In November 2010, members of Sicheng Church in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, organized a clothing drive to collect warm clothing for those living in poor areas of western China. Within a short time, two truckloads of clothing were collected. Church members volunteered to sort and package and help transport the donations to Yunan, Guizhou and other needy areas in western China. Photo shows clothing awaiting shipment at Sicheng Church.
Dear Reader,

From its beginning in the early 1950s, the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) stressed the Three-Self principles that would make it possible for the Protestant churches to separate themselves from their colonial past and “make [their] own way amidst the construction of a new China”: self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation. Over the course of the ensuing years, as it was possible for the church to move forward on this foundation, new developments were encapsulated in new phrases now familiar to Chinese churches and their partners and colleagues in the world church: “love country and love church”; “three wells” (govern well, support well and propagate well, 1991); and “strengthen Theological Reconstruction” (1998). Today, the growing possibility for the church to play a more active role in the larger society is reflected in the emphasis on “building harmonious churches,” a response to the national call for building a harmonious society.

The excerpt in this issue of ANS of a report summarizing the TSPM’s experience and work over the years to its 60th anniversary (2010) states that the organization’s most vital concern going forward is to build a harmonious and healthy church. Key tasks of this new era for TSPM include deepening Theological Reconstruction, being salt and light in society, strengthening the church, and maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

In “A Theological Education Roundtable,” theological educators from China and abroad present brief snapshots of their views of seminary education. Their concerns range from holistic education to a focus on research to the importance of fieldwork to enhance students’ understanding of the real life of the churches. All agree that theological education affects the whole future of the church.

Tian Feng, the church monthly magazine, has begun a series of short articles exhorting readers to pray for concerns of the churches. Recent issues have asked for prayers for migrant workers and for self-support in the churches. This issue of ANS carries “Pray for Theological Education in China” as a companion piece to the views expressed in the theological education roundtable.

Past issues of ANS have included frequent articles on the challenges facing churches and meeting points in rural areas. “Reflections on the Clergy in Rural Areas,” is a survey by a government cadre on the current state of training for church workers in northern Jiangsu and the need for improvement.

Our final article, on the 25th anniversary of East China (Huadong) Theological Seminary in Shanghai, includes an interesting summary of the seminary’s experience as well as steps being taken to improve student selection and curriculum for the future.

Our News section carries the notice of the death in Shanghai of Mr. Luo Guanzong, an elder statesman, active in the TSPM since its inception, as well as in the YMCA. Mr. Luo held various posts in these organizations in a career spanning as many decades as the TSPM itself and was a past chairman of TSPM.

Thanks as always to our translators for this issue, Emily Dunn, Suzanne Rowe, Kurt Selles, and Katie Spillane. Photos are courtesy of Tian Feng and www.ccctspm.org.

Janice Wickeri
TSPM at 60: Tasks for a New Era

Building a healthy and harmonious church

The Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) was initiated by Chinese Protestants during the 1950s in the context of the declaration that the “Chinese people [had] stood up.” Christians hoped that the church would be reborn, and made the choices that were necessary for the church to make its own way amidst the construction of a new China. Thus, the TSPM bore features that were distinctive to that time. The Three-Self theory was never rigid, isolated, or closed, but from its inception was open to the times, had its finger on the pulse of developments in society, and was integral to running the church well. Sixty years later, the Chinese Church is continuing its fine tradition of loving the country and loving the church, and is carrying the TSPM into a new historical period. We believe that as we seek to do this, the most vital concern must be to build a harmonious and healthy Chinese Church by deepening the TSPM.

The experience of the TSPM over the last sixty years tells us that if we do not hold firm to the Three-Self principles the church will lose its direction, and we will lose our audience for the gospel; i.e., the population at large. This experience also tells us that if we do not truly run the church well, the TSPM will become an empty slogan and we will lose the foundation on which the TSPM rests; that is, Christians. Bishop Ting once painted a picture of a healthy and harmonious Chinese Church in an address entitled “Retrospect and Prospect”: “The Three-Self Movement has never worked for Three-Self for its own sake. From its beginning, the movement envisioned a well-governed, well-supported, well-propagating Church of Christ growing up on Chinese soil” (see Chinese Theological Review, 1985: 13-14).

In fact, from the mention of “wanting to help build a Chinese Church that is run by Chinese people themselves” in the “Christian Manifesto” shortly after the founding of the People’s Republic, through to discussion of “governing well, supporting well, and propagating well” at the Fifth Chinese National Christian Conference (1991), and again to the proposal on “strengthening Theological Reconstruction” at the Jinan Conference in 1998, the Chinese Christian TSPM has never strayed from its basic aim of running the church well, as has been demonstrated throughout its sixty years. Indeed, this has enabled it to remain relevant, win more believers’ support, and retain its vitality and vigor.

The church is Christ’s body, and is also a living spiritual fellowship made up of believers. The maturation and development of the church must be harmonious and healthy. As Paul instructed the church in Ephesus, it must be “a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). This requires that the church cleanse itself through the Word, and nourish its flock with pure spiritual milk.

What does it mean for a church to develop in a healthy and harmonious way? A church that is healthy and harmonious takes responsibility for its own good governance, support, and propagation. It bears the characteristics of its time, and is harmonious internally. It is rooted in the rich soil of Chinese culture and has its own distinctive style of theology. It has the courage to take social responsibility and live out an ethic of love. It is a church that exalts Christ and preserves unity; its own organization is exemplary and cohesive; it is full of Christ’s fragrance, and witnesses to the meaning of life in its everyday behavior.

The TSPM will become more cohesive, be able to unite more people, and facilitate harmony in society at large only when the Chinese Church is growing in a harmonious and healthy way. The mission of the Chinese Christian TSPM mission is glorious, but the task is formidable. For the foreseeable future, serving the construction of a harmonious and healthy church will be a key focus of the TSPM.

What must we do to build a harmonious and healthy church?

The experience of the Chinese Church demonstrates that maintaining the Three-Self principles and “loving the country and loving
the church” has been the key to running it well. Today, history has entrusted us with a new mission. We must undertake this task and endeavor to build a harmonious and healthy Chinese church. In order to do this, we should attend to the following points:

Pass on the torch, continue to love the country and love the church, serve the nation, and advance social harmony

Over the past sixty years, the TSPM has achieved much in the areas of loving the country and loving the church and moving forward in unity. As successors in these new times, we should seek not only to keep loving the country and loving the church and to maintain independence and self-determination; we must also undertake to move forward together and run the church well.

Chinese society is experiencing enormous and historic change at present. Maintaining reforms and opening up, propelling scientific development and promoting social harmony have become hallmarks of these times. Chinese Christianity cannot stand aloof from these changes, but in fact has already become a part of them. Christians must not only connect with God, but must act in accordance with God’s teaching and connect with their homeland, society, and people from all walks of life. The TSPM is contributing to the great progress being made in building a moderately well-off society and constructing a harmonious socialist society. It is working to resist all forms of religious extremism and ethnic separatism and to maintain national and ethnic unity. It is actively involved in the construction of a harmonious culture, conducts its relationships appropriately, and works to maintain social stability and promote religious and social harmony. In so doing, it undoubtedly furthers economic and social development. This is an important role that a harmonious and healthy church must play in contemporary Chinese society.

Maintain the dual focus on theoretical research and sermons so as to advance theological reconstruction.

Theological Reconstruction was launched twelve years ago. Over this period we have succeeded in achieving a common understanding of Theological Reconstruction, invigorating the church’s theological reflection, deepening believers’ understanding of their faith, enriching church sermons, developing Christian morality and ethics, and strengthening Christians’ sense of social responsibility and desire to serve.

Theological Reconstruction has now entered a crucial period. We must fulfil its fundamental task in a down-to-earth fashion and maintain a dual focus. This is particularly so with regard to building a church which develops in a healthy and harmonious manner. On the one hand, we must work on theological theory—specifically, we should enhance the role of seminaries as bases for theology, create an atmosphere which is conducive to theoretical research, identify key topics, and secure research funding. At the same time, we must also work on translating this theory into accessible terms so that church sermons can be filled with fresh and contemporary “manna.” We must extend the successful practices of the Theological Reconstruction preaching teams, make use of church workers’ enthusiasm, and work hard so that we can “provide nourishment when needed,” and enable Christians of different social strata to access contemporary spiritual resources.

Forge ahead, explore the theory of harmonious theology, and encourage churches to hold harmonious church activities.

At present, we should consider harmony in the church and in society as an important topic for research in Theological Reconstruction. Over one hundred passages in the Bible make direct reference to the concept of harmony. We must actively uncover and utilize messages such as “peace” and “harmony” that are contained in Christian doctrine, and engage in theological exploration of the biblical injunctions to “pursue peace with everyone” (Hebrews 12:14) and “preach a gospel of peace” (Acts 10:36). Seminaries throughout China should engage in research wherever possible, with a view to converting the fruits of Theological Reconstruction into theological support for establishing harmonious church activities.

The CCC/TSPM attach great importance to the “harmonious church” programs launched by churches throughout the nation, and propose that in terms of concrete measures these churches should
aim to have a proper grasp of eight fundamental standards: loving the country and loving the church, observing the law, promoting unity and stability, holding orderly activities, teaching in an appropriate style, management that is up to standard, safety and cleanliness, and serving society. “Harmonious church” programs should also adhere to “four linkages,” which refers to linking these activities with maintaining Three-Self patriotic principles and deepening Theological Reconstruction, strengthening the local CCC/TSPM and the churches themselves, reinforcing unity, and engagement in social service. “Harmonious church” activities not only benefit our national interests and social harmony, but can also improve the church’s internal cohesion and the social image of Christianity.

In building a harmonious church we must achieve unity and harmony within each church, and then extend it by strengthening the CCC/TSPM’s cohesiveness and influence, particularly among those believers who are not yet in contact with these two national organizations. As long as believers are patriotic and law-abiding, we should try to win them over so as to broaden the base for healthy and orderly development in the church.

Be salt and light. The church must have the courage to take social responsibility, have an ethic of love, and be Christ’s witness.

Caring for society, living out faith and being salt and light are all fine Christian traditions and signs of a church that is developing healthily. Christians should not look only to their own concerns, but should also care about those of others. The Christian faith is a living faith; the Christian gospel is “the power of God” shown forth in society. Uncovering and putting the Bible’s moral and ethical resources into effect is a good starting point for Christians who want to serve society and live out their faith. It is also a witness that a healthy church should bear.

In recent years, Chinese Christianity has had some achievements in the area of social service. Christian individuals have become role models in all sorts of fields, and it is widely affirmed that “a Christian should be a good citizen.” But we must also recognize that by and large Christian social service has been rather small in scale, with limited effect, and that Christians’ participation could be stronger.

It is my hope that through our combined efforts Christians will not only endeavor to enhance family values, professional morality, and public ethics, but will also put effort into creating harmonious churches and bringing about religious and social harmony; they will not only work for causes such as disaster relief and poverty alleviation, but will also practice the teaching that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” by initiating social service ministries and supporting causes that go to the public interest. Christians should not only work towards prosperity, setting up businesses and developing a proper view of career and wealth, but should also enter into the nation’s economic construction, and contribute to social and economic development and the creation of a socialist society that is relatively well off. They should not only work for the development of a modern society which is healthy and ordered, fair and just, and for a nice homeland, but also towards protecting God’s creation, protecting the environment, and increasing sustainable development.

Exalt Christ, create an atmosphere of mutual respect, bless the fruits of unity, and “maintain the unity of the Spirit.”

Both the Chinese tradition of “harmonious coexistence and broad acceptance” and the biblical injunction to “bear with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2-3) require that we “maintain the unity of the Spirit.”

At present, the church is still experiencing many problems in the area of harmony and unity. This is firstly because some Christians are lax in exercising mutual respect when it comes to differences in faith, leading to an undue emphasis on “maintaining differences” and a neglect of “seeking the common ground.” This has a negative impact upon the Chinese Church’s unity and worship together. Second, problems in church harmony stem from the interference and influence of overseas forces. With increasing Sino-foreign exchange, overseas forces have used guises such as reviving tradition and strengthening exchange to seek out “workshops” which they can control, and have planned to carve the Chinese Church up into fragmented “branches” of foreign denominations once again. Conflicts within the church have additionally been on the rise in recent years. Some of these disputes have been
Church Life

Church workers and fellow Christians, over the past sixty years the great land of China has changed tremendously. Not only have the Chinese people, who experienced the wounds of war and the hardships of backwardness, stood up; Chinese Christianity, which was once known as a “foreign religion,” has truly recovered and remade itself through the baptism of the TSPM. Sixty years later, the banner of the TSPM has been handed on to our generation; history has entrusted us with the lofty task of building a healthy and harmonious church.

In today’s China, people are open towards religion like never before. Clearly, profound social change has brought opportunities and challenges to the place and development of Christianity in Chinese society. We should all appreciate the arrival of this important moment in history! Let our hearts and minds be as one; may we work effectively, seize this opportunity and strive to catch up with it. Let us use the wisdom and strength that God has given us to write another beautiful chapter on the TSPM in the history of our great socialist homeland!

“May you establish the work of our hands; yes, establish the work of our hands” (Psalm 90:17).

Transcribed from Tian Feng No. 372, December 2010 by Emily C. Dunn

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A Theological Education Roundtable

En Guang

At a conference held recently in Shanghai, theological educators from China’s twenty theological schools gathered to discuss theological education and to exchange ideas. Attending the meeting were presidents, deans, and administrators, as well as some theological educators from overseas. This reporter had the opportunity to discuss with the participants their ideas about the theological curriculum, training programs, and challenges facing theological education. Below are brief comments from each of them.

Kan Baoping
General Secretary
China Christian Council

Adhere to the correct policy to run theological education well:

This meeting fulfills a vital function for theological training in the entire country. Because the seminary is the cradle of pastors, the future of the Chinese Church rests on the theological training of today. God has entrusted us as theological educators with the responsibility and task to create healthy educational environments, to establish strong curriculums, and to devise proper policies for carrying out theological education. Training and exchange can provide us with opportunities for reflecting on the objectives of theological education and for running a theological institution. These opportunities also help us to evaluate whether we are achieving our goals.

Cai Ruiyi
President
Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary

Challenges in theological education:
The seminary and the church are inseparable.

Some people even say, “The theological students of today are the pastors of tomorrow; so the seminary of today is the future of the church.” The purpose of theological training is to train a generation of church leaders. All church leaders have three responsibilities: to preach the gospel, to care for the church, and to lead the church. These three responsibilities remind us that theological institutions must design curriculums that help students understand “the Word,” how to “proclaim the Word,” and how to become a “preacher of the Word.” Though the context of the church is constantly undergoing change, “proclamation,” “Word,” and “person” or preacher must be balanced aspects in the theological curriculum for training church leaders. Constantly reforming the theological curriculum to maintain this balance is the ongoing challenge of theological education.

Manfred Kohl
Special Ambassador
Overseas Council

Theological education and management:

As theological educators, we need to study how to best use our resources. God wants us to put the considerable resources he has given us to good use. Doing a good job of administering theological resources can help us do our work even better. We need to teach our students—the future pastors—how to become excellent shepherds, working hard to serve God and God’s kingdom.

We need to follow Jesus’ example with his disciples, putting into practice theological education in our daily lives.
and preparing a reserve of qualified teachers. For this reason, building a cohort of qualified teachers is the most pressing need of theological education. The principles and deans of theological institutions need to be at the forefront, leading in the process. This should not be limited to mere talk, but should be a process of setting an agenda, guiding the leadership and formulating a feasible, practical plan for training leaders over a five to ten year period. Teacher training is the systems engineering of our theological education, the key long-term task.

This requires presidents and principals to guide the leadership in prayer, asking the Lord to increase their faith, to help them work with perseverance, to overcome difficulties, to realize a plan for training, and year by year work toward bringing it to completion.

Yu Daxin
President
China Graduate School of Theology (Hong Kong)

The proper response of theological education to secularization:

The word “secularization” comes from the Latin term saeculum, which means “this moment,” or “at once,” or “the present.” Thus, “secularism” means “at present” or “at this moment” indicating a philosophy that excludes the supernatural, historical orientation, and the ultimate. The “secularization” of the present age reveals such a philosophy. In order to respond to this present day philosophy, theological training needs to emphasize the transcendent, point to the experience of God in everyday life, strengthen the consciousness of the last days, and heighten the awareness of God in historical consciousness. This kind of theological training must stress the importance of spiritual formation, and at the same time foster a vision of the end of the age. To resist the tide of secularization requires spiritual intensity.

Zhou Yongjian
President Emeritus
China Graduate School of Theology (Hong Kong)

Theological education that meets today’s needs:

In the face of relentless social change, theological education needs to ground itself and hold firmly to its unchanging mission: to train competent, devoted, and knowledgeable pastors for the church. Theological education includes, but is not limited to, theological study. It must also include academic study, spiritual formation, and practical application. Moreover, theological education must keep pace with the times, understand the situation of society and the needs of the church, raise its standards, strengthen the quality of teachers and students, implement an appropriate curriculum, and set standards and plans for future development. At the same time there should be a tireless effort to expand and develop relationships and exchanges with theological institutions overseas for consulting and inviting noted scholars to lecture. If we can do these things the future of theological training in China looks bright.

Gao Ying
President
Yanjing Theological Seminary

Teacher training is the lifeblood of theological seminaries and Bible schools:

The teacher training and resources of theological institutions are built up over time and are the lifeblood of theological colleges and seminaries. As the goal of theological education is the transmission of the faith, teacher training is the guarantee that theological education can continue and develop. Raising the level of faith of Christians depends on the quality of pastors, and the quality of pastors depends on the quality of theological training. At the core of theological education is training qualified teachers and preparing a reserve of qualified teachers. For this reason, building a cohort of qualified teachers is the most pressing need of theological education. The principles and deans of theological institutions need to be at the forefront, leading in the process. This should not be limited to mere talk, but should be a process of setting an agenda, guiding the leadership and formulating a feasible, practical plan for training leaders over a five to ten year period. Teacher training is the systems engineering of our theological education, the key long-term task. This requires presidents and principals to guide the leadership in prayer, asking the Lord to increase their faith, to help them work with perseverance, to overcome difficulties, to realize a plan for training, and year by year work toward bringing it to completion.

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Theological educators must elevate their research and writing level:

Teachers disseminate knowledge. Disseminating or spreading knowledge is not simply the process of passing on knowledge, otherwise it would just be the work of transmission. Spreading knowledge is planting knowledge so it takes root in new soil, sprouts and grows. This requires processing knowledge and adapting it so that it can grow in new soil. This processing also requires study and research. Doing research is not only about understanding and mastering knowledge. It is also a way of thinking in order to gain knowledge, and based on that knowledge to stimulate further reflection and research. Teaching that is not founded on the basis of research is merely the transmission of old knowledge and not the dissemination knowledge into new soil. And writing is the recorded account of research, which gives those who come later an opportunity to keep thinking and provides them with new resources. In this way, the torch of knowledge can be passed on to later generations. Research and writing are what theological educators need to do to complete their task.

Theological education and culture:

I think Chinese theological education should stress the importance of Chinese culture, since traditional Chinese culture is part of the revelation of God. China has a long history, and Chinese culture is deep and profound. Chinese theological education should be rooted in the soil of Chinese culture, uniting the Chinese Church and Chinese culture to develop theological thinking. Zhongnan Theological Seminary has begun a curriculum related to Christianity and Chinese culture so as to advance students’ knowledge of Chinese culture as well as to develop a vigorous relationship between the Christian faith and Chinese culture.

Seminary students must do fieldwork in the church:

Theological education itself is a task that cannot be separated from the work of the church, because the task of the seminary is to train appropriate workers for the church. So, theological institutions and churches are mutually dependent partners in the kingdom of God. Working in churches can help seminary students understand the real situation in the church, which will help them to make proper adjustments or changes in direction and to tie their theological training into real-life situations (as the saying goes, “theology is the church thinking”). Theological students who have more opportunity to think about the needs of the church will be more effective pastors. Seminaries certainly should not
neglect practical training opportunities for students in churches. Today seminaries and Bible schools should strive to give theological students an opportunity to participate in church fieldwork.

Wang Hong
Principal
Shaanxi Bible School

Theological education and holistic education:
Personal growth is the core of holistic education, and how best to promote personal growth is crucial in theological education. We can promote the personal growth of students through school policies, spiritual formation, and community life. In a word, students need a variety of dynamics to develop and grow in personal maturity, and the work of seminaries is precisely that of guiding students and providing them a place to practice their work.

Xiang Xi’an
Provost
Anhui Theological Seminary

Principles for developing the theological curriculum:
The office of academic affairs plays an important role in the development of the theological curriculum and can aid the process in focusing on several key facets. First, is the need to establish provincial seminaries and Bible schools. The appropriate curriculum for national or higher level schools is different from that of provincial schools. At the provincial level, we need to focus on practical skills that allow our students to master areas such as music, piano, etc. Second, in our thinking about how to develop the theological curriculum, we need to think through the relationship between theology and culture. We also need to strengthen classes on culture. This will help students to understand culture better and prevent their faith from being out of touch with the real world.

Zhu Junwei
Vice-principal
Inner Mongolia Bible School

Thinking about theological education in Inner Mongolia:
By reflecting on and evaluating the effectiveness of our established curriculum over a number of years, we have come up with four important principles related to the development of the theological curriculum. First, does the traditional theological curriculum follow the standard principles of general pedagogy and is the unique nature of theological education taken into account? Second, does the established curriculum adequately express the relationship between “teaching” and “learning”? Third, in developing Chinese theological education, a unified approach should be followed, but the various regions should be able to adapt and adjust according to their own needs, allowing unity to be reflected in diversity. Fourth, theological seminaries and Bible schools should maintain a close relationship with
churches so that theological education does not take place in isolation. Courses in the curriculum will then better reflect theological thinking.

How I see the hidden curriculum in theological training:

The hidden culture reflects the college’s culture, and includes the quality of the faculty, interpersonal relations, values, and talent. Although it is not a measurable part of the curriculum, the invisible curriculum penetrates all aspects of the students’ education. If you say that the visible curriculum is the flesh and blood, then the invisible curriculum is the vascular system which allows the visible courses to convert “knowledge” into the “practical.” Students receive the “visible” curriculum, but they must also receive the invisible curriculum in order to gain an education. Theological education is not only intellectual education; it is the formation of people. In the growth of students, the invisible curriculum is an integral part of theological education.

Developing theological education in step with the times:

The benefits of attending this theological forum have been great. The unique circumstances of the present Chinese social and religious situation have produced tremendous changes for theological education. On the one hand, to avoid being marginalized, theological education must continue to adapt its training, teaching, and educational philosophy. On the other hand, governmental policies and regulations regarding religious affairs should also be based on the needs of China’s contemporary social situation in guiding the standardization of theological institutions. This will give Chinese theological institutions a more active role to play in Chinese society.

Translated from Tian Feng, No. 372, December 2010 by Kurt Selles

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Thank You!
There are currently twenty seminaries and Bible schools in China, ranked according to the regions from which they recruit students: (1) the national seminary, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary; (2) regional institutions, such as East China (Huadong) Theological Seminary which draws students from four provinces and a municipality; and (3) provincial institutions, such as Guangdong Theological Seminary in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

Under the policy of Reform and Opening, an excellent foundation has been laid for theological education in China. Over ten thousand students have graduated from seminaries, most of whom are now serving in churches. Yet compared to the rapid development of the church and the demands of society, Chinese theological education has a long way to go. It faces many difficulties and challenges, such as:

**“Hardware”:** Many seminaries and Bible schools have new campuses and buildings, but many are still in dire need of construction or renovation. Internal facilities also need improvement and financial constraints are a universal problem.

**Teacher training:** Improvement and strengthening are needed, whether in terms of numbers or qualifications; many faculty lack relevant pedagogical knowledge.

**Library resources:** Holdings in libraries are low and do not meet student needs; faculty too lack the necessary reference materials to prepare their lectures. The need is even more acute in a number of provincial seminaries.

**Curriculum:** Overall planning and rationale are needed. Due to teacher training and other factors, some curriculums cannot be implemented and student demands go unmet. Some curriculums lack standardization, systemization, and scientific approaches.

**Research capacity:** This is a crucial task of theological education, but due to limited conditions, few seminaries have the capacity to undertake research in theology, pastoral care, management and service at present. There is still quite a way to go on the way to high-level research capacity.

**Student recruitment:** From recruitment at the various seminaries and Bible schools, it can be seen that at present few junior college graduates register to test for seminary; most students have a low educational level; some institutions accept applicants with a junior high school education. In addition, the process by which some churches selects students is full of weaknesses— their call is unclear, their will weak and all this affects their study.

**Job assignment following graduation:** It is frequently impossible to assign graduates to the rural church due to lack of self-support, rigid ideas and so on. This too affects theological education.

Theological education affects the future of the Church. Therefore, we earnestly request brothers and sisters throughout the country to give sincere thanks and prayers for theological education in the Chinese Church.

**Give thanks** for our theological education. Thank God for guiding the ministry of seminaries and Bible schools in every place, thank God for blessing the church in China.

**Pray for funding** for theological education in the Chinese Church. Ask God to grant the funds that are needed.

**Pray for improvement** in faculty training and theological library resources. Ask God to bless faculty and students and grant them the spiritual resources that will better equip them for ministry.

**Pray for recruitment** of students at all seminaries and Bible schools. Ask God to prepare suitable vessels for his use.

**Pray for theological graduates** in the Chinese Church. May God grant them strength of wisdom, that they may rely on God’s strength in any environment, dedicating all their hearts and all their strength to God’s service. ♦

Based on “Pray for Theological Education in China,” Tian Feng, No. 373 January 2011.

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At present, the countryside is both the focal point and the sticking point of religious work. Religious work in rural areas is focused on building up groups of qualified persons to work in rural religious venues. The implications of this work are important and pressing. The author has undertaken a general survey of religious circles in Jiangsu province with a specific investigation of religious activity centers in the counties and cities of northern Jiangsu. Having undertaken this research, the author believes that a strong foundation must be built upon increasing the number and quality of persons with responsibility for religious venues, including both management staff and clergy.

The Current Situation and its Causes

This investigation shed light upon the overall low quality of clergy and church workers in religious venues. The prevailing common denominators here are few in number, under-qualified and aging.

A shortage of church workers

With a population of 80,000 believers, 1 pastor, 6 elders, and 9 evangelists, the believer to pastor ratio in this area is 5,000:1. This ratio is much worse than that for Jiangsu province as a whole: the province is home to 1,600,000 Christians and 2,000 pastors. Thus the believer to preacher ratio for the province overall is 800:1. Among nearly 80 venues of religious activity in this area (northern Jiangsu), less than 10% are staffed by clergy or church workers.

Overall quality is poor

The level of education among staff members is quite low – there is a large gap between the actual level of education and Jiangsu's proclaimed goal that “clergy and church workers shall have at least a senior middle school education and senior pastors shall have a junior college education or higher.” The majority of staff members have not received education or training from religious institutions.

The greying of church workers

The average age of clergy is over 50. Many are approaching or have reached retirement age. Due to the shortage and their generally low quality, the religious needs of believers often go unmet. This leads to private arrangements and an increasing number of privately built meeting points, such that heresy begins to seep in, creating opportunities for outside interference.

From a long-term perspective, it is only by strengthening the church workers that we can solve the many fundamental problems that persist in religious venues. The primary factor leading to the weakness of the clergy is a failure to create good mechanisms for their appointment, education, and employment.

First of all, the selection of those for clergy training is not transparent and open. There are no objective criteria applied to determine who may register for the exam to enter seminaries and Bible schools. Rather, this opportunity is doled out on the basis of recommendations passed from one level to the next. A sense of fairness is distinctly lacking. There is a lack of open mindedness in some religious groups and among those responsible for religious venues. When one group dominates over the...
long term without open hearts and minds, a conscious repression of talented people occurs. When promising individuals are not selected, no one has the gall to train them; promising individuals are not scrutinized from a sense of public spiritedness. Some appoint friends, some appoint relatives. The worst aspect of the situation is that when promising individuals are repressed, protectionism becomes even worse. This results in excellent students of good character being unable to sit the exams, while some of those who are recommended are unable to pass.

Secondly, there are two dilemmas that present themselves in the training of personnel. The number of those able to train in provincial level or higher seminaries and Bible schools is small and the training difficult, while religious groups at the municipal level and below lack faculty, funding, and other necessary conditions for training. Their training methods are out of date and their institutions imperfect. This results in a vicious cycle and quality remains poor.

Third, many of those who show signs of talent never get the chance to exercise that talent and bloom. At the same time, the basic needs of church staff can hardly be guaranteed. Beyond the few religious groups who receive allocated hiring funds, only a minority of religious personnel receive living allowances, based on whatever funds religious organizations and local churches and meeting points can raise. The majority of staff members are volunteers. This problem of providing social security for staff remains fundamentally unsolved. Finally, due to the effect of lack of human resources, some local students who have been sent to the seminary either stay in the seminary after graduation or move to big cities and more prosperous areas. Many of the promising local people move to other areas.

Reflections on Constructively Promoting Formation of Clergy and Church Workers

Personnel development is linked to the overall situation of the church, to the future, and to a religion’s image. It must be assigned a high level of priority and approached with sincere planning. Solid progress must be pursued. The foci of personnel training are political thought, quality of education, religious scholarship and the establishment of high-quality management. The following points must be encompassed in our training policies:

Planning Ideas

Long and short-term goals must be integrated by clearly defining the qualities sought, the number of personnel involved and the length of time required for personnel training. We must create systematic mechanisms for personnel development and make full use of effective personnel performance. The launch of Jiangsu’s project to train 100 outstanding core personnel in religious circles is one concrete measure of personnel strategy. We must clarify the principle tasks involved in personnel development. Government religious work departments, religious groups and religious educational institutions must reach consensus and create commonly acknowledged duties in personnel development. We must strengthen our conceptual framework and look at questions from developmental and contact perspectives. We must integrate practical forward planning and pinpoint solutions to the questions facing us in personnel development. We must prioritize the efficient use of time and, as changes occur, correct policies and regulations in a timely manner. We must deepen our investigations and pay attention to new questions that arise as we research personnel development. This way we provide a reliable basis for measures to improve the system.

Creating a positive and forward-looking work environment

Religious groups and their leadership must have open hearts and minds in the matter of personnel training. They must be open to different streams of thought. We must eliminate old, decadent, backwards, and prejudiced ways of thinking. We must refuse to give up and overcome our inquietudes. Those who fear other qualified personnel contribute to outmoded ways of thought. We must correct and perfect our work, eliminate barriers that inhibit personnel development, and smooth the way for the development of our staff. We must use the
three-pronged system of government religious work departments, religious organizations, and religious educational institutions to its full potential. We must show that our religious work departments can play a leading role in inquiring about the work of personnel training, increasing the dynamism of the work, and proactively guiding religious groups and religious educational institutions to improve their rules and regulations and clarify the goals, tasks, and methods of personnel training. We must give full play to the leading role of our religious groups – from start to finish they represent the front line for personnel training. We must give full play to our religious circles as taking the initiative, being self-aware, differentiating responsibility, seeing themselves as the major base for their own personnel training, and, based on the precondition of adhering to dual-track national and religious education, strive to raise the quality of religious schools and religious teaching, taking a step forward in promoting standard education and specialized [that is, religious—ed.] education.

Reforming the personnel training system

We must expand democratic elements of religious personnel training, persist in administering education in a democratic way and using personnel democratically. In selecting and employing staff, we should listen more to the voices of the broader body of believers. We should solicit input more widely, conduct group or collective research, and prevent a situation in which individual voices – or a minority of voices – prevail. We must reform the current system and create more relaxed criteria for selecting and employing staff. For example, in regards to recruitment, religious educational institutions can encourage believers who meet the criteria to apply on their own initiative, removing the system of step-by-step recommendations, and systematically reducing the restrictive power of religious organizations and small groups of people. They can also revitalize placement training and increase self-study in a fair and competitive manner. They can increase quality and accountability in preaching and proselytizing. When sound employment systems promote openness, equality, and justice, then we can employ staff in managerial and leadership posts. We can speed up promotion by strictly implementing policies and systems for staff advancement and promotion and insisting on standards that guarantee quality. Normal staff advancement is impeded over the long term when some areas, especially municipal and county level religious groups, do as they please and do not advance and promote staff in accordance with the regulations.

Strengthening quality awareness in personnel training

Schools are the front lines of personnel training and we must make full use of their role as the base for such training. Through system building and organization building we must gradually form sound, rationally based administrative mechanisms that are oriented to the grass roots and the broad masses of believers, as well as being future-oriented; schools that take initiative to reform regulations and restrictions that are not conducive to personnel selection and training. Moreover, we must proactively coordinate with religious groups to see that the work of seminary graduate placement is done well. Religious organizations must look after the proper training and employment of personnel. They must prioritize deeper value and not simply chase after what is flashy on the surface. They must strictly adhere to evaluation, employment, and promotion standards. In some places the incumbent clergy have low educational levels and lack religious knowledge, while highly qualified graduates meet with rejection – unable, over the long term, to find employment or promotion. This type of situation must be changed, and competitive and merit-based systems introduced. Government religious work departments should lead in building political thought and a basis of management in accordance with the law. They should keep good records on religious staff and, establish strictly character-based criteria for restricting those whose lack religious knowledge, do not display good moral conduct, and do not meet the criteria for clergy. All this will improve the prestige and image of clergy and church staff in believers' eyes.

(This report was written by a cadre of the (Government) Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau of Pizhou City, Jiangsu Province)

Translated from Tian Feng No. 373, January 2011 by Katie Spillane
East China Theological Seminary Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Training Pastors for Our Age...

Lin Yujie

About 300 people gathered between November 23rd and 24th, 2010, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of East China (Huadong) Theological Seminary, including the elder generation of the Chinese Church leaders, leaders of the national CCC/TSMP, the Shanghai CC/TSJM and the Christian Councils and Three-Self Committees of various counties and districts, the Board of the East China Theological Seminary, leaders of the East China (which comprises four provinces and one municipality) Religious Affairs Bureau, the former Chair of the Board and president(s) of the seminary, Shanghai-based alumni of the theology program, and visiting educators at the seminary as well as the entire faculty and student body.

East China Theological Seminary was established in 1985 to offer a four-year theological degree program. It was started through the combined efforts of the CC/TSMs of the four provinces and one municipality of East China; i.e., Shandong, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Fujian provinces and the city of Shanghai. Over the past 25 years, it has produced many clergy, well rounded in their spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, and cultural lives and experienced in sharing life in community. The institution itself has experienced God’s abundant grace. During these 25 years, the seminary has moved three times. It began in the north building of the Huai’en Church which was not even 300 square metres in size, and now enjoys a beautiful campus situated on 18,470 square metres in the Qingpu district of Shanghai. God’s favour and grace has been on every move.

Over the past 25 years, 880 students have graduated from the seminary. Of these, 358 are from churches in Shanghai, 162 from Zhejiang churches, 160 from churches in Shandong, 159 from Fujian churches and 41 from those in Jiangxi. The seminary currently has 18 full-time lecturers, 27 staff and 134 students, of whom 114 are studying theology at degree level and 20 are studying church music.

On the afternoon of November 23rd, a service of thanksgiving and celebration was held in the seminary chapel. Rev. Xu Yulan, executive vice-president of the seminary, officiated; a prayer was offered by Rev. Li Hongyu, a member of the board; a sermon entitled “Calling Pastors for this Era” was given by Rev. Su Weiyuan, another board member. Rev. Su encouraged his listeners to be pastors after God’s own heart, and he had three points: “Pastors of the day must have an accurate understanding of their own position; they must offer service which is pleasing to God; and they must equip themselves in line with the mind of God.” The theological student choir and the music student choir combined to sing “Lift High the Cross.” Rev. Deng Fucun, a member of the board, offered the benediction. The celebration following the worship began at 10:30 a.m., with the Rev. Xie Bingguo, president of the seminary, officiating. Congratulations were offered by Elder Fu Xianwei, chair of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China; Rev. Shen Xuebin, chair of the Board of the seminary, Rev. Li Baole, vice-chair of the Board, and Li Songlin, Director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Religious and Ethnic Affairs. In his remarks, Elder Fu shared four earnest hopes: (1) That a correct administrative policy would be maintained amidst new trends in a new era, with the principles of Three Self and Love the country, Love the church remaining constant. (2) Full play should be given to the role of the seminary as an educational base, by...
continuing to promote Theological Reconstruction as a contribution to the building up of a systematic Chinese Christian theology. (3) The seminary should establish close contact with the actual situations of churches and believers in East China so that real service can be offered to those churches and believers. (4) Strengthen unity, improve management, and take the education offered by East China Theological Seminary to a new level.

In 2009, the Board of East China Theological Seminary revised its charter, smoothly bringing in “the new” to replace “the old.” The Shanghai CC/TSM bears clear responsibility for the day-to-day running of the seminary, while the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Religious and Ethnic Affairs will oversee, inspect, and guide the institution’s work. During the past two years, as the new leadership team took office, several areas of work have emerged within this new structure, and yet foundational traditions will still be in place, despite the unceasing innovation.

(1) As the charter requires, strengthen supervision of the teaching and administrative staff. A system of employment contracts has been instituted; and at the same time, a system has been established to improve the various regulations.

(2) Emphasize the training of lecturers. The seminary values every training opportunity offered by the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Religious and Ethnic Affairs, and the CCC/TSPM. Such training gives the teaching staff opportunities to improve themselves and the quality of education they offer. The seminary actively creates opportunities for staff training through a variety of methods.

(3) Strengthen student education in patriotism. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Peoples Republic of China, the seminary organized the students to participate in the “Arts Festival to Mark 60 Years of New China,” organized by the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Religious and Ethnic Affairs. At the same time, the seminary organized a series of patriotic educational activities in the same spirit as that of the Commission. This year [2010] is the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Three Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China, and the seminary organized a series of activities to mark the occasion. The seminary also places great emphasis on a course entitled “Christian Patriotism” for first-year students as well as similar education for the graduating class.

(4) A publication that can keep alumni connected has been launched. The seminary established a publications team and a website team last year in order to improve communication with alumni. Three issues of Seminary News have been published so far. The 25th anniversary has also seen the resumption of publication of the seminary journal Huadong shenyuan, which will now appear each semester.

(5) Recruitment efforts have been improved. Following the regulations of the State Administration of Religious Affairs for religious educational institutions, the seminary has drafted a recruitment regulation, combining past experience in this area with current needs, and have revised the enrolment criteria and test procedures. It is now required that entrants have one year of experience in serving in the church, and the proviso that entrants be age 30 or under has been reinstated. Apart from a written entrance examination, a face-to-face interview is now required. A full-time faculty member, a member of the local CC/TSM, and a member of the Seminary Board in the prospective student’s province or city join to form a panel to conduct the interview, and come to a collective assessment based on the relevant standards. Prospective students are selected based on a combination of marks from their written entrance examination, the interview, and other assessments.

President Xie Bingguo had this to say about the future development of East China Theological Seminary: (1) Students will be recruited nationally for the church music program; (2) The room
housing the history section of the library will be refurbished and developed; (3) The faculty will be built up; (4) The syllabus will be improved; (5) In the theology course, holistic education will be emphasized. East China Theological Seminary will continue to stress the development of students “spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, in community and aesthetically” for their work in the church, following Three-Self principles, deepening the Theological Reconstruction conversation, and thereby training people who can appropriately serve in the church in this era.

In the midst of these developments, the seminary is also organizing forums where alumni, current students, and faculty can exchange ideas. It is hosting a seminar to commemorate 60 years of the Three-Self Movement; and there are the 25th anniversary celebrations of the seminary itself; etc. Many activities have been organized, and those who attend them are filled with gratitude.

The 25th anniversary celebrations not only serve to summarize all that has gone before, but even more importantly, they mark the point from which we look ahead to the future. It is full of hope, a new hope, a turning of a page for East China Theological Seminary. We are sure that, guided by the hand of God, East China Theological Seminary will produce even more pastors who will serve God in these times.

Translated from Tian Feng No. 373, January 2011 by Suzanne Rowe

Returning home in Yunnan with donated rice (see NEWS, p. 19).
March 11. The Guangdong provincial CC and TSM, along with faculty and students from Guangdong Union Seminary took part in a “Tree-planting Activity for Religious Circles” sponsored by the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission of Guangdong province. The activity took place in the Yanyan Scenic Area of Xiqiao Mountain near Foshan.

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On Feb. 28, 2010, a welcome snowfall transformed drought-stricken areas, but inconvenienced pedestrians and city traffic. Early on the morning of March 1, 12 faculty and students from the Christian training center in the city of Heze (pop. 8.2 million), Shandong province, turned out to clear the snow, delighting passing pedestrians and bringing a beautiful witness to Christ.

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In January, as the Chinese New Year approached, the Xinxiang City (Henan province) CC/TSM, in the Christian spirit of having “mutual affection with love,” brought flour and oil, necessary ingredients for the boiled dumplings commonly eaten during these holidays to 28 poor households in the nearby area, 10 of which were ethnic Muslims, who have been especially hard hit in these difficult economic times.

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Food production in areas of Guizhou has been affected on a large-scale by the effects of serious drought. In order to help tide over the villagers, the Guizhou provincial CC/TSM and their counterparts in Rui’an City, Zhejiang province joined hands, and on Oct. 20, a team of 4 from Zhejiang, along with a representative of the Guizhou provincial CC/TSPM, bought 16 tons of rice, which they distributed in 3 ethnic minority townships in Hezhang County to relieve shortages there.
IN MEMORIAM: Mr. Luo Guanzong 罗冠宗 (1920-2011)

Mr. Luo Guanzong, honorary chair of the Advisory Committee of the Eighth Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) and the Sixth China Christian Council (CCC); honorary chair of the ninth Shanghai Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee; director general emeritus of the Shanghai YMCA; and chair of the Sixth Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (elected in 1997), died on February 13, 2011, at the age of 91, in Shanghai.

Luo was born in Gaoming, Guangdong province, in 1920 and grew up in the Cantonese quarter of Shanghai, where he graduated from Fudan University in 1943. A member of the Church of the Redeemer (Anglican), he joined the student relief committee of the Shanghai YMCA right after graduation. In the 1950s, he became associate general secretary and then general secretary of the Shanghai YMCA, and was also a lay member of the Synod of the Chinese Anglican Church.

He was a founding member of the national TSPM and a member of its first Standing Committee, as well as the secretary of the Shanghai TSPM Committee until the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

The official CCC/TSPM announcement of his death describes him as “a lifelong patriot and church-loving Christian who held high the banner of three-self patriotism.” His long career in the church included several terms as a vice-chair of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee; member of the Advisory Committee of the China Christian Council; secretary-general, vice-chairman, president and honorary president of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee; general secretary of the Shanghai YMCA and member of the Board of the Amity Foundation.


In addition to his church and YMCA involvements, he was deputy secretary general and office director of the CPPCC Shanghai Committee; and served multiple terms as a member of the CPPCC National Committee and as a member of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee.

In accordance with Mr. Luo’s wishes, his remains were donated to medical science. A quiet memorial service was held on February 22, 2011 at Mu’en Church in Shanghai.

Mr. Luo Guanzong with Bishop K.H. Ting in 2002.