David uses twice in quick succession the phrases, “I will lie down and sleep in peace,” and “lie down in safety.” Chinese people put a great deal of emphasis on living and working in peace and contentment. One should make a living peacefully, because only when one’s body and soul have a place to settle down will there be the possibility to speak about dedication and joy in one’s work.

Peace and contentment not only depend on creating an opportunity. According to the Confucian tradition, peace and contentment are able to stimulate the growth of kindness in a person’s heart. The Book of Changes says, “The contented and peaceful are genuinely full of lofty kindness.” That is to say, the kindheartedness of someone who is at peace and contented will only continue to grow.

Translated by Kurt Selles from Tian Feng No. 364, April 2010

CCC/TSPM and United Bible Societies Celebrate 25 Years of Bible Publication at Amity Press

A commemorative meeting to mark 25 years of partnership in Bible printing between the China Christian Council and Three Self Patriotic Movement Committee of Protestant Churches in China (CCC/TSPM) and the United Bible Societies (UBS) was held in Shanghai on April 10, 2010. Present were 27 staff from the CCC, the Jiangsu Christian Council, the Shanghai Christian Council, and the Zhejiang Christian Council, as well as Ms. Guo Wei, director-general of China’s State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) and a delegation of UBS Board Members, General Secretaries, Directors, Senior Staff and supporters coming from 20 different countries, representing 16 Bible Societies.

Elder Fu Xianwei, Chair of the TSPM, observed in his remarks that the gathering was not just a celebration of the last 25 years of partnership but for the next 25 years as well. Elder Fu looked forward to continued and greater cooperation between CCC/TSPM and UBS in Bible ministry. One area of CCC/TSPM and UBS collaboration in the near future would be in the production of more editions and formats of Bible to meet the Scripture needs of children and young people.
Besides providing subsidy for Bible paper, the UBS fellowship has also helped to purchase 44 Bible distribution vans for use by the Bible distribution centers of CCC/TSPM. Elder Fu highlighted that “CCC/TSPM has also published 8 different minority languages with UBS help in translation. To date, we have published 50 million Bibles with 50 different versions and specifications – not to mention Braille Bibles and digital Bibles — thus serving the needs of Chinese Christians from various ages, occupations and social status.”

At the end of the Celebration, Rev. Weibusch presented Elder Fu a replica set of the first complete Chinese Bible translated by Rev Robert Morrison, Rev William Milne and their Chinese Assistants from 1807 to 1819, and published in 1823, with the support of the British & Foreign Bible Societies. It was a reminder of the Bible Societies’ involvement, contribution and commitment towards the Bible ministry of China over the past 200 years.

Edited, with thanks, from an article by Pamela Choo for United Bible Societies, China Partnership. Full article can be found at http://www.ubscp.org/celebrate25years/