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The Chinese Theological Review: Volume 10

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Preface

This is the tenth annual issue of *The Chinese Theological Review*. Bishop K.H. Ting, who was the moving force in starting the *Review* and has remained an inspiration and strong supporter over the past decade, also celebrates his eightieth birthday this year. It seems most fitting that this tenth anniversary issue contain a tribute to his life and work. We offer here a biographical sketch, some earlier writings which have not appeared in English before and a recent letter to alumni/ae of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in which the Bishop sets out some of the issues facing the Seminary and the Churches in China. The early writings, including some written in English while he was working overseas and others written very early during his ministry in China, speak with a surprising relevance about issues still current today.

The major part of this section consists of reflections by colleagues and friends from China, Asia, Europe and North America who have been asked to write about Bishop Ting's long career in both the domestic and worldwide ministry of the Church, and their own relationship to him. Some writers offer biographical reflections on Bishop Ting. Others examine aspects of his thought and contributions to the Chinese Church. Still others venture more broadly into history and theology which he has inspired.

As editor, it has been my pleasurable task to be the first to read their submissions. Their reflections form a picture of a rare individual whose thoughts and actions have developed along a consistent and original track throughout a long and productive life. We see Bishop Ting as an insightful thinker, an inspiring leader and a supportive friend, a man of gentle demeanor and soft voice whose unwavering faith has enabled him to lead the Chinese Church through times of testing and rebuilding. As well as recalling their personal encounter with K.H. Ting, many of the contributors interpret his life and work as a theologian and church leader who has had a significant impact on the ecumenical movement.

From the reflections included here, it will be evident that K.H. Ting is one to whom many different kinds of people have responded on many levels. He is perceived as an outstanding leader, but because of his gentleness of manner and voice, the distance between persons such a perception often engenders is overcome. From former student to ecumenical colleague, people have sensed and responded to a farsighted vision expressed in a very personal way. This is true of his concern for the Chinese Church, which, as one colleague puts it, "he cares for with a mother's love". The use of mother rather than father here is important, for both his personality and thought embrace qualities of gentleness and receptivity often termed feminine.

Though K.H. Ting is perhaps the most far-sighted theologian in China and one most conversant with international theological trends, he has generally chosen to express his conceptual insights in a Zoncrete way, speaking both to and from the church. In his *Preface* to the first volume of The *Chinese Theological Review* in 1985, he put it this way: "We value the work of those theologians who can part with their individualistic heroism, humbly and not condescendingly orient themselves to the fellow Christians at their gate, listen earnestly

to them and summarize their insights." There are of course strengths and weaknesses in such a position, and he went on to note, as if responding to implicit criticism: "If all of this is a defense, it is one not of compartmentalism, but of the right of Christians of all sorts to be equally regarded, of our responsibility to keep Christians of all sorts in the common bond of fellowship, and of the importance of staying close to and reflecting and molding the constituency given to us." This orientation has been a hallmark of both his theology and his leadership of the church.

As one whose major preoccupation is words and the sojourn of words and ideas from one language to another, I have come into contact with a side of K.H. Ting which may not be very well known. From our first meeting in 1979, I realized that English was as powerful and beautiful a means of expression for him as for most native speakers. 1n the course of my own translation work, I have learned much from a careful reading of his revisions of my translations of his Chinese writings. Moving easily between both languages, he is able to shrug off the constraints of either one to avoid the stilted phrasings and unnatural expressions of "Chinglish" that dog many in this field. His use of the Chinese language I must leave for others to comment upon. When he writes in English he has a deft hand and a sure ear, expressing his ideas in a language that points to and beyond what can be captured in words. He has a fine sense of the way in which the ambiguity and mystery of language enhances meaning. It should, I suppose, come as no surprise that one who has made a careful study of the Bible should have such a thorough appreciation for the power of words. As a church leader of national and international prominence, of course, he is concerned to speak with precision and from a knowledge of his audience. This has made him sensitive to nuances of meaning and to ideological bias in English translations of materials from the Church in China. It was said of Zhou Enlai that he used to read the galley proofs of *People's Daily* every day before it was published. K.H. Ting has worked with the same care on important Church documents and statements.

Language aside, as the writings in this volume attest, K.H. Ting has been the leader the Church in China has needed in the eighties and nineties. Christianity in China, in spite of difficulties and setbacks, has a higher profile in Chinese society than at any time in its history there. It is appreciated and studied by scholars outside the Church, and has begun to make its presence felt in the broader society through a growing number of social service projects: kindergartens, clinics, programs for the elderly and so on. Ties with Christian Churches worldwide have been strengthened by its renewed presence in the World Council of Churches. Bishop Ting is a leader of unique qualities, "useful to God", able to argue the case for religion in official circles, to reach out to those outside the CCC and TSPM, to represent the Church on the international scene and even to reach out to former missionaries across the acrimony of past rejection. He has been a reconciler of quiet and enduring strength both within the Church and for the Church, vis a vis society. In all he says and does he expresses himself as a Chinese, with all the strengths and limitations of what it means to be a Chinese Christian in China today. Others may not be prepared or able to do this and one who does is open to criticism from within and without. That K.H. Ting does it with integrity and grace is a measure of the man. I would like to join with all contributors to this issue in wishing K.H.Ting many happy returns and God's continued blessing on his work.

In addition to the tribute to Bishop Ting on his eightieth birthday, we have included some materials from recent issues of the *Nanjing Theological Review* several sermons, an essay on Y.T. Wu and two symposia consisting of submissions from readers on theological construction and democracy in the church. Both of the latter touch on a wide range of issues and problems in the church today and represent a variety of viewpoints. Finally, there is an Index covering a decade of *The Chinese Theological Review*. Translations are my own, unless another translator is listed. Some of Bishop Ting's writings were written in English, and this is so indicated.

This year's issue has, as usual, benefited from contributions from many individuals. Colleagues in Nanjing , particularly Chen Yongtao, have provided materials and information on authors. I would especially like to thank the authors of our section of reflections for their thoughtful and fascinating pieces. Thanks also to the translators, and Eva Lai Woon Ching, Susan Raeburn-Cherradi, Lois Cole, Marvin Hoff, Joanne Hoff and The Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia. This particular issue would not have been possible without the hard work, expertise and encouragement of Philip Wickeri, who first suggested a tribute to K.H. Ting as the focus. And of course, I would also like to thank our readers, who have supported this work over the past ten years.

With the publication of this tenth issue of *The Chinese Theological Review* we also honor the memory of Prof Kuo Siu May, who passed away 24 September 1995.

Janice Wickeri
Hong Kong

TRIBUTE TO BISHIP K.H. TING ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

1. A Biographical Sketch of K.H. Ting

K.H. Ting was born in Shanghai in 1915 to a Christian family. His grandfather was an Anglican priest. His father, a banker, was active in a Christian organization promoting self-support for Chinese churches. Perhaps the greatest influence on his life in every sense, including the religious, was his mother, a devout Christian who lived to be over 100 years of age. She continued to be a source of strength and inspiration for him all her life and it was through her influence that the young K.H. moved from the study of engineering to that of theology.

He received his B.A. from St. John's University in Shanghai in 1937 and his B.D. from the School of Theology there in 1942. In 1948 he received his M.A. from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He was ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood in 1942 and was made Bishop of Chekiang (Zhejiang) in 1955.

He is married to Kuo Siu May, a Professor of English at Nanjing University. They have two sons and two grandsons.

He served as a YMCA student secretary in Shanghai, as curate of the Church of Our Savior in that city, and as pastor to the International Church there during the Japanese occupation. During his time overseas, he served in the Student Christian Movement of Canada and the World Student Christian Federation in Geneva. Returning to China with his family in 1951, he was General Secretary of the Christian Literature Society in Shanghai before becoming Principal of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in 1952. He was elected to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee in 1954.

In addition to his overseas service, he traveled widely outside China during the mid-fifties to early sixties, attending international meetings and visiting church leaders. He attended the Lambeth Preparatory Conference and a WSCF meeting held in Tutsing in 1956 and the 1961 Peace Assembly in Prague. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, he was a delegate to both the Chinese People's Consultative Conference (1959) and the National People's Congress (1964).

During the Cultural Revolution, he and his family were driven from their home and relocated in simple quarters. During these years they joined a small group of friends who met regularly for worship in homes. Bishop Ting was never imprisoned, but was kept under close scrutiny by the Red Guards.

When conditions improved somewhat toward the end of the Cultural Revolution era, he and other members of the Seminary faculty took part in a number of translation projects including translating the minutes of U.N. meetings into Chinese and compiling a Chinese-English dictionary.

In 1978, he was made a member of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC and the following year was named a delegate to the NPC. That same year (1979), he attended the Third World Conference of Religion and Peace in Princeton, N.J., his first visit overseas since the Cultural Revolution. In 1981, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary reopened.

Bishop Ting was elected national Chairperson of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement and President of the China Christian Council. In 1985, he became President of the Amity Foundation, and has continued to travel widely.

GLEANINGS FROM THE EARLY WRITINGS OF K.H. TING

2. Youth and Religion

Many think that young people and religion are two subjects which are very hard to draw together. Young people like activity and liveliness, while religion seems to be telling people to just sit quietly and behave. The young like to enjoy life, while religion tells people to give up material comforts. Young people like the here and now, but religion is forever making extravagant claims about some far off heaven and hell which are hardly believable. The young conclude from all this: "Let old people get excited about these things, the young are in no hurry for the after life." Some pastors, it should be said, have more or less the same idea, though they would not come out and say so.

This general misapprehension is due to the fact that people do not have a clear understanding of the meaning of "religion". The most important thing in religion - in Christianity at least is not going along to church services, nor memorizing the Bible, or repeating "Amen". It is not praising someone's character, or someone else's ideas all these are just a small part of what religion is. The most important thing in religion is its effect on our lives, for religion is a way of living which is related to every action we take. Unless a young person has no interest in life, he or she cannot be indifferent to religion.

Why, then, do so few young people come to church? Does it mean they have no interest in worship? No, because lack of attendance does not necessarily indicate lack of interest. It might mean that our worship services are not interesting to young people, that they cannot get what they need from church, that it's not as comfortable as sitting at home listening to music or reading the newspaper. Don't blame young people for not coming to church, perhaps they are put off by the service. Don't blame them for not being enthusiastic about the work of the Church, perhaps the Church itself has dampened their enthusiasm.

Therefore, I think that if the Church can meet the interests of today's youth, if it can help them find answers to various questions, then our young people will certainly take part in all the churches' activities, and they will be even more enthusiastic than the elderly. It is just that at present our young people do not realize how much religion can in fact help them.

In the second chapter of Acts, Peter is preaching to the Jews, testifying to them that the Jesus whom they nailed to the cross is the son of God. When he finished speaking, some were more or less convinced, and asked him, "What should we do?" Peter did not disappoint them, he did not answer them by saying, "Sorry, I don't know either, perhaps we should just sit here until we die." He told them something they could do, he showed them a way out.

In Acts 16 there is a very violent earthquake while Paul is in prison. The jailer took up his sword to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped, but luckily Paul prevented him. And so the man asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul certainly did not reply: "Sorry, please ask elsewhere, I'm a bit confused." Rather, he gave the jailer a clear and simple answer, which he could put into action - "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved,

you and your household." That jailer felt as if a great burden had suddenly been lifted from him.

When the rich young man came to see Jesus and asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Our Lord Jesus did not say to him, "Pardon me, I don't know." He showed him an extremely concrete path which he could follow.

This is the twentieth century and young people's questions are even more complicated. We have our own questions, we also have many questions about our country and society. Once we begin to ask, there's no end to our questions. We sincerely ask of the Church today: "What must we do?" We really want to know whether Jesus, who lived for thirty or forty years in a tiny place in Judea two thousand years ago in a society where life was much simpler, can have a simple and attainable answer for the hundreds of questions which face us, living as we do two thousand years later in a complex society with progressive thinking and advanced ideas. Can this carpenter of two thousand years ago, who was rabbi to twelve fishermen, tax collectors and so on, show the youth of today a way out of their difficulties? We would like to know.

If religion today can help young people find answers to the many serious questions which they face, as it could for our Lord Jesus, Peter and Paul so many years ago, there is no need for us to fear that young people will be uninterested in religion. There will be no need to fear that St. Peter's Church will not become a vital "young people's parish". We are very happy that the priests here at St. Peter's have not overlooked young people's lives, but have striven to promote the youth fellowship as a manifestation that Jesus is indeed the salvation for twentieth century youth, that he can fully understand all the difficulties we meet. Though we have achieved too little over the last year, I hope that our entire youth fellowship will work together with one accord, forgetting what is past, deploring hypocrisy, criticizing less and assuming more responsibility. Then next year at this time we can all congratulate each other on our success. For it would be wonderful if we could congratulate each other on our successes next year at this time.

Shanghai
St. Peter's Youth Magazine, 1937.

3. Reading the Bible at Christmas: A Meditation

"The word became flesh, and lived among us ..." (Jn. 1:14).

People called him Immanuel, meaning God with us.

No one can deny that this world is full of suffering, sorrow, oppression and violence against people. All that is rational is destroyed by its own rationality, while the irrational flourishes and extends its control. From our human perspective, it appears that the world is bent on its own destruction.

But this is not God's way of seeing things. God has never despaired of humankind. God feels that we can be saved and has therefore come into our midst for our salvation.

Today, darkness does indeed cover the earth. We cannot see the light. Yet Christians, believing in the Incarnation, are profoundly aware that God has not abandoned us. God is not far away, but he has entered our world and lives among us.

We should maintain a positive outlook. We should view the world optimistically and with hope. We should be prophets in the darkness, facing the light which is about to dawn.

* * *

"...Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave ... to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:6).

From this we can see the following: (1) Our Lord Jesus originally occupied a high position. (2) But this high position meant nothing to him. (3) He sacrificed this position to come among us, to become like a slave, and to share our sufferings and needs. (4) As a result, he suffered death, even death upon the cross.

If we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus at Christmas only because of point one, then there is not much meaning to our celebration. Jesus' greatness does not lie in his original position, which he gained through no effort of his own. His greatness lies in what the other three points tell us about him, his sense of righteousness and his effort to achieve it.

Suffering can temper us, but it can also make us tremble. It can make us remember and yearn for past "heights" and make us wonder whether all our efforts were worthwhile. Suffering can shake our present faith and make us long to recover our past lives when we did not suffer.

There is no clear way before us yet, and we still must taste deeper suffering. It is precisely at this time that Christians learn from our Lord.

* * *

"...wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Lk. 2:7).

The world was crowded in those days. Two thousand years later, we are still in the same situation. We can understand the difficulties which Mary faced as a mother.
Christmas is a busy season. Everyone's mind is full of their own plans. They leave the Baby Jesus to his cold manger.

Factory bosses and shopkeepers take advantage of the Christmas season to produce and sell all sorts of novelties. They are busy getting rich. Lovers make use of the Christmas season to compete with each other in gift giving. They become preoccupied with the objects of their affections. Soldiers in Europe look forward to a forty-eight hour ceasefire, a temporary halt to the killing, when at least they can enjoy a bit of fresh air (or has this now been vetoed?). And the poor? They hope Santa Claus might bring them a bit of ease and comfort once a year.

Christmas is a splendid holiday. We all bring our own desires to our celebrations. Our lives are crowded with all sorts of illusions, grand designs and selfish hopes. But the mission of our Lord Jesus, the true spirit of Jesus, has been left in the manger where no one will see it, because there is no room anywhere else!

* * *

"Do not be afraid, this is the good news of great joy for all the people ..."

Fear is the most common phenomenon on this earth. Millions of people live in fear all the time because of some event or another. Fear is like the giant hand of the devil hovering above us, ready to seize hold of our lives.

What people basically fear is simply insecurity. People need to have a sense of security. If a person feels insecure, if he or she feels that there is nothing to "depend on", that "food, clothing or shelter" are threatened, then that person is afraid. Millions of people today fear that tomorrow they will be jobless and their wives and children will starve to death.

Fear and anxiety cause people to shrink back and become passive. Only active struggle can root out fear.

"Do not be afraid ..." This is the gospel the shepherds heard. “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat ... what you will wear." Yes! What is the use of being anxious? "And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?" "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Yes, only by participating in the great work of "building up the kingdom of God on earth" can we overcome fear. Great love drives out fear. Haven't we seen mother love expressed in a life of

never flinching from difficulties or dangers? Only when we begin to see the people through the eyes of fervent love, only when we deliberately sacrifice our own interests for their sakes (which is also for our own sakes) in order to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth, only then will we be truly able to overcome fear and hold back the devil's hand. In that kingdom, the people will no longer fear insecurity of any kind.

This is the good news of great joy for all the people.

Shanghai ,
Xiaoxi, December /940.

4. Asia, China and the Chinese

This essay was written as an introduction for a mission study project of the World Student Christian Federation. K.11 Ting worked in Geneva as a Secretary for the Federation from 1948 - 1951.

We in the West are apt to think of Asia in terms of its problems. We hear of its over-population and under-nourishment. We are told of its illiteracy and disunity. We read about its racial, religious and political clashes. Suffering is so much a regular thing that the average life expectancy of an Indian is only twenty-seven years and of a Chinese thirty years.

We not only think of Asia as a hopeless bundle of problems but also assume that these problems are static. They seem to be something that has to remain there. Some people even think that since the people in Asia have never known and enjoyed life as we know and enjoy it they are perhaps quite content with their lot and anything that tends to disturb the tranquility and equilibrium of Asian society might be doing a great deal of harm to the Asian people.

The truth is that Asia Js not static any longer. We have tended to look at Asia in terms of its troubles and difficulties which do not seem to change very much through the decades. But the real Asia is the people of Asia. To understand the real Asia we have to identify ourselves more closely with the people - their suffering and needs, their aspiration and struggle, their frustration and heroism, their yearning and indignation. If we cease to think of Asian countries merely as geographical entities or as remnants of ancient cultures or as pawns on the chessboard of international power politics or as the "white man's burden", but as composed of human beings who, like ourselves, have opinions and desires, then we shall find a living Asia.

This is only too obvious, as what can be important for us to know about Asia apart from its people who actually compose over fifty per cent of the total human race? Their awakening today and their present determination to get freedom and keep it is a most important new factor in modern world history and its repercussions on the future will be far greater than those created by the invention and the use of atomic bombs.

For thousands of years the people of Asia have lived and have been treated like animals. A large majority of them are peasants under the ruthless exploitation of rich and despotic landlords. For the last few centuries their suffering has increased immeasurably because their rulers are not only the natural landlords but also foreign powers. The political regimes set up in these countries are mostly instruments to extort from the people rather than democratic organs for serving the interest of the citizens. They are very patriarchal and arbitrary police states. How the authorities are divided up between foreign powers and native autocrats varies from country to country. Japan was the only country which, up until 1945, has been an exception in so far as the presence of foreign domination was concerned.

But today, the people of Asian countries are moving. "We've had enough!" they say. They are not just moving. They are moving towards a definite goal the goal of freedom and independence. They want to have a change because they feel that any change will be one for the better. The situation in

Asian countries is very much like that of France in her pre-revolutionary days, only complicated by the influence, interests and intervention of the Western powers.

The largest country in Asia is China which embraces half of the total population of the continent. There the upsurge of the people is at its highest just now:

Eighty-five per cent of the people of China are working as peasants. However they own only about twenty per cent of the arable land, while ten per cent of the people the landlord class - possess eighty per cent of the land. This tremendous degree of concentration of landownership results in the unimaginable poverty of the peasantry as the rental alone will often take away half of the crop from the farmer.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the Father of the Chinese Republic, had deep insight into the root-cause of China's problems. In his "Three Principles of the People", he insisted most strongly that the land system in China should be changed. It was his idea that there should be a redistribution of land so that the landlordry would be abolished and the land would belong to the tillers themselves. Without this basic change the livelihood of the Chinese people can hardly improve. And this land problem is not merely a Chinese problem but that which the people of the other Asian countries want to tackle now too.

The people of China, as those elsewhere, are aspiring after peace, democracy and prosperity. They know they have a right to these things and should not allow any force to withhold them. especially in China, the people who fought to defend their villages and their country have learned to organize themselves to look after their own welfare. They have taken their fate in their own hands and do not like to relinquish their hard-earned rights.

So China is a typical Asian nation in revolt. As is always the case in times of drastic changes, ideas of all kinds and shades are finding listening ears among the people. "Lo, the Messiah is here! and lo, the Messiah is there!" All "isms" are taking advantage of the ready soil.

This is the moment that the Christian Church cannot afford to miss. We must enter deeply into the life, suffering, struggle, aspirations and difficulties of the common people of China. In the true spirit of identification we can pass on to the people the uplifting gospel that all men everywhere need.

Geneva, 1949-5O
Written in English.

5. Two Reflections on Evangelism

I. Why Force My Religion on Others?

No matter what made you ask it, this was precisely the question Jesus had to wrestle with in making the all-important decision for His life and work.

In the wilderness the devil cleverly suggested several means by which Christ could have forced his religion on others. One way to force people's allegiance was by filling their stomachs. Another was by somehow outwitting them and then take advantage of their credulity. Still another was by exercising political authority and coercion.

Throughout history it has been a constant temptation to force our religion on others. But to the extent we yield to that temptation, what happens is no longer evangelism - the bringing about of the voluntary offering of one's self to God in Jesus Christ with the full and honest participation of one's intellect and emotion and will - but becomes proselytism, the moving of a pagan or a semi-pagan from one religious group to another.

No, you cannot force your religion on another person without making yourself a nuisance and a cultural imperialist and, at the same time, reducing him to a status less than human for whom, consequently, faith can have no meaning. You cannot force your religion on others without, in that very act, defeating your own purpose. By an inner mechanism, as it were, the Christian faith would thereby negate itself and become its opposite, turning into something completely unworthy and immoral. This happens the moment we try to "buy", or "entice", or "hypnotize", or "threaten" or by any other way "force" people into giving their allegiance to that faith.

All through history the Church has known better. It has erred more often in forgetting its missionary vocation altogether than in imposing the Christian religion on others. In carrying out its missionary vocation it has rather learned that all true evangelism happens only by respecting as persons the people to whom the Church is sent, by encouraging the full activity of the people's heart and mind and soul so that they know what is involved in making their decision, by discouraging too easy allegiances as Jesus Christ Himself did, by entering humbly and gratefully into their own cultural backgrounds, and by recognizing and appreciating all healthy and sublime aspirations and struggles for the good, the beautiful and the righteous.

The question "Why force my religion on others?" often implies something like this:

"I concede that religion is good for human beings and that human beings are better off with some belief in God than without. But since there are religions in all lands, why trouble to send Christianity there, even though some of us ourselves may think that Christianity is a better religion? Indeed what right have we to preach our own religion to those who have their own?"

Now the first thing that needs to be said is that we are Christians and not mere religionists. The religionist feels satisfied if every person has some sort of a God. But the Christian is not

particularly anxious that this should be the case because he knows that people are having gods of all sorts in their life anyway even without his worrying about them. His one concern - and that is God's concern too - is that people should worship no false gods but realize their true being and calling by knowing and glorifying the One True God, the Lord and Father of Jesus Christ.

Evangelism - the work for the extension of the new humanity which knows and glorifies that God - is a task the Christian humbly and gratefully yearns to fulfill.

That some individuals should think that Christianity is (either slightly or much) "better" than other religions is not relevant. What do they mean by "better" anyway and how do they know that their yardstick for the measurement is valid?

Geneva, 1950.
Written in English.

II. How Can They Claim Christianity is Better?

If you are thinking of buying a refrigerator and are confronted by ten different models, you naturally try to choose the kind that is "better" than the other nine. If you are choosing a roommate for a school year, you examine the prospective person against some criteria you have in your mind: whether he is honest, whether you two can get along, whether he minds your smoking and, in short, whether he is "good enough". In a presidential election you vote in favor of your choice because, as you say, his program is "better", i.e., nearer to what you believe to be democracy, freedom and prosperity for the majority. Or, at least because the candidate, in your judgment, is the "lesser of two evils".

In all these instances, your choice is made in the light of certain ideals, criteria or principles you have already accepted. Each time you make a choice, you only affirm once more your loyalty to these ideals.

But we land ourselves in difficulties if we transfer that same shrewdness to the matter of Christian faith.

If you say you choose to believe in God because that belief is more reasonable, then, are you not professing a faith in your reason rather than in God?

If you say you believe in Christ because he is "better", then, are you not affirming a faith in your own ideals of goodness and your own ability to measure Christ's goodness with your yardstick, rather than simply your faith in Christ? It is still you yourself who are the tribunal and who pronounce the (not too important) verdict that Jesus Christ or Christianity is "better."

Of course, we do not mean to advocate irrationalism in regard to our belief in God or muddle-headedness in regard to the true goodness of Christ. We only want to say that our view of what is reasonable and of what is good is not important when compared with what Christ thinks of our reason and our moral judgments.

Christ came to the world not in order to be questioned and examined by our world's standards and ideals, and to earn a high recommendation from us. He rather came to question and uproot our old presuppositions and authorities. He challenges the very basis from which we make all our judgments.

This Man is so tremendous that every sincere person will find that every traditional yardstick fails in measuring his size. He is such a different sort that any attempt to "contain" him in the traditional human framework of history, sociology, psychology and ethics only proves its own bankruptcy.

In accepting his authority we have to negate all our own authorities. But we have not lost anything as we at first feared; we have rather gained true life. We throw off the old crutches as we realize that what we once held to be the good is not so good at all. We become humble as we

discover that it is not we who are to judge him but he who is to judge all people and cultures, and all the world.

In accepting Christ, we hear him say: You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. We could hardly have chosen him as long as we held to ourselves the right to fit the Christ into any scheme which we decided to be "good". But he chooses us and becomes for us the new orientation-point for making all life's other choices.

Thus, it is hard to conceive of "comparative religion" as an "objective" course of study through which one can come to discover the religion which is "better" than all other religions. From where does one get the basis for such comparison? Only from the religion that is already his own. Then, it is a very subjective study. And for the Christian it certainly cannot be a detailed, comparative study of religions, but a Christian criticism of all religions and the human cultures which have produced them. And this is evangelism itself.

Of course Christianity may be "better", but that is not a terribly important point, because Christianity is radically "other". If Christianity is merely relatively "better", then we know what the "best" is which we should strive for - the joining together of all the relatively good points of all religions and cultures. And we should expect the end product to be still better than Christianity. But it is the genius of the Christian faith that hope has never been attached there. You cannot produce the true life-saving religion by pulling several diseased cultures together any more than you can get a sanatorium by putting five patients in the same room. The proponents of "cultural pluralism" are promoting inter-cultural contacts and stimulation precisely with the
In accepting his authority we have to negate all our own author promise of mutual purification and the emergence of a new heaven and earth. But we believe that for the regeneration of human civilization it takes something more the intervention of a factor from without and above. And Christians have long believed that Christ is that factor and the Incarnation of God is that intervention from above for the salvation of the world.

If that is so, the question "Is Christianity better?" is certainly not very exciting. It sounds rather like an anti-climax to the all-important news that in Christ God has given us something entirely different and "other" to do for us what all our religions fail to do.

"Are not Christians a little too biased and not objective enough?" This is quite true. This is in the sense that they are biased towards the greatest and most important truth they have seen. But they are certainly not any more biased than those who have no orientation-point or frame of reference beyond themselves. Christians are biased towards that Truth to which objectivity is self-deception and neutrality moral cowardice.

Christ is not a "better" prophet than others, or the "more unique" among religious leaders. He is the unique fact in the history of God's dealing with humanity and in Christ, all of history gains coherence. He is, as it were, that center which Archimedes was looking for in vain when he exclaimed, "Give me a point outside of the earth and I can lift the earth itself with a lever." Thus, nothing is good unless it is good in his sense and nothing is reasonable unless reason is first humbled in his presence and its position as master changed to that of a servant.

If we are truly captured by this Person the first thing we naturally go to do as we recover from the shock of the encounter is to tell others about him. It is not "missionary education" through its many interesting devices that can make us do it. Nor is theological argumentation a necessary ingredient of that response, as witness the large number of simple Christians who cannot but be messengers of the good news even though they are very shy as "theologians".

But if we ourselves have not been really captured by this Person, then in order to justify missions (if unhappily we have to do so), we resort to all sorts of arguments. Some are clever but secondary. Others are utilitarian and boastful. Still others are selfish, unworthy and pagan. Then, we know how to answer those who ask, "What right have we to preach our religion to those who have their own?"

But to ask this question is really to ask, "What right has God to love man?" or "By what right does God dare to offer us any rescue from sin?" It is really quite absurd to think of this in terms of rights. When someone is drowned and is struggling for life, you do not ask if you have the right to save him. We are not at all dealing with anybody's right, but with love.

And, if it is Love that is in the Heart of God that we are concerned with, then it is not a question of right, but one of divine constraint. "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel."

Captured by this Love in God, we naturally and spontaneously yearn for serving God in such a way that this Love may be fulfilled. We cannot but see that God yearns for the whole of humankind to return to him and that what stands between now and the final culmination of the Kingdom of God is but the completion of the evangelistic task by those who are already members of the new humanity. Is there anything unnatural in our desire to let God use us as an instrument for the fulfillment of this Purpose? Is there any other task that is more challenging and liberating and closer to the forward march of history? Is there higher meaning or vocation for the Christian than our life and work as seen in the light of their significance to God? ...

Geneva, /950/5/.
Written in English; unpublished incomplete manuscript.

6. **The Lamb of God** (excerpt)

This excerpt comes from the last few pages of a pamphlet which K. If Ting wrote shortly after he returned to China from Geneva. It very much reflects the spirit of the times, and was originally prepared as a series of meditations for the Chung Hwa Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican) for Good Friday, 1952.

How would Christ himself feel about a new country such as ours? Would he love new China? Or hate it?

When Christ saw Jerusalem oppressed by the enemy, he wept over the people's misery (Lk. 19:41). He rejoiced seeing the devil fall from heaven like a flash of lightning (Lk. 10:18). Today we in China no longer suffer under the heel of our enemies. The devil has been defeated. Would not Christ rejoice at this too?

What, then, should we Chinese Christians do? The past, when we were indifferent and could not show our concern for our people's sufferings, is over. Today our people are rejoicing. Wouldn't it be reasonable for us to rejoice with them? If we cannot love what Jesus loves, how can we claim to love Jesus'? Those who truly love Jesus must love what he loves and hate what he hates.

It is likely that because we lived a long time in the evil of the old society, we became harsh and indifferent toward our people, toward justice and progress. It may even be that we lost our God-given capacity for happiness and anger, joy and sorrow. When it would have been reasonable for us to cry, we lacked the impulse and found ourselves unable to. Now, when it would be quite reasonable for us to be happy, we still cling to our private sorrows. When we ought to have been angry, we lacked the conscience to bear this kind of witness. Since this is so, we have none of the fragrance of Christ and people cannot find in us the traces of Christ. Our feelings too are out of tune with those of our people. Christ once sighed and said: "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, `We played the flute for you and you did not dance; we wailed and you did not mourn' " (Mt. 11:16-17). Today, when China is calling upon Christians to join in building a new life for our people, we should not continue to nod off without bestirring ourselves. The greatest suffering which Christ bore on the cross was the indifference of his disciples. Today our numbness may subject him to the same suffering.

Let us Christians soon confess our sins before Christ's cross. We should humbly admit that we were dead to our feelings in the past. We thought ourselves 'cool-headed', 'rational', unwilling to 'act rashly'. But what was the reality? We had lost the most minimal sense of justice human beings should possess. We had lost the love we should have for our fellow human beings. Now we must repent. We should listen to what John wrote to the church in Laodicea: "I know your works, you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ... Be earnest, therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:1516).

“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world."

"For he was wounded for our transgressions" (Is. 53:5)

Christ is the saving and healing Lord.

Our Lord's disciples were afflicted by indifference. But they received a wonderful healing and became enthusiastic, brave and strong apostles of the early Church.

They turned Christ's depression and suffering into joy. And finally they entered with him into glory. John says: "And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God .... And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21: 2, 14).

Today the Risen Christ, in that same ardent and sincere voice, asks us again, and then again, "Do you love me?" This is a question we cannot avoid.

May our joy, anger, love and hatred be truly one with that of Christ. Then we can meet Christ's gaze and say to him calmly and without fear, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

This is the greatest joy of the Sacred Lamb.

Shanghai, 1952.

7. Between God and Humankind

> There is no umpire between us, who might lay his hand on us both. (Job 9:33)
>
> For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human... (1 Tim. 2:5)
>
> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation ... (2 Cor. 5:18)

Our Bible tells us that there is an argument underway in the cosmos between (God and humankind.

Humankind – in the person of Adam - has sinned, and God wants to question humankind. God asked Adam: "Where are you?" (Gen. 3: 9). Adam was unwilling to assume responsibility, so he tried to talk his way out of his predicament. He wanted to shift the blame to someone else Eve. But Eve, too, liked to argue, and she planned to shift the blame onto the snake. This began the cosmic dispute between God and humankind.

Human sin built a wall between God and humankind. It also destroyed the harmony between people. God asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" (Gen. 4:9). Cain too tried to shrug off his sin. He thought up an excuse to rebut God's question: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

That was how harmony was destroyed, and the argument continued.

In this argument, human beings feel themselves justified; they strain to find ways to cover up their crimes and sins. God, however, is just and forceful. Our God does not like to argue. God does not enjoy putting people in their place the way we do. Argument is something God avoids unless there is no alternative: it goes against the grain. God wants to win us over because we are in danger and need to be saved. And God has already made preparation for our salvation. In the most sincere voice, God says to us: "As I live ... I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn back from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ez. 33:11)

Our heavenly Father calls upon the whole cosmos and upon humans themselves to bear just witness and to judge:

> Come now, let us argue it out...
> Listen to me in silence, O coastlands; let the peoples renew their strength; let them approach, then let them speak; let us together draw near for judgment.
> What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?
> ...expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

> And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard!
>
> (Is. 1:18; 41:1; 5: 4, 7, 3)

In the argument between God and humankind, humans cannot prevail. What they need is a mediator, one who stands in the middle and listens to both sides. Centuries before Christ, Job, in the depths of his despair had expressed this entreaty for generations.

There are certain qualifications this mediator must have: the desire to compel the two sides to be reconciled; a clear knowledge of the context of both sides; the confidence of both sides; and acceptance by both sides of the mediator's contribution in reconciling them. In brief, the mediator must be the representative of the two sides - on the one hand representing God, and on the other, humanity.

The most outstanding tenet of our Christian faith is that we believe that God has sent us a unique representative, Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ is human, completely and truly human. And so he can represent humankind before God. Christ is also God, completely and truly God. And so, he can represent God to humankind.

"1 believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary." Why? If he came into this world in the same way as ordinary people, then he is human, not one who argues with or opposes God. And he cannot represent God to people. If he came into this world in a way completely different from ordinary people - for example, if he fell from the heavens then he is God and no human. And he cannot represent people to God.

By the wisdom of God, the way in which Christ came into this world illustrates the truth that he is two natures in one body and this means he has the necessary qualifications to be mediator between the two sides.

Among the words and actions of Christ on earth, some represent God to humankind while some represent humankind to God. In the Incarnation, he represents God coming among us into the world. In his sacrifice upon the cross, he represents a sin-burdened humanity reaching for the Father. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ represents God instructing humankind in his will. In John 17, the prayer of the great high priest he represents humankind, praying for them before the Father's throne.

What Job longed for in his despair was simply a judge or an umpire, but what the Lord provided was a mediator: "...for there is one mediator between God and humankind, Jesus Christ..." He is neither a judge, an advocate, nor an umpire. God re-established the relationship between God and humankind and paid the price.

> Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with out weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with

boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 14: 14-16)

Not only did God send Christ to accomplish the work of reconciliation, he has also entrusted this task of encouraging reconciliation to us Christians and to our Church (2 Cor. 5:18). The task is to represent God in the midst of humankind and to represent humankind to God.

Representing God in the midst of humankind means allowing others to see God's glory reflected in the Church and in ourselves as Christians. This is what it means to bear witness.

But when the Church is mentioned today, it does not bring to people's minds anything glorious, or anything good and pure and clean. It reminds them instead of events which have caused our people and nation unhappiness for over a hundred years. If this is the case, can we say that we have been bearing witness?

The Gospel is, after all, the Good News. How can it be that people do not want to hear it? This has been caused by impurity in the same way that impurity in the New Testament led to someone's ear being cut off! (Mt.26:51) Let us and our Church manifest God's innate love, uprightness, goodness, purity and perfection. The catholicity and unity of the Church is also a reflection of the uniqueness of God which should be found in the Church. When we reflect these qualities, other people will see the goodness of our actions and will join with us in turning to our Heavenly Father with songs of praise. In this way also, the Church assumes the role of a prophet.

We and our Church should also have a priestly function. We should be humankind's representative before God and like Christ we should pray for humankind and bring all humanity's joys and sorrows, accomplishments and defeats, expectations and disappointments before God.

Christ can represent humankind because of his ability to enter deeply into our midst and identify with humanity. He moves people to humility, but never humiliates them, nor does he cause them to humiliate themselves. Christ loves individuals; he loves the masses of the people, he shares in their sufferings and in their joys. He understands people's weaknesses and sympathizes with their hopes and strivings for a better future. He helps people overcome their temptations and changes people by his example.

Christ is "true God from true God" and he is also a human among humans. He loves humankind deeply and profoundly; it grieves him to see human weakness and failure; it brings him joy to see human goodness and righteousness. He hates and wishes to see destroyed the evil which oppresses people. He loves and wishes to see flourish the young growths of truth, goodness and beauty.

Only by following the path where Christ has gone before can we be made worthy to play the priestly role, representing humankind and leading people to the Lord's throne.

We pray that God may strengthen the Church, that she may have the vigor of both prophet and priest.

Sheng Kung, *(Inaugural issue) February, 1955, pp. 6-8.* Sheng Kung *was begun in 1955 as a new publication of the* Chung Hwa Sheng Kung *Hui (Anglican-Episcopal).*

8. A Letter to Alumni/ae of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary

This letter was sent out to all alumni/ae in the Spring of *this year. (12 February 1995) It is the most recent of Bishop Ting's writings which we are including in this section.*

I have been deeply moved by the many letters from alumni/ae all over the country expressing their affection and congratulations, both to their Alma Mater and to me personally. Hands are few and we have not been able to respond individually, for which I hope you will forgive us, so I am writing this circular to all of you to speak about things which concern us all.

If you return to campus after many years away, you will still find the East Building, but the West Building has been tom down, and in its place we have built a multi-purpose building. The ground floor houses a kitchen and the students' dining room, on the second floor are large and small reception rooms and a small dining room. On the third floor are ten guest rooms, while on the fourth floor there is a large hall. Our address, Number 13, Da Jian Ying Lane has become Number 17. In addition to the basic theology program, we now have a graduate program, a Bible correspondence course, the *Correspondence* editorial office, and the *Nanjing Theological Review* offices. The main campus also houses the offices of The Amity Foundation, the Nanjing Office of the National TSPM and CCC, the office of the Jiangsu Provincial Three-Self Association and Christian Council, the Nanjing University Religious Studies Institute and the editorial offices of its journal, *Religion.*

I can report to you that the younger generation is gradually succeeding the older one at Nanjing Seminary and that the process is going smoothly. Smoothly and gradually indicates that we are in the midst of change, but there will not be any big ups and downs. We would like to thank you all for your prayers in this respect.

There are some people in our Church who scorn theology, and see the seminary only as a place for the training of preachers. There are others who also scorn theology and who just want the Seminary to be a place for improving the politics of the clergy. The Seminary should train its students' preaching ability and graduates in theology should also be outstanding in politics, but if we want to run the church well, we cannot do without the guidance of theological thinking. Theology comes from the intensive study of the Bible, from delving into the church experience and theological exploration of earlier generations and from the broadening vision which flows from the exchange between the Church here in China and the Church ecumenical, all of which we draw on to guide the church's practice. The Chinese Church is so very much in need of theology; so how can some say we don't need it'? The Christian Bible is a monumental work of theology so how can we use the phrase "there is no theology in the Bible" as an excuse to deny the value of theology? The Bible, through it language, its poetry and the sense of beauty it bestows, provides us with a great deal of material for theology.

Nanjing Union Theological Seminary has been sending students overseas for study in recent years, in order to increase international theological exchange and to advance Chinese

theological construction. This work has met with warm support and cooperation from Councils of Churches in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

We have received your many letters raising the various problems facing our Church.

Regarding the Church as a whole, the recent meeting of the Joint Standing Committees of the CCC and TSPM addressed the current situation by maintaining support for independence and running the grassroots church well. We cannot say that because the issue of independence was raised in the 1950s, raising it again in the 1990s is a "retrogression". It must be pointed out as often as necessary that China is an independent nation and our Chinese Church is an independent church. We have said this in the past, and we should continue to say it. As for the church at the grassroots, it is very painful for Christians in many places that a minority or even one or two people are in control; finances are not handled openly and the church does not resemble the church of Jesus Christ. We must strongly call upon believers to participate in and supervise the way the church is run so that grassroots churches can become schools of democratic management. This has always been a special characteristic of Protestant Christianity, for the laity have always held a certain degree of authority in the church whether in its Presbyterian, congregational or Episcopal expressions.

I should report to our alumni that our two national Christian bodies do not take a hostile attitude to the masses of believers and their leaders outside our organizations who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Our approach to them is that we are members of the same body in the Lord, that they are all our brothers and sisters, including those who are critical of or have complaints about the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. We must consider their criticisms with a sense of humility. We should share whatever advantages we have with them, or assist them by virtue of our more favorable situation. Those who identify with anti-China forces overseas can be found in and outside the church, but these are a minority.

The government registration of religious venues has been a particularly frequent topic in your recent letters.

The first thing which must be clarified on this issue is that the purpose of registration is to allow "underground" meeting points to come out into the open. It is never good in any country if there are some religious believers who must hold their religion in secret or meet clandestinely, and it is never a sign of religious freedom. After registration, underground groups in China can come aboveground and meet openly in the broad daylight. The people and the government authorities in their area can relax, and the believers can feel secure. As long as our religious activities are normal, we need not hide them from anyone, and we can welcome the masses of our people to watch, listen and monitor our activities. It appears from the regulations for registration promulgated by the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council that a church or meeting point need only comply with six simple and easily achieved demands in order to register. This shows that it is not the intention of the government to cut down the number of churches and meeting points or to use registration as an excuse to harass them, but rather to allow all religious activities to come into the open. The more of these which can move from underground or semi-underground status to "above-ground", the better.

Frankly, the division of religious activities into sanctioned and unsanctioned, or underground and above-ground is the method used in the former Soviet Union, not that of socialism with Chinese characteristics. If we can achieve success in the task of registration of religious venues, if we can ensure that all normal religious activities attain open and legal status, that will be good enough. Then we can say that this is a style of religious work which is part of socialism with Chinese characteristics. And I am very hopeful that we will be able to do this.

Mr. Luo Guanzong [Secretary General of the TSPM] and I met with a leading comrade from the Legal Department of the State Council on this issue of registration. He told us that registration was simply registration, and separate from their regular work. The provisions of the regulations for registration, he said, do not specify particular actions, and this is good, for nothing should be added to complicate their content. The spirit of what he told us is worth careful reflection.

Some people in the two national Christian bodies would like to take the opportunity afforded by registration to undertake a review of the qualifications of all Christian leaders whose groups register. This is unacceptable. First of all, it is adding to what the regulations require, and thus makes the work of registration more difficult. Second, it is an extremely broad subject and the two bodies do not have the resources to screen so many new people. Third, we have not yet succeeded in broadening our own unity, so how can we so blithely set ourselves up as arbiters of others' qualifications? This would broaden the base for continuing quarrels, not unity. In the process of government registration, the task of the two national Christian bodies lies in encouraging and assisting churches and meeting points with registration, in promptly reflecting to the government problems and criticisms from the Church and in clearing the channel for an exchange of views. I think this is an area where alumni/ae can also assume some responsibility.

I hadn't imagined that even today there would be those who oppose registration on the grounds that "we are citizens of heaven and we listen only to God, not to man". They did not raise objections on this score during the national census, nor resist by claiming that they should not be counted as part of the population of China. They do not want to have any contact with the government and so I wonder if they even collect their Identity Cards. The Church is certainly a spiritual body, but on this earth it is also a people's organization. Recently someone showed me a letter from the United States which contained an essay calling for Chinese Christians to resist registration. If we follow isolationism in this work of registration, piling difficulty upon difficulty in the process, it is as if we are cooperating with anti-China groups from overseas!

It is common knowledge that the ruling party of China is an atheist party. Some people overseas seize upon this to paint the Communist Party and government as enemies out to destroy religion. Such people have a poor grasp of the facts. Taking only Christianity as an example, over the past ten years, since the restoration of order following the Cultural Revolution era, an average of three churches have opened every two days, and this does not include the tens of thousands of meeting points which have opened in this time. We have distributed over ten million Bibles, and opened thirteen centers of theological education with several hundred students. Though we are not completely satisfied with the implementation of the policy of religious freedom, can all this be considered typical of a country where religion is seen as the enemy or where religion is being destroyed?

We should not be satisfied with mere statistics of success. Chinese Christianity is facing many problems, which our Nanjing Union Theological Seminary alumni/ae should give their attention to and reflect upon. Let me mention just one:

In the last decade or so, Chinese intellectuals have had a more open attitude toward Chinese Christianity than ever in the past. But we Chinese Christians are greatly lacking in the ability to respond and carry on a dialogue with them. We very much need a group of Christian intellectuals with expertise in a variety of fields who would command respect. Such Christian intellectuals should not only worship in our churches, but should take part in church leadership at all levels. They should also enter all sorts of specialized groups where they could meet others in their field, share their faith, contribute to these disciplines and play a role on the international scene. These specialized disciplines include the creative arts and drama, as well as the study of religion as part of the social sciences. We need to form a strong corps of theologically oriented intellectuals with original ideas they can convey in a reasoned and convincing way, intellectuals who can also propound their ideas as Christians from a socialist society with Chinese characteristics in international theological circles.

Since I have not written to you in some time, as soon as I begin I find there is a great deal to say, but I will stop here. I would like to thank my colleague, Zhao Zhien [Lecturer in New Testament at Nanjing Seminary], of the alumni/ae working group who keeps in touch with so many of you. To all of you alumni/ae who give their all for China and the Chinese church, my best wishes for your physical, mental and spiritual health and well being.

K. H. Ting
Nanjing

REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF K.H. TING

9.Co-workers in the China Christian Council – Bao Jiayuan

There is a saying in Chinese, "when one is surrounded by good fortune, it often goes unnoticed". I know this from experience. I have worked for many years in the Nanjing Office of the China Christian Council and have had the opportunity to serve the Lord while working side by side with Bishop Ting. I have therefore had a much greater opportunity than most to benefit from his guidance and instruction as a spiritual leader. It is precisely for this reason that many extraordinary things seem quite matter of course to me. The years have gone by without my realizing it and the Bishop is now eighty. But to me, he seems the same as ever, the same as he was when I came to study at the Seminary in the early sixties.

Thirty years have passed in the blink of an eye. In the 1960s, the Chinese people were in severe economic difficulties. As a result of the years of ultra-leftism, Christians and clergy went through repeated political movements, and many people came under severe attack. After 1958, the church began holding unified worship services and instituted organizational changes which led to much reflection and soul-searching. The Church was at a low ebb. Nanjing Union Theological Seminary was closed for many years; theological education did not develop smoothly and there was a crisis in leadership training.

The Church has faced difficulties and challenges in every age, but thanks be to God, its life remains under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In 1961, Yanjing Seminary in Beijing joined with Nanjing Seminary, thus strengthening Nanjing's teaching staff. In this way, theological education took a turn for the better. Nanjing Seminary reopened its refresher course and in the autumn of 1962, a new class was admitted to the regular theological program. I was one of only 19 students in the class, and we had a standing joke that there were more teachers than students at Nanjing Seminary. Many people found it hard to believe that there could be a theological seminary in the China of the 1960s. In truth, there has been no class like this before or since. No one then could have guessed that this class of students would not graduate until the eve of the Cultural Revolution and that it would be the last class of theological students in China for many years.

Bishop Ting was then Principal of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, with Ding Yuzhang and Cheng Zhiyi, both his elders, as Vice-Principals. Bishop Ting was quite young then and when he spoke, it was usually in a soft voice which seemed very kind. He was very approachable and liked to chat with us young students. I was the youngest in the class and at first I was always embarrassed and timid at meeting the Principal. But in talking with him I came to see that Bishop Ting was warm and friendly. I gradually came to admire him. He would frequently tell us: "Not only does our Chinese Church need patriotic and church-loving clergy, it also needs accomplished theologians." He would urge us to study well, to be solid students and to gain a good grasp of theology in order to serve the Chinese Church in the future. Looking back now, the fact that he was able to keep the Seminary open and train people, despite the pressures of extreme leftism, is incredible. Many of the students trained in the 1960s today fill the ranks of leadership in the church. Bishop Ting was kept very busy in

those days, but he taught modern western theology, logic and other classes himself. In class, he was articulate and clear, and able to clarify difficult concepts for us. We all enjoyed his lectures.

Relationships between the Chinese Church and the Church ecumenical did not flourish in the 1960s as they have in the 1980s, but whenever overseas church visitors came to the Seminary, Bishop Ting would show them around personally. He also liked to arrange for young students to participate, even encouraging us to speak to the visitors in English for conversation practice. He always said that if we wanted to do well in our theological studies, we had to master English. To get us young students more interested in foreign languages, Bishop Ting would hold English parties with sweets and soft drinks at his home. He made a special point of inviting Mrs. Ting (Professor Siu May Kuo) to come and chat with us. Mrs. Ting taught English at Nanjing University and was very concerned about the study of English at the Seminary. She was very pleased to see that our level of English was comparable to that at other universities.

In the 1990s, the world appears to have shrunk as technology has developed and language has become extraordinarily important in interchurch relationships. Bishop Ting frequently stresses the importance of language skills for clergy and church workers. Of course, Church and Seminary were both at a virtual standstill during the Cultural Revolution era, and little language training was done. Many of those with good English are to be found among the older generation, and this is one of the problems in the transition from an older to a younger generation of leadership. Bishop Ting is very concerned about whether the new generation of clergy will have as good a grasp of the language a the older generation. He feels this is terribly important and has advise the China Christian Council to encourage young staff to learn English, At some other seminaries in China, students have been censured for studying English seriously. They have been accused of failing to focus on their main task, of being unspiritual and of lacking the will to serve. Bishop Ting has pointed out the errors in this kind of thinking and he has asked people to revise their views and study harder.

Everyone who has had contact with Bishop Ting knows that in addressing others, whether in letters or on the phone, he likes to use the term "co-worker". This is a very cordial term, especially for us in the younger generation. It is a form of address that gives no indication of relative position or age, but expresses equality in the Lord. In fact, many people these days have fallen into the habit of using exaggerated terms of address in order to flatter others. They will call an assistant pastor, Pastor, or an assistant professor, Professor.

This brings to my mind the way Paul addressed Timothy, Philemon and others in the early Church. He too called them co-workers. In the Christian Church we are all co-workers with God. This shows that we are all the Lord's servants and it should warm our hearts. Bishop Ting is very concerned about the lives and work of Chinese Christians working in the China Christian Council and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee. When he goes to Shanghai for example, he will always visit with young co-workers in these two bodies. He will chat with them and listen to their views. In 1992, some Shanghai co-workers came to Nanjing on holiday. Busy as he was, Bishop Ting made time for an evening with them, and asked them to his home for a conversation. He told them that as co-workers in the two

national Christian bodies they should continually seek to develop spiritually and never become bureaucratic in their work in church organizations, or lose touch with ordinary Christians. The CCC should do what is pleasing to Christians and avoid what is not, in order to run the church well, and in order to accomplish more, and more quickly.

Bishop Ting is a model of learning, who sets an example by his hard work for the Church at the national level. But he has never forgotten those at the grassroots. Many Christians from meeting points in rural villages come to see him and he never refuses to see them, patiently listening to their troubles and doing all he can to help. His actions arise out of the love of a pastor for believers, a sense of responsibility for God's ministry, of sharing in believers' difficulties and helping to address their problems. In this way he becomes God's loyal servant. As he has said, a good shepherd should be together with the sheep.

'"The Chinese Church is very small and very poor." This is Bishop Ting's constant comment when meeting and entertaining visitors. He stresses that frugality is a Christian virtue and has set limits on meals for such visitors: four dishes and one soup. We should not parade extravagance or aim at ostentation for guests. This is a bad habit and an unhealthy tendency. In our present society, ostentatious wining and dining is a common sight, one aspect of corruption. The Bishop has all along maintained the principle of frugality; his feeling is that sharing and fellowship are the important things. In our office, we have to deal with a great deal of correspondence every day, but old envelopes are saved and used as scrap paper for sending inter-office mail. I once passed on a document to Bishop Ting in a new envelope and he responded with the criticism: "N.B. Make use of old envelopes." Reusing old envelopes has now become a tradition of our office. It is a small thing but has a big impact on everyone who comes to work here. We believe that our office supplies are part of the church's resources, God's resources. We have no right to waste them.

In the great stream of history, we human beings seem very small and our lives transitory. As the Psalmist says "For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night"(90:4). We are all sojourners in this world. As I travel this road, my constant thought is how to glorify God. Each day I place my life and work for the new day in God's hands and ask God's guidance. And I take Bishop Ting's ordinary yet extraordinary spiritual experience as my encouragement: do more which will please the believers and avoid doing things which will displease them.

Nanjing

Rev. Bao Jiayuan is Associate General Secretary of the China Christian Council and Director of the Nanjing Office of the CCC. He came to know Bishop Ting in 1962 when he entered Nanjing Union Theological Seminary as a student. Rev. Bao's family have been Christian since the mid-nineteenth century; his father is a well-known pastor in Suzhou and his mother is an evangelist.

10. **Wise as Serpents and Harmless as Doves** – Simone Frutiger Bickel

"Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Mt. 10:16). Since our first meeting just forty-seven years ago, K.H. Ting has always embodied for me this exhortation of Christ to his disciples. I do not know what the serpent represents in the imaginary mythology of China, but whatever its symbolism may be, it is its qualification which is important in this context: "Be wise". The Greek word does not evoke a mode of thought detached from contingencies but a practical wisdom which takes account of circumstances and of other people. Bishop Ting recently reminded his students of this fact during a theological seminar in Nanjing, when they were soon to be called to the ministry. "In appropriate situations," he said, "use a language appropriate to the situation.'" That kind of wisdom appears to me to be one of his greatest qualities.

The symbolism of the dove, filled with peace and beauty, is more universal and unambivalent, but here too it is the qualification that counts: "Be harmless". The Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible refers to the etymology of the Greek word: deprived of all aggression, offered without defense. "If we must err, I prefer to err on the side of naivety rather than cynicism. The cynic bangs the door of opportunity himself and lands himself in nothing but spiritual frustration and greater cynicism. ... There seem to me to be some redeeming possibilities in naivety which cynicism lacks.'" This naivety, offered without defense, struck me more than his wisdom in the course of the exchanges which we had during the years 1948 -1950 in Geneva, when K.H. Ting was secretary of the World Student Christian Federation and ardently desired to return to China, contrary to the general opinion that such a move would be unwise.

Though I knew that Bishop Ting would celebrate his 80th birthday this year, I never dreamed that I would be invited to join my voice to those of others I considered better qualified to celebrate the man who, precisely through his wisdom and biblical naivety and the wide range of his human, pastoral and theological abilities, has become the leading figure of Chinese Protestantism. How could I dare to speak of his irreplaceable role when I have never worked with him? What did I know of the building of a Christianity no longer "strange and foreign", completely at the service of the people and a new China? Despite a keen desire, I have never been to China and have therefore been able to follow the events only from a great distance and "through a glass, darkly."

If I have nevertheless accepted, it is solely in the name of a friendship which has bound me to K.H. and his wife Siu May Kuo since 1948; a friendship which has not needed many words and has known some long periods of silence, but which has not ceased to live in me and has given me a feeling of solidarity with a people who, in their turn, are "strange and foreign" to us Westerners. My witness will doubtless be too personal (and I know of K.H.'s reserve in speaking of himself), but it is the truest path that I can take to express my gratitude to him.

Now retired, Simone Frutiger-Bickel serve as a youth pastor in Switzerland for a number of years. She was also a teacher of New Testament at the former Ecole des Missions in Paris. She came to know Bishop K.H. Ting during his time as Secretary for the World Student Christian Federation in Geneva, 1948-1951.

When I met K.H. for the first time, during two youth and student meetings in Holland held before and after the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948,[3] I shared with many others a strong feeling of "missionary zeal", made all the more impatient by having spent the war years in Switzerland. Although spared by our country's neutrality, we felt so shut in and useless. Suzanne de Dietrich, whose biblical and pedagogical work was to influence generations of students and lay people, had taught us to discover the Bible as the Word of God for the world, living and exigent, demanding all our effort and all our obedience. I did not then know that K.H. had already adapted her booklet "Rediscovering the Bible" into Chinese in Shanghai, very soon after its publication, or that he had attended the same biblical revival school in China. Side by side with Susanne de Dietrich, W. Visser't Hooft had delineated for us a Church purified by suffering and engaged in all kinds of combat. Fortified by this "worldwide" Word, we were prepared to live (and die...) for it. With an ignorance and a naivety which had nothing in common with the biblical one, we wanted to engage ourselves with the Church universal in modern confrontations, and on the side of the most destitute.

It was against this background that my meeting with K.H. took place. "We must take our vocation seriously so that God may use us. Yet, in another sense, we need not take it seriously so as to have enough room for the Holy Spirit to operate in us. What we do is extremely important because it is God's work. Yet at the same time, what we do is also extremely unimportant because of the same reason."[4] This statement contains the secret of all his life and work. Thus it is that, with the aid of other friendships, instead of returning to "fight" in a working-class suburb of Paris or dreaming of missionary service, I accepted a post as youth pastor in Switzerland. I stayed seven years in this post which I had at first insistently refused.

At that time I had two conflicting images of China, both equally unreal. On the one hand was the image of the "Yellow Peril", common in the West and shared by the middle class and military circles in Switzerland. Since 1945, the Enemy Number One could only be Communist and Chinese. Of the immense revolution which had begun and of its historical conditions (the Long March) we heard only terrifying echoes. Chang Kai-shek was regarded as a hero and what was more, a Christian hero -- a fiction which was hard to contradict. The other image of China was current in student circles and came to us from reading the novel *La Condition Humaine* [Man's Fate] by the French author Andre Malraux, which glorifies the Shanghai workers' insurrection of 1927. If, as we gradually found out, the novel was more concerned with the international brotherhood of man than with historical truth and the desire for freedom it still opened up for us a different view of China.

In K.H. I at last met a Chinese "of flesh and blood". In reply to our questions, calmly and with his wisdom and biblical naivety refined by a mature sensibility, he revealed to us the reality of a China "of flesh and blood", emerging from a long humiliation, and spoke of the need to build a Christianity no longer seen as a mere "Western import" but growing from the rich and newly tilled earth of China. Without giving any ideological lectures, whether political or religious, but with light yet firm touches like brush-strokes, he had his own way of putting our certainties into question and making us reflect in a constructive manner. For

him, faith could not be a confrontation or "fight against" but a mutual respect, a "working with", which is in fact that of the incarnation. Faith can wish for the good before denouncing evil in accordance with a common Western pattern. All of K.H's theology, his Christology and ecclesiology were already there, in the bud. For me and within me, the dialogue with him, and through him with China and Chinese Christians, had started.

"Let us be in touch", he wrote to me one day. Despite long periods of silence and uncertainty about the real problems of the Chinese people and Chinese Christians, during which prayer remained the sole link, our dialogue has continued, thanks to mutual friends. It has been possible to deepen the nature of this dialogue through the more recent reading of the newsletter of the Canada China Programme, *The Chinese Theological Review* and books of K.H.'s writings such as No *Longer Strangers* by Ray Whitehead, *Seeking the Common Ground* by Philip Wickeri and *Venturing in the Bible* by Siu May Kuo.5 This refreshing presentation of the Bible in all its beauty was soon to be republished in an enlarged edition -- just at a time when in France we were only beginning to face up to an increasing ignorance of the Bible. Our dialogue was confirmed once again during a brief encounter in Paris in 1988.

But this dialogue remains difficult. Both at the political level and at that of the Chinese Christians, the news is often contradictory. It is not always possible to identify the sources of information or their ideological background. We remain within a tragic framework of confrontation where we are ready to emphasize the bad at the expense of the good, as though animated by a secret thirst for martyrdom. Many find it difficult to understand that the "patriotism" which animates the China Christian Council and the Chinese Catholics is experienced as a dynamic of solidarity and with a profound love for the people, not in an arrogant, chauvinistic manner which in the West is characteristic of conservative, nationalistic movements and which is rightly denounced. In France, where I have lived for some forty years, only a small minority takes an interest in English-language publications. Particularly where the conditions of the legal exercise of religious liberty are concerned, news from the China Christian Council is often swamped by Communiqués from a Roman Catholic majority not inclined to understand it, or by statements from radical evangelical circles. In the consequent confusion, it is difficult to discover what we can learn from a Chinese Church, as compared with the better known Churches in Africa and Latin America. And yet the Chinese, with their will for incarnation and mutual respect, for credibility and ethical dignity, and in their patient post-denominational edification, are far ahead of us.

At the very heart of this difficult dialogue and of more and more complex historical situations, whether we share them or not, may we help each other to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves", with a wisdom and a lucid naivety to which Christ promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 10:20). This is the only way to build "a Church of beauty for Christ", whether in China or anywhere else. 6

Geneva, Paris, Berne

K.H. Ting, "Reordering the Relationships," *The Chinese Theological Review 1989.* p. 19.
K.H. Ting, "Creation and Redemption," The *Chinese Theological Review: 9 , p. 157.*

11. **Cosmic Christ and Ecumenical Fellowship** – Theresa and Feliciano Carino

Crossing Barriers, Seeking Common Ground

One of the more fascinating and challenging facets of K.H. Ting's life and thought is the fact that it attracts attention and provokes interest among a wide spectrum of both conservative and liberal or progressive Church people and theologians. It is equally interesting and important to note each group's surprise at what they learn from and come to know of him. The discussion that was generated by his two lectures before the faculty and students of Union Theological Seminary of the Philippines on the occasion of the conferral of a doctor's degree in theology *(honoris causa)* on him illustrates this point well.

On the one hand, when they heard him expound his location in the theological map in terms of a very strong Christological base that is centered in Jesus as the Cosmic Christ and of love as the nature of God and therefore "at the back of the whole creative process," the more liberal and progressive students were taken aback by what seemed like very traditional theological language and too gentle a view of the life and witness of the Church. His questions against liberation theology, his refusal to "turn to a liberationist Christology," and his strong warnings against "idealizing and absolutizing the poor" startled them no end. This was not what they expected from someone who had returned to China to be a part of the socialist renovation of his country.

On the other hand, when they heard him speak of his concern for the survival and growth of the Church in a threatening if not hostile environment, the more conservative students were surprised by his insistence on the primacy of the unity of the Church and his refusal to sacrifice that unity in favor of the espousal and attainment of economic, social and political goals. They did not expect this strong concern for the survival, growth and unity of the Church from a church person who very openly expressed the conviction that "socialism is love organized for the masses of people" and one who can say that atheists are and can be partners in a common human enterprise "even though we get our orders in doing certain things together from different chains of command."

What is involved here is not a matter, as some would say, o straddling two worlds. This is not a case, in other words, of someone standing with his feet apart in order to plant them artificially on different grounds. What is at stake, on the contrary, is the exposure of that theological ground on which the Christian life is planted and out of which it becomes so integral to its expression and witness that it crosses all sorts of unfamiliar barriers and seeks common ground with all sorts of

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K.H. Ting. from notes on returning from a journey to Eastern Europe *in 1949,* cited in Philip Wickeri, *Seeking the Common* Ground (Maryknoll). *NY:* Orbis. 1988). *p.127.*

"The Growing ('hutch." Youth Missionary Conference & World Student Christian Federation Theological Conference. Woudschoten. Holland. summer 1948.

“A Chinese Answer to the Question: Does God Call Us?'." *Student World 41. 1948. pp. 318-325.*

It is above all thanks to Marie-Jeanne Coleman. Toronto. that I have had access to such sources.

unfamiliar people in the manifestation of God's love for the world and in the attainment of human goals for individual and social life.

Commitment, Compassion and Competence

Here lies precisely the dominant impact of K.H.'s life and thought upon us. His theology, focused upon the encompassing character of God's love as this is incarnated in Jesus Christ, calls into question the rifts that divide the Christian community and challenges us to unite and put together what we tend to divide and separate. He pushes much further the outer limits and more deeply the imperatives of Christian unity. His life and work, punctuated by so many dramatic and monumental changes and zig-zags in Chinese politics and in the politics of the world, exhibits so much of that wholesome capacity, so important for any vibrant witness to the Gospel to be rooted in very basic and firm commitments, while remaining free to respond to new challenges and be open to new realities. There are not very many Christian leaders anywhere in the world today who have gone through so many changes and crises in the life of Church and society as K.H. and who still remain so fresh and profound in outlook and analytical skill, and so generous in spirit.

Here is a man who returned to China after its liberation in 1949, leaving behind studies and international ecumenical work that was already fairly established in order to be part of the massive renovation of Chinese society that the new political dispensation entailed. He went through the Cultural Revolution, with all the dislocations that this brought about in the life of the Chinese people in general and the Chinese churches in particular. He lives now amidst the changes that have been brought about by the turn towards modernization in Chinese life and the new dilemmas and opportunities which this have engendered. He lives in a socialist society, still affirming the socialist path at a time when socialist regimes around the world have collapsed in varying ways. Given all this, one would have expected the accumulation of some dose of cynicism both in his intellectual and pastoral work. We have noticed none of this at all on the several occasions in which he visited the Philippines and the many instances in which we have had the privilege of meeting with him. On the contrary what we have encountered again and again is a vibrant and lively Christian spirit, so firm in his commitment and so confident about the future of the Church and about a better future for the life of the world, still so alert and inquisitive about new developments in social, political and theological life and thought, and so generous in compassion towards people who are different and things that are unfamiliar. Commitment, compassion and competence are the hallmarks of his life and ministry. They also constitute the main source of the influence he has had upon the life of others and upon the life and mission of the Church.

China and the Ecumenical Movement in Asia

The incredible wealth of experience and thought that has come out of K.H.'s intimate involvement in the life of Chinese society and of the Church in China since 1949 should have benefited the life of the ecumenical movement in Asia. Unfortunately, this has not happened. The separation and distance generated by the patterns of Asian and world politics in the post-Second World War period has kept not only K.H. but also the whole of the Chinese church largely estranged from and unknown to the other Churches in Asia. Strange as it may seem, even now K.H. is perhaps better known and better read in the West than in Asia.

The changing ideological and political climate of international relations in Asia and in other parts of the world, and the equally changing complexion of Chinese economic, social and political life have clearly begun to break down this wall of separation between China and the rest of Asia. In the not too distant future, this should also erode more fully the barriers that have kept the Chinese churches from the mainstream of the ecumenical movement in Asia. While anticipating and hoping for the time when there will be a fuller fellowship between the Chinese churches and the other members of the ecumenical movement in Asia, we would like to note two important dimensions of Asian ecumenical life that would profit much from the life and thought of K.H. and the orientations and dynamism which he has helped to engender in the life of the Chinese churches.

A. The first has to do with the continuing challenge of Christian unity and the unity of the Church. There is a growing feeling in Asian ecumenical circles that interest in the question of Christian unity has receded considerably in recent years in favor of what is perceived as the more urgent and relevant demands of common action and witness in social and political life. K.H.'s unrelenting insistence on the unity of the Church in China as integral to its identity and work, and his theology of the compassionate and cosmic work of God in Christ open up fresh approaches to this question and should enliven interest in it.

What has in fact been most refreshing and provoking in K.H.'s concern for and insistence on the unity of the churches in China is the fact that it has been articulated alongside and as part of the other equally urgent impulses and needs of the churches in China. "Living down the stigma of being a Western import", forging an authentic Chinese Christian selfhood so that the churches are not only a dot in the Western missionary map, developing self-reliance in the Church, and enunciating a Christian presence and witness in the Chinese socialist experience have all been meshed with and become part of the urge for Christian unity. Mission and unity, faith, witness and service have all been naturally and historically brought together as part of one movement of obedience to the demands of God's work in Jesus Christ.

The link that binds these various demands in the life of the Church is K.H.'s theology of the Cosmic Christ. In short, in introducing the cosmic dimension of the work of Christ as the central principle of the Church's faith and life, a more inclusive and encompassing principle for the unity and renewal of the Church is also put into operation. The unity of the Church in this context must be seen as part of and integral with the work of God in Christ for the unity and coherence of "all things" and of the whole creation (Col. 1:15ff). Here, the cosmic dimensions of Christ's work places the task of seeking the unity of the Church in proper perspective. The unity of the Church is not the "end" of God's work in Christ, neither is it to be seen simply as prerequisite for the broader task of seeking the unity and coherence of "all things" in Christ. On the contrary, the unity and renewal of the Church is to be seen as part of and integral to the more encompassing struggle to seek the unity of the whole cosmos amidst the technological revolutions of our time, the ongoing clashes of race, political movements and ideologies, the countervailing clamors for freedom and justice, and for the building of alternate and more human economic, social and political structures. Finally, in his concern for the integrity of creation K.H. reminds us that the broad and encompassing dimension of

God's work is and must be the perennial source and basis of unity and renewal in the life and mission of the Church.

B. This leads to a second point which has to do with the forging of a new ecumenical fellowship and witness amidst some of the most stunning and incredible changes and developments in the life of the world in which we live. A recent report of the Executive Committee of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) notes the changing ideological climate in the world and in Asia, and the unprecedented, almost dizzying, economic activity and growth that is happening in our part of the world as two of the dominant features of the life of Asia and the Pacific to which the churches must give their attention and response, and in the light of which they must adjust their life and work. How are we, in this context, to raise the "ideological question" in a fresh and creative way? What would this mean for the life of the churches and for their social witness? How are we, as well, to deal with the "economic question" that we are confronted with in a manner that we have not known before? How are these new economic realities going to affect our relationship with each other as nations and peoples, and as churches?

Beyond these questions and realities, the fact is dawning upon us that we are in the midst of one of the most challenging and important decades in the history of civilization. It is as we already know a period of incredible technological innovation and scientific discovery; a period of the even more incredible operation of a global communication system never before attained on the plane of human possibility and praxis. It is a period in which unprecedented economic growth in our part of the world could make our continent the trade and economic center of the world. It is a period that is predicted to bring about some surprising political reforms and possibly some moments of great cultural rebirth. It is moreover a decade like none that has come before in our lifetime because it will culminate in the millennium, the year 2000. For centuries, this monumental, symbolic date has stood for the future, for a major turning point in our lives and in the world's life, for the opportunities and the dangers that confront us, for the closing of the old and the beginning of the new, and for the monumental choices that we need to make in order to bring the promise of the future into gradual reality.

What the challenge of the oikoumene and what many have referred to as the millennial atmosphere has generated is a sense of critical review, assessment and renewal within the whole ecumenical enterprise that is geared towards loosening the ecumenical bolts so that ecumenical life becomes more open to the demands of an emerging new world. All over the ecumenical world, a sense of transition has in fact set in. "Transitory ecumenism" is a term that has been coined and used to describe this new ecumenical situation. This transitory ecumenical situation involves a review not only of existing programs and activities but also of basic theological and ethical promises and the sustained effort at building new structures and cultivating new relationships and solidarities.

Again, as the Executive Committee of the CCA has noted, in this new economic, social and political milieu, China will play an important and perhaps incomparable role. In such an ecumenical situation, the Chinese churches will be called upon to play a major ecumenical role. As two of those who have admired greatly and been influenced by the life and work of

K.H. we think that in this new situation in the life of Asia and of the Asian ecumenical movement, K.H.'s most creative contribution is still to come.

Manila

Dr. Theresa Carino is Executive Director *of* the Philippine China Development Resource Center. She met Bishop Ting at the international conference, "God's Call to a New Beginning" in 1981 in Montreal. Canada. Dr. Carino edited the Asian edition *of No Longer Strangers: Selected Writings of KH Ting* (Raymond Whitehead, ed.).

Rev. Dr. Feliciano Carino is General Secretary *of* the National Council *of* Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). Bishop Ting and Rev. Carino met in 1984 during the visit of a Philippine delegation to China under the auspices *of* the Chinese Association for Friendship with Foreign Peoples. Since then Rev. Carino has been involved in numerous projects developing exchanges between the CCC and the NCCP

12. **Working Together in the Era of Openness and Reform** – Wenzao Han

In the early forties, while I was studying at Hangchow Christian College, Bishop Ting was pastor of the church that ministered to us students in Shanghai. After I began working at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in the early sixties, Bishop Ting and I grew even closer. Now it is more than thirty years that we have been working together. By way of mutual encouragement, I would like to share some of my feelings about working with Bishop Ting in the years since the end of the Cultural Revolution era.

The China Christian Council (CCC) was established four years after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Over these years, the CCC and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee (TSPM) have done much to build up the Chinese church and to further links with the church universal. These achievements, which have gained wide public recognition, cannot be separated from Bishop Ting's crucial perspective and timely guidance.

In 1956, Mr. Y.T. Wu put forward a program of "Three Witnesses and Ten Tasks" for the building up of the Chinese Church. Because of the general situation of the times, with "leftist" thinking rearing its head, Mr. Wu's suggestion could not be realized. But then, after more than a quarter of a century, Bishop Ting again began speaking of the need to "build up the church", and he gave this a new meaning: not only should the three-self principle be upheld, but the church should be well-run, well-propagated and well-supported. This clearly indicated the direction forward for China's clergy, church workers and laity and it enabled continued development in all aspects of ministry.

"No matter where believers gather to worship, whether in churches or in homes, we are to serve them all." These few words express Bishop Ting's viewpoint and their guiding significance is profound. They open up our field of vision and clarify our mission. For those who are complacent about the status quo or still perplexed by the influence of "leftist" thinking, it is a dose of clear-headedness, and of huge benefit in impelling the Chinese Church to move along the path of unity.

Since 1980, the two national Christian bodies have entrusted me with the task of fostering contacts with churches overseas. Before this, our Church had almost no international contacts. There were a few visits by a small number of church leaders from overseas, and a few of our church leaders attended a small number of international Christian meetings, generally in a private capacity. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, our relationships with overseas churches have developed quite rapidly. This is due in part to the improvement in domestic and international conditions for such contacts under the government's policy of reform and openness. But Bishop Ting's penetrating judgments have also played a crucial role in fostering such contacts.

In the early eighties, Bishop Ting put forward the idea that "world Christianity is not a monolith". This insight was a response to the situation at the time and was of very pertinent significance for us. At that time there were "anti-China" forces in international Christian circles, and though their numbers were not great, neither was their influence negligible. They attacked

China in numerous and tedious articles in their publications, they blurred the distinctions between the harm done to religion by the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution and the situation since then when the government had set things back on the right course. They raised a hue and cry over the smuggling of Bibles, and so on. Their actions drew the attention of government bodies all over China and for a time there were those who felt that these people represented the international Christian movement. This misunderstanding greatly obstructed our opening up of overseas contacts. Bishop Ting's insight corrected this misapprehension and laid the intellectual foundation for our work of building contacts with churches overseas

The aim of Three-Self is to establish a "self' for the Chinese Church, but this "self' has significance only in relationship with the Church universal. Three-Self by no means implies self-isolation. If one limb severs itself from the Body whose Head is Jesus Christ, it cannot survive. The Chinese Church should become a limb of the Church universal, and it should develop into one with an even greater witness. Bishop Ting's views on this matter have guided us theologically in our work of building overseas contacts, enabling us to rightly re-order the relationship between our own independence and our relations with the Church universal. To stress either of these two at the expense of the other would be to set an impossible course

In the late eighties and early nineties, great political changes took place in Eastern Europe. The news which reached China was that churches in these countries played a major role in promoting these changes. This could not but cause various sectors of Chinese society to cast a suspicious eye upon Chinese Christianity, wondering whether our churches might also one day play a starring role in the "peaceful evolution" of China. Because Chinese Christianity had historically been closely related to Western colonialism and expansionism in China, it has been seen by many Chinese as a "foreign religion". Decades of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement brought great changes to this image and smoothed the path of our ministry. To come once more under suspicion and be seen as a potential political enemy, was another setback. Bishop Ting undertook a conscientious investigation and helped to demonstrate the falsity of these rumors about "peaceful evolution" and the role of the Church in Eastern Europe. He spoke from a sense of justice in the National People's Congress to clear things up, thus sweeping away the obstacles from the path of our churches' further development.

This year Bishop Ting turns eighty. We in the Church owe him a great deal. With my few remarks here I would like to express my gratitude for his lifelong commitment to the Christian community here in China and wish him many more happy returns. May God continue to bless you in body and spirit.

Nanjing

Dr. Wenzao Han is Acting General Secretary and Executive Vice-President of the China Christian Council and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation. Dr. Han met K.H. Ting while doing SCM. work in Shanghai and has worked closely with him in the years since 1978 lie studied at Hangchow Christian College and St John's University.

13. **A Bishop with Charisma** – Peter K.K. Kwong

It was very thoughtful for those at *The Chinese Theological Review* to mark the tenth anniversary of the journal together with the celebration of the eightieth birthday of Bishop K.H. Ting, the guiding spirit behind the *Review. A* reflection on Bishop Ting's life and work will always be incomplete and inadequate because, I think, it is easier to write about a charismatic leader than to write about a leader with a charisma such as that of Bishop Ting.

A charismatic leader is someone who promotes or whose followers promote a movement centered upon the leader himself or herself or upon his or her ideology. The movement as the conceptualized aspect of the mind of the charismatic leader is easy to trace. But Bishop Ting is not in this category. Even though he is a great supporter of the Three Self Patriotic Movement of the Chinese Church, there has never been the suggestion that he is a leader out to promote himself or his ideology.

But what he does have is a charisma appropriate to a bishop or church leader. Instead of promoting himself, he always tries, within a very complex situation, to promote the work of God. He understands God in the context of Chinese culture without forgetting the universal and international dimensions of Christian faith. He has accomplished what might seem impossible to many of us: to work through all the complications of the situation he has been presented with, and come out with a clear vision, a sense of direction, and an acceptable and agreeable course for the Church. It is in this respect that I would call him a bishop with charisma.

His flow *to Study the Bible* represents a milestone in his thinking and the focus of his concerns. In this book, he takes the truth of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ as expressed in the Bible to be the first priority in the work of the church. In order to understand the life and work of Jesus Christ, we of course have to study the Bible. In order to help Christians in China to understand the Bible, Bishop Ting published this book as a guide and teaching aid.

The necessary prerequisite for learning how to study the Bible is of course the Bible itself. It was under K.H.Ting's leadership that, in the late seventies and early eighties, the Chinese Church began to print Bibles in government printing factories. Later in the eighties, with help from the United Bible Societies, the Amity Printing Company was established, and it has produced to date more than ten million Bibles for Christians in China. These figures show us the important position of the Bible in the heart of Bishop Ting.

In order to help people understand the Bible better and more deeply, theological training is needed. As the Principal of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, K.H. Ting has helped this institution to consolidate, expand, and improve both in terms of quality and quantity, especially in library resources, faculty development, and other facilities for students. He has done all of this in spite of the limited resources available. Furthermore, even in the early eighties, Chinese theologians and church leaders were already emphasizing the importance of indigenization, especially in the areas of theology and church music. This, I believe, is also

one of the reasons behind the publication of the *Nanjing Theological Review* at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. This helps us to see how Bishop Ting is trying to lay a strong foundation for the Chinese Church, based on good training and nurture for pastors and theologians with indigenization or contextualization in mind. In a very real sense, he is the builder of the modern Chinese Church.

Since he has given such a strong emphasis on the Bible, Bishop Ting also knows that we Christians should provide services for our communities. Just ten years ago, Bishop Ting helped to found the Amity Foundation, a voluntary organization providing for social services, education and development. One of the characteristics of the Amity Foundation is that it is not run by Christians alone. It involves people from the broader community as well. To be able to live and work with people outside the church is a very important part of the Christian mission. It is no coincidence that both the Amity Foundation and *The Chinese Theological Review* are celebrating their tenth anniversary together this year, because they are both the fruit of Bishop Ting's efforts in building up the Church in China. It is marvelous that he could at one time achieve so many things. From this, we can have a glimpse of his mind and ability.

In spite of his love for Chinese culture and his keen interest in indigenization, he is not a man with a provincial view. Just the opposite, Bishop Ting has a great concern for the history of the Church, ecumenism, the universal nature of the teachings of Jesus Christ, the international nature of the Church, and its public role. Throughout these years, he has spent much of his time responding to demands from all these areas of concern.

As a young man who studied and worked overseas, Bishop Ting learned the importance of international ecumenical relationships. He has therefore promoted international exchanges with the Chinese Church. Many churches throughout the world have renewed their fellowship with the Chinese Church over the last two decades. There have been thousands of exchange visits between the Chinese Church and churches in Hong Kong and overseas. A number of faculty members and theological students have been sent to study abroad in the last ten years. A new generation of church leadership is coming up under the careful guidance of its present leader.

The Amity Foundation is a good example of how the Chinese Church can work together with both the local and international community. Its voluntary workers come from many parts of the world including North America, Europe, Australia, Asia and, of course, China. On another level, the introduction of the English language *Chinese Theological Review* has brought Chinese theological concerns into a more universal dimension. It has established a platform for international dialogue on theological issues from the Chinese perspective. To bring Chinese theology into the world scene is a bold step, and yet it can contribute to understanding the worldwide Christian response to the Chinese theological mind. Chinese Christians understand that communication and exchanges of ideas and personnel are very important in helping one to grow. And this is true, no matter whether we are speaking of a person or an organization.

The China Christian Council is now a member of the World Council of Churches. Bishop Ting, far from being a leader with a provincial outlook, is very much an ecumenical and international leader with a special local concern for China. His philosophy is to embrace rather than to isolate. For this reason, he is also the architect of the present Chinese Church.

The above outline of the work achieved by the Chinese Church over the last two decades represents only a small portion of all that has actually taken place under the leadership of Bishop K.H. Ting. From this tip of the iceberg, we can feel the magnitude of the Church's greatness. All of us who have met him would agree that he is a man with a deep sense of integrity. He has a charming personality. His sincerity and honesty give him great credibility. His willingness to listen with patience and to respond in his soft and gentle voice makes people feel comfortable in his presence. In this way, they develop confidence in him. Yet he also has his own convictions and principles on which he stands firm. He tries to accommodate but not at the price of selling his soul. He has a charisma which commands respect from all who know him.

I have been privileged to know Bishop Ting for more than ten years. It is very appropriate to celebrate his eightieth birthday by reflecting on his work and life for the Church in China and for the worldwide church. He has set a good example for us who try to follow Christ and work for his Kingdom. May God continue to bless him and uphold him in his work.

Hong Kong

Rt. Rev. Peter K.K. Konng is Bishop of the (Anglican) Diocese of Hong Kong and Macau. One of his first acts upon assuming the Bishopric in 1981 was to visit Bishop Ting in Nanjing to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation between his church and the CCC. He also serves as an advisor on Hong Kong and Macau affairs to the Chinese government.

14. **Friends of Different Faiths** – Li Pingye

Before we met, I would never have believed we could be friends, because our experiences have been different and we believe in different things. K.H. Ting is a venerable Christian theist, while I am a middle-aged atheist. Yet the first time we met I had the feeling that we could not but be friends, because we shared the same values and outlook on life. We had so many interests in common which gave us much to talk about and we understood and identified with so many things about each other's beliefs and goals.

We first met in November 1989, at the YMCA on Xizang Road in Shanghai. I stayed there a week and saw the Bishop nearly every day. We would always chat. We talked most about Chinese Christianity and the difficulties it faces, its future prospects and the building up of the Church. In our contacts over the next few years, this remained our most frequent topic of conversation. I sensed that he felt very anxious about the situation of the Chinese Church. On the one hand, the Church itself was extremely weak, the clergy aging and grassroots organizations ailing. The number of Christians was growing rapidly, but because their educational level was very low, there were frequent problems with religious activities at the local level. On the other hand, some cadres working with religion at the grassroots level understood neither religion nor our government's policy and they transgressed the rights of religious believers. Whenever this subject came up, Bishop Ting would get very indignant. Later I noticed that whenever there was an opportunity to speak to government officials, especially at national meetings, he would always stand up to criticize transgressions against the rights of religious believers and to protect their right as citizens to believe. The fervor of his words frequently surprised me and even made me a bit anxious for him.

Because we are friends, I pay close attention to his published articles and speeches and those given on various occasions both at home and abroad. I hope I can understand his thinking and theological views, because there was a time in China when people believed that religion was incompatible with socialism. What I find strange is that when he expounds his theological ideas, his manner is very different from when we are chatting or when he debates politics at important government gatherings. His theology is extremely tolerant. It is his belief that Christianity is a spiritual culture which guides people's view of human life or their involvement in reality. Faith is a search for meaning, for the ultimate concern of human life. The essence of God is omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and love. This love is given to all humanity. Anything in human society which is true, good or beautiful is sacred because it is of God. This is in no way to confine truth to Christianity; the progress of human history reflects God's will for human salvation, thus all that moves humanity forward should encourage the active participation of Christians. Bishop Ting strongly affirms the socialist revolution and socialist construction undertaken by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. "Socialist construction is an arduous process, but it casts off oppression and moves toward the realization of a new principle of distribution, 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work.' It enables humankind to achieve a level of equality never seen before. The universalization of love is the goal of socialism. Socialism is love on a large scale, organized love, love which has taken shape as a social system.'" For Bishop Ting, the socialist enterprise is an expression of God's will, thus, the

broad masses of Christians should take an active part in this enterprise. It can be seen from his theological thinking that he is concerned with all sorts of questions facing the Chinese Church, and that while constructing a foundation for a Chinese theological system, he tirelessly seeks the unity of purpose and spirit between Christianity and socialism.

In my view, this suggested what seemed like an insoluble problem in Bishop Ting's thinking: he strongly affirms the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, giving it a heartfelt commendation; but he continues to severely criticize the words and actions of some government cadres involved in religious work. Does this imply that socialism and religion are compatible in terms of values, but find it difficult to avoid contradictions in practice? Does it mean that in a socialist country, due to the fact that the party in power is guided by an atheist philosophy, religion inevitably becomes a dissident force? Does it mean that at bottom there is no possibility for Communists and Christians to enter into sincere friendship, sharing weal and woe? And yet Bishop Ting and I are friends. That being the case, what is our friendship founded on? It was Bishop Ting who helped me out of this quandary. During a meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) last April (1994) in Beijing, he began speaking with me very earnestly about a speech given by the chairman of the South African Communist Party, the late Joe Slovo. Not long after, I saw his own translation of this speech in the journal Religion. The title was "The Right not to Believe and the Shared Values between Socialism and Religion." The passage in this speech which struck me and helped me out of my quandary was this:

> In general, it is my contention that there are no two ideologies which in their ethical content converge so closely together than Marxism and all that is best in the world's religions. It must also be conceded that there are no two ideologies in whose distorted image and practice such great damage has been done to the human condition. Both ideologies have produced martyrs in the cause of liberation and tyrants in the cause of oppression.

This led me to understand not only him, but also myself. The basis of our friendship lies not in total unity of faith or viewpoints, but more importantly, in a spiritual affinity, an attitude toward life, a reluctance to cheat either oneself or others, a thirst for truth, the pursuit of what is true, good and beautiful in this world, and unswerving opposition to injustice and evil. I am aware that I will not be able to realize my ideals in practice and there is no way I can be compared with Bishop Ting. But there is one thing I can attest to: we are both loyal to our respective faiths and we can also speak candidly; we have never tried to hide our views from each other. And, though our different standpoints cause us to disagree, this does not damage our friendship, because we can understand each other. Actually, those who have true faith should be most able to communicate with one another, because faith of whatever type is about transcending the self and transcending the pursuit of gain. It requires an unselfish and self-denying character which is indifferent to reputation and which aspires toward perfection. Communism too is a type of faith and since it is a faith which can be realized in the here and now, it requires dedication and struggle even more. Not only are self-sacrifice and transcendence needed, but indefatigable effort as well. Furthermore it requires great effort in uniting all those who can be united. Many people think that they are struggling for and tirelessly pursuing what they believe in; others, from the very beginning, understand the

illusory nature of this faith and realize that it is unattainable in the present; or they are simply not clear about what they believe in, and so take worldly prestige as their life's goal and devote themselves to its pursuit. This is the tragedy of history.

Bishop Ting often says that it would be unfortunate for China if everything but religion were handled well. He has also frequently observed that even if we make only a small step toward our goal, we should pursue it anyway. But this is precisely where I find myself lacking. I think the reason for this difference between us is that he is much clearer than I about his own historical task, and more importantly, he is filled with hope for the prospects of the struggle.

Bishop Ting once said to me that he was very much appreciative of Taoism. I too am fond of Taoism, but I feel that it is in fact a very difficult theory to realize. This is especially true for someone who lives in turbulent times, unable to control things and with no hope of retreat. It then becomes all the more difficult to speak of expunging all desire and care from one's mind and following nature as the Taoists do. For Bishop Ting, Taoism must remain an object of appreciation. His own destiny is closely bound to that of the Chinese Church, so much so that today, when people speak of the Chinese Church, they invariably think of Bishop Ting. The footprints of Bishop Ting can be seen along the way forward for the Chinese church, for his life has been lived for the Church in China. On the occasion of Bishop K.H. Ting's eightieth birthday, I wish him long life for the sake of the work of the Church in China.

Beijing

Dr Li Pingye received her Ph.D. in history from Huadong Normal University in Hunan, writing her dissertation on the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation period. She is associated with the United Front Work Department in Beijing, and is a member of the Chinese Association of Religious Studies. As she notes above, she met Bishop Ting in 1999 in connection with her work. and found that they share main intellectual interests.

"Inspirations from liberation Theology. Process Theology and Tedhard de Chardin." the Chinese Theological Review: 1986. p 70.

15. **A Life of Love, to God's Purpose** – Li Yading

I have studied and worked with Bishop Ting for over fifteen years. In our eyes, Bishop Ting is a deeply spiritual church leader who has high prestige and commands universal respect. He is a Christian scholar of great learning, a warm and kindly elder, a man who in many respects approaches perfection. His wisdom and far-sightedness, his manner, his unassuming and noble character, provide a model for younger people to follow. But there is much about him that we will never learn.

In the Spring of 1981, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary welcomed its first class of students since reopening its doors following the Cultural Revolution era. Bishop Ting was then 65, gray-haired but hale and hearty. Upon meeting him, the students were won over by his modest manner and soft melodic voice, and they could not help feeling respect for him. The Chinese Church was in a time of renewal and Bishop Ting placed great emphasis on the training of the younger generation. He spent a good deal of time with us, teaching by example and we benefited greatly from his presence. These days when we get together with former classmates and look back at those days, we say we had "the luck of the first-born", since we had the opportunity to spend so much time with him. Bishop Ting is a bishop filled with the love of Christ. In his lectures and sermons, he frequently encourages us by focusing on the subject of love. He sees love as the fundamental attribute of God, as the greatest truth and true essence of human life. He is, at the same time, a Bishop who puts love into practice. He loves students, he cares about their lives and growth as persons. He encourages us to be well-rounded; to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically and as part of a community. He supports the students in undertaking all sorts of activities on and off campus. He urges students to read and reflect more, to have high aspirations and vision. Though he is very busy, he used to arrange theological seminars to introduce students to the situation and problems of the Chinese Church as well as trends in the development of Christian theology worldwide. All these things have served to expand our horizons.

His open -heartedness and tolerance are remarkable. He is good at drawing all sorts of people together, including those whose views in matters of faith differ from, or are even opposed to, his own. By understanding and sympathizing with other people's weaknesses and never forcing his opinions on others, he puts mutual respect in matters of faith into practice. The faculty and student body at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary come from all over China, and individual's theological backgrounds differ. It would be difficult to avoid things in their shared religious life which seemed inappropriate to this one or that one. When such conflicts arise, Bishop Ting urges everyone to apply the principle of love in mutual tolerance and respect. If a student or faculty member feels hurt, he will personally express his care, sympathy and support. Many people have been comforted and encouraged by him in such circumstances, and so he is universally commended for this.

Bishop Ting shows loving care and concern for the growth of the younger generation. He is bold in making use of them and has entrusted them with the future of the Chinese Church. He loves to chat with younger people and he always listens to them with patience. For their part, they are willing to share with him whatever ideas or suggestions they have. Bishop Ting

never holds himself aloof or condescends. He puts himself on an equal footing with everyone else. Conversing with him gives one a sense of congeniality and trust. With him, there is never any sense of what people these days like to call the "generation gap". He understands young people and they trust him. In a relationship like this, there is no pretence or insincerity.

Bishop Ting possesses the foresight and wisdom of great Christian leaders. From the days in the early eighties when the Church was being restored, he began to ponder the question of training young people for the leadership of the Church. Often, both in public and private, he would express his great desire to put aside all other work in favor of concentrating on running the seminary, in order to train the next generation for the Chinese Church. From the early days he was aware of the need to discover people of talent and train them. He proposed sending batches of students overseas for advanced studies, a move which at that time required a certain amount of courage and insight. I remember when he put forward this proposal for the first time in 1986, and some local church leaders and government officials sent a joint letter strongly opposing the idea. Bishop Ting did not get angry, but argued according to the facts and in the end the plan was put into practice. Looking back on this incident now, everyone praises Bishop Ting for his vision and wisdom. Because of his personal interest, his care and effort, today there are many young people shouldering important responsibilities within the Church.

I still treasure a photograph the Bishop gave me right before I went overseas to study. On the back, in his own hand, is written "Love never ends". This is his favorite Bible verse. In my three years of study overseas, this photo and verse were with me, giving me untold encouragement and strength. When I felt exhausted from studying, I would think of Bishop Ting's kind face, and his deep eyes filled with expectation. For three years, his own never-ending love never left the students who, like me, traveled in foreign countries pursuing their studies. Every letter brought his earnest instructions and hopes, encouraging us to treasure this hard-won opportunity and to make an effort to learn from other's strong points in order to enrich ourselves spiritually and intellectually, while teaching us how to live our lives. In the clash and blending of cultures East and West, we gradually matured.

Those who know Bishop Ting know that he is good at bringing people together and understanding what is in their hearts. This is no tactic, nor some art of leadership, but is entirely an expression of the love which is in his own heart. Love is the important thing to] understand about his character. He loves and respects those from different denominational backgrounds. He has always advocated that, in matters of faith, those in the majority must not compel those in the minority, but should rather show concern for them. There have been people who misunderstood this and opposed him, some even wrote letters berating him. He has never looked at things in the usual way, but calls such people brother and sister, patiently inquiring after their situation and helping them solve their problems. Because of this, many people have turned around and asked his forgiveness, thanking him and going on to tell him all their troubles.

On the issue of home gatherings in the Chinese Church, Bishop Ting has been misunderstood, castigated and criticized by many people overseas who either do not know the true facts or who have other axes to grind. Some of these people even saw him as "the mastermind behind the

banning and persecution of home meeting points." These people have no idea of how much effort Bishop Ting has exerted or how he has argued, publicly and privately, for the reasonableness and legal rights of these home gatherings. He has never appealed or argued on his own behalf, giving no thought to what damage might be done to his own reputation. His attackers perhaps are precisely those who benefit most greatly from his kindness they are the ones who actually benefit from his protection. I feel ashamed for those who demonstrated against Bishop Ting at Fuller Seminary a few years ago, because they really do not understand what he has been doing. Their actions were based solely on bias and rumor. I think that if one day they had the opportunity to sit and talk face to face with Bishop Ting, they would certainly feel regret for it.

Bishop Ting has worked his heart out, day and night, for the renewal and rebuilding of the Church in China and has been under enormous pressure, much greater than most people imagine. He takes the Father's work and God's family as his own, assuming a broad and long-term view, revealing great foresight, firm and dauntless persistence. He holds the whole Chinese Church and thousands of Christian brothers and sisters in his heart. He understands the Chinese Church, which he loves and has struggled for over half a lifetime, and knows profoundly what the Church should do at any given time so it can be well-run. All along the road, at the crucial moments, he brings his special spiritual discernment to bear, seizing the opportune moment to put forward new thinking and proposals, holding firm the direction of the Chinese Church. He has appropriately described the "Three-Self' organization as a scaffolding for building up the Chinese Church. One day when this edifice is finished, the scaffolding will no longer be needed. In pace with developments in the church internationally and at home, he has developed an accurate grasp of the pulse of the Chinese Church and through his unusual foresight and wisdom he has proposed re-ordering all aspects of relations between the Church and the government and between the TSPM and the CCC, changing the function of Three-Self so that it centers on running the church well. This is because a well-run church will be beneficial to the modernization of China and to the peace and stability of society. For only a well-run church will be strong enough to repulse attacks from all sides. Much of Bishop Ting's prophetic thought is frequently misunderstood or not accepted, but time and practice will prove him right.

Time ages us and the laws of nature have no mercy. Fifteen years have gone by since we met and Bishop Ting is now eighty. Reaching eighty is assuredly an occasion for joy and congratulations, but if time could be turned back – I don't dare be too extravagant in my wishes - then I wish Bishop Ting were 65 this year.

In closing, I would like to offer these words to Bishop Ting, words he used in speaking of someone else:

"Because you're a person of love, because your actions spring from love, because your voice expresses love, because what you say is love, we thank you! And I am sure we will have many more occasions to thank you in the future!"
Nanjing

Mr. Li Yading is Associate Dean of Studies of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. He graduated from the Seminary, in the first class to enter when it reopened in 1981. tie has

16. **A Man with the Church at Heart** – Luo Guanzong

I first met K.H. Ting in the Fudan University Student Christian Fellowship when he was a Student Secretary of the Shanghai YMCA. After graduation in 1943, I too joined the Shanghai Y as a Secretary and K.H. was my mentor. He was only a few years older than myself but we all had great respect for him. At first I called him Teacher Ting. Later when I got to know him better, I called him K.H., as did all the other colleagues at the Y.

K.H. is most congenial and cordial to people, and he gave a great deal of spiritual support to me and other colleagues in the Y. He is also a very conscientious scholar. In those days he was already well versed in theology and his intellectual interests were broad and deep. When we were faced with matters which we could not think how to handle and asked his advice, we always received help and inspiration. He is very democratic and would discuss the work with us and ask our opinions. He would give his own opinions as well, but he would not press us to accept them.

In those days K.H. was also the volunteer pastor for the foreigners in Shanghai who worshipped at Community Church. In 1943 he helped organize a student church which met for worship in Community Church every Sunday afternoon. T.Z. Koo, the well known church leader, had started the student church, and Xu Huaigi (a Professor at the Central Anglican Seminary) also served as pastor. K.H. asked several seminarians Peter Tsai (Cai Wenhao) and Zheng Jianye - as well as other student workers, both men and women, to take turns preaching and leading fellowship activities. They gained experience in this way and also, according to the mandate of the SCM, joined together in leading students to know Christ, to know the truth and the age, and to dedicate themselves to the training of talented people of all kinds for the Church. K.H. had many friends among Christian students and many people benefited from his wisdom. He was the most admired of the SCM leaders. Among his colleagues at the YW and YMCAs, he was universally acknowledged to be the most promising Youth Secretary; Christian leaders in Shanghai and the General Secretary of the Shanghai YMCA, Lu Ganchen and Yang Huaisheng were all very fond of him. They appreciated this young man's spiritual cultivation, his intelligence, his abilities and the way he handled things. And he was not yet thirty.

At the Spring Festival in 1944, Li Ming, a colleague at the YMCA, and I went to K.H.'s home to pay a New Year's visit. As we entered, we saw K.H. studying, his wife Siu May writing something and his mother reading the Bible. It was very quiet in the room. Except for a bit of candy and fruit, there was nothing to indicate it was a holiday. This left us with an impression we will never forget. We felt very deeply that this was truly a scholarly home, which was filled with the Lord's grace.

After the war, in the midst of the high tide of our people's resistance to tyranny and the struggle for democracy, Christian leaders like Y.T. Wu, Tu Yuqing (General Secretary of the National Association of YMCAs) Lu Ganchen (General Secretary of the Shanghai YMCA), Chen Jisheng (Board Member of Shanghai YMCA), Shen Tilan (Principal of Medhurst Middle School), Sun Ruiying (General Manager of the Xinhua Bank), Wang Guoxiu (Professor at St John's University

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studied at Garrett Theological Seminary and received his M.A. from Fuller Seminary in the U.S

and President of the National Association of YWCAs), organized the "Christian Study Group on Democracy". They frequently invited leaders of the democratic movement to address Christians groups in order to help them understand the movement. K.H. served as Executive Secretary and he delegated a lot of concrete tasks to several of us young Y secretaries. In 1946, K.H. went to Toronto to serve as Secretary of the Canadian Student Christian Movement and he recommended that I take over as Executive Secretary.

Later, K.H. studied theology in the United States and then worked in Geneva and other places for a time.

After Liberation, in September, 1950, when the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement was established under the leadership of Y.T. Wu, K.H. was still overseas. In late 1951, the whole Ting family returned to Shanghai where he first served as General Secretary of the Chinese Christian Literature Council. In 1952 when eleven denominational seminaries and Bible schools joined together to form Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, its board of directors asked K.H. Ting to serve as Principal of the new institution. He was only 37 at the time. Looking back, the fact that he was able to unite theology professors from so many different denominations around the principle of mutual respect in matters of faith and effectively run an inter-denominational seminary training a large number of students in theology was an amazing accomplishment. Many of these seminary graduates are now leaders of the Church at both national and local levels.

K.H.'s spiritual insights are a frequent source of new light for us. Recently a visiting church leader from overseas spoke of the unforgettable inspiration he received on reading Bishop Ting's book *flow to Study the Bible.*

After the Cultural Revolution, Bishop Ting succeeded Y.T. Wu as Chairperson of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee and concurrently President of the newly organized China Christian Council. He has led us to persevere in our independent stand and to maintain the Three-Self principle. Further, he has directed our efforts toward making the church not only self-run but well run, not only self-supported but well supported and not only self-propagating but propagating the gospel well.

During this period, Bishop Ting's important speeches and sermons have brilliantly summarized the great significance of Three-Self and its relationship to building up the Church. Moreover, they have helped to shape the new situation and put forth new demands. Outstanding among his writings are: "Retrospect and Prospect," "Another Look at Three-Self" and his sermon "The Holy Spirit and Us." These writings all arise out of the experience of building up a Chinese Church in our socialist nation and they put forward the guiding thought of upholding the three-self patriotic principle and building up the church.

In October 1980, in "Retrospect and Prospect" (his opening address to the Third National Chinese Christian Conference), Bishop Ting affirmed the great achievements of Three-Self: making Chinese Christians into patriotic Christians, transforming the foreign image of Chinese Christianity, and changing the attitude of the masses of the people toward Christianity. At the same time, he pointed out that the vision which the Three-Self Patriotic Movement had since its inception was the establishment in China of a Church of Christ,

well-run, well supported and well-propagated. We should respond to the revelation given us by God in the Bible, absorb the fine traditions and teachings of church history and allow the Spirit to lead us along a path appropriate to China, one which has not been traveled before. To this end, Bishop Ting proposed the establishment of the China Christian Council, separate from Three-Self, a church affairs body that would serve the church and Christians according to the three-self principle.

At the Enlarged Plenary of the Joint Standing Committees of the CCC and TSPM in September 1982, Bishop Ting delivered his address, "Another Look at Three-Self," in which he expressed his belief that the Chinese Church needed to realize three-self for itself, in order to bear good witness in China, but also for the Church ecumenical.

> "The catholicity of the Church includes, to be sure, the extensiveness of the church in geographical terms. But this is, after all, only a question of expanse and does not exhaust the meaning of catholicity. Catholicity in all its fullness should include the question of depth, which is all the more essential, i.e., how the Church takes root in all cultures, gives off a brilliance which stirs the hearts of all people and thereby greatly enriches the treasury of the universal Church. Only in this way will worship before the throne of God be like a hundred flowers blossoming and like multiple colors showing forth, enhancing the joy shared by God and men alike."'

Without independence, without the special contributions of churches from all nations, we could not have a Church of genuine catholicity.

In August 1984, Bishop Ting delivered his sermon, "The Holy Spirit and Us," at the service of thanksgiving for the thirty-fifth anniversary of Three-Self. In this very important sermon, Bishop Ting spoke of two events. The first was the Jerusalem Council recorded in the Fifteenth Chapter of the Book of Acts. The discussion at that meeting concerned whether Gentiles, on hearing the gospel and accepting Christ as Lord, must at the same time accept circumcision and other laws and customs of the Jews. The Council decided that in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, the confines of Jewish law should be broken. From then on, Christianity broke away from Judaism, and Gentile Christians in every place could, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, run their own churches. They were no longer subordinate to the church in Jerusalem. In the New Testament era, churches appeared in many places. They were all under the care and guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were all local and all bore the particular color and character of their own place. They were in a mutually supportive relationship with the church in Jerusalem, but they were also its equals; there was no subordinate, or mother-daughter, relationship.

The second event he mentioned in this sermon was drawn from the second and third chapters of Revelation, in which the Spirit writes letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor. Each of these churches had its own particular context, its own strengths and weaknesses. Each had received Christ in its own way. The Holy Spirit did not ask the seven churches to conform to one pattern, the message the Spirit wrote to each Church was different, but the closing words of each letter were the same: "Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches." We can see that the Spirit wanted the churches to share

what they had received from Christ, so that through sharing, their grace might be ever greater.

It has been said that the term "three-self' cannot be found in the Bible. In this sermon, Bishop Ting shows us that the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 was meant to solve this issue of "three-self." The relationships among the seven churches of Revelation put into practice exactly this three-self principle. This gives us new light on three-self, allowing us to see its Biblical basis and spiritual significance.

In summing up the foundations of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement, in integrating our experience of building up the church, Bishop Ting has advocated "establishing the church well on the basis of the three-self principle."

The simplest summary of what is termed "running the church well" is this: if we want to gain the affection of people in general, and the affection of Christian believers, we must first gain God's affection.

As I understand him, the main elements contained in Bishop Ting's concept of running the church well, according to the three-self patriotic principle, are as follows:

The Church should be independent. It is no longer an appendage of foreign mission boards, nor is it controlled by foreign churches. It no longer takes European or American churches as its standard. It maintains the principle of self-administration, self-support and self-propagation. It should walk together with the Chinese people, put down roots in Chinese culture, shape a Chinese Church selfhood. Only then can it make its contribution to the Church Universal. It maintains that church and evangelization work in China are the sovereign right and responsibility of the Chinese Church. Independence is not isolation. It develops mutually enriching international ties with foreign churches and Christians who respect our three-self principle. But it absolutely opposes all anti-China forces and their efforts at infiltration which make use of Christianity to oppose our socialist nation, to attack our Three-Self Patriotic Movement, to arbitrarily split or control our Church. In the period of reform and openness, while maintaining its self-support principle, our Church can engage in beneficial sharing on a small scale without conditions with churches overseas. Bishop Ting has always counseled colleagues not to approach churches overseas with hands outstretched, asking for money; and to absolutely oppose demands for interference and control by foreign churches made under the guise of donations. He calls this a type of "neo-colonialist missionary movement".

The members of this Church should develop a sense of national dignity, they should love their socialist nation and unite with their compatriots in the common task of working for the establishment of socialist material and spiritual civilization and contribute to the enrichment and prosperity of the nation and the stability of society. In the church they must uphold the fruits of three-self, and with one heart and mind make the Church well-run, well-supported and well-propagated. They should follow the "Church Order for Trial Use" to develop democracy and run the church well.

The Church should strive to safeguard the believers' right to freedom of religious belief and the legitimate rights of the Church. While Bishop Ting in general affirms our Chinese religious policy, at the same time he has always been in touch with relevant government departments. He has criticized local cadres when they have transgressed the believers' right of religious freedom, and has called for the lawful rights of the Church to be restored in cases where such cadres have interfered in internal church matters.

The Church should be one which effectively carries out a ministry based on the teachings of the Bible and church traditions. It must meet the religious need of believers, and strive to raise the standard of their belief and awareness in order to combat all sorts of heresy and questionable practices, as well as resisting those who seek to make use of Christianity for illegal purposes.

The members of this Church should love one another and be united. They should with one accord uphold the fruits which the Chinese Church has gained on the path of unity. In all matters of faith, they should maintain the principle of mutual respect and not seek to make faith uniform.

The Church should be one suited to the image of the nation, bearing beautiful witness to the gospel.

Bishop Ting has written a great deal on building up the Church, and the above represents only a few points which I have learned from him. It is my belief that as the situation develops, there will be new understanding and new fruits in building up the Church according to the three-self patriotic principle.

Looking back over the more than fifty years that I have known Bishop Ting, I feel deeply that here is a man who, from start to finish, has been concerned with building up the Church. He has led many young people to dedicate themselves to the gospel and has brought them up spiritually and intellectually. Especially after the establishment of socialist new China, he deepened his knowledge of three-self and the building up of the Church: he saw that this movement, a Chinese patriotic movement, was essential to building up the Chinese Church; he also saw its Biblical basis and spiritual significance. His genuine knowledge and deep insight have enabled us to deepen our understanding of the relationship between three-self and building up the Church. He has clarified for us the belief that the Three-Self Patriotic Movement has always been under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and that it represents a new and living path opened for the Chinese Church by God. True, because of our own weaknesses, we have made mistakes in the course of this great movement. But the Lord has not abandoned us and has sent his loyal servant to lead us forward, step by step, with full confidence in the future.

Shanghai

Mr. Luo Guanzong is Vice-Chairman and Secretary General of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of the Protestant Churches of China Mr. Luo is a contemporary of Bishop Ting and they have worked together since the late 1930s.

17. The Student Christian Movement and the Chinese Church – Philip Potter

It is difficult to think of K. H. Ting as being 80 years old, because his face, his speaking and his writing radiate an aura of continuing maturity. This is what struck me 47 years ago when we first met at a Conference of the World Student Christian Federation on "The Growing Church" at "Woudschoten", Zeist, Holland, just before the inaugural Assembly of the World Council of Churches in August 1948. This was the first conference which K. H. organized after joining the staff of the WSCF, with special responsibility for the evangelistic and missionary calling of the WSCF. This was also my initiation into being for the next two years Overseas Secretary of the British SCM, which included concern for mission, international affairs, foreign students and student relief. The emphasis of the meeting was on the church in each place, as part of the universal Church, being the base of the mission of Christ. Further, the accent was on "growing", as Paul wrote about it: "Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love" (Eph. 4:15-16).

This meeting was the beginning of a long friendship which has not depended on meeting or writing each other frequently, but rather on a deep mutual commitment to the Church which is rooted in Christ and in the soil of each land - a Church which is the base of mission out of its selfhood in Christ expressed in each culture. This was something K. H. and I had learnt from the SCM - he in China and I in Jamaica. Indeed, two years before, our Jamaica SCM had the visit of T. Koo, who was a delightful herald of the Gospel all over the world for over twenty years as officer and staff member of the Federation. He came in his Chinese guru gown and with his flute, and he introduced us to the mysteries of Tao in relation to the Word, and also to the old Chinese saying "Under heaven, one family."

The thesis I want to develop in this commemorative paper is that the Student Christian Movement, as part of the World Student Christian Federation, has been a significant school for enabling students to devote themselves in every land to a Church which is self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. In the paper, I want to write specifically and in a necessarily selective way about the Chinese SCM and about the Chinese church. My only qualification for doing so is that for the past three years I have been doing much reading and research into the history of the WSCF, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

When John R. Mott pioneered the formation of the WSCF in Vadstena Castle, Sweden, on 17 August, 1895, he was aware that the six persons present represented young Movements in the US, Great Britain, Scandinavia and Germany. But he already had in mind that Asian movements should be part of the Federation. His friend and colleague, Luther Wishard, had spent time in Japan, and in China where in 1893-4 he started six Student YMCAs and one city YMCA. The rallying cry of this

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All three writings cited appeared in *The Chinese Theological Review 1985:* "Retrospect and Prospect". pp. *I-17:* "Another Look at Three-Self". pp. *18-33.* and "The Holy Spirit and Us". pp. *178-184.*
The Chinese Theological Review: 1985. p. 28.

new Federation was "the evangelization of the world in this generation". But its permanent motto was Christ's prayer *"Ut omnes untint sint"*, "that they all may be one".

After the Vadstena meeting Mott and his wife went on a world tour to establish SCMs. They arrived in China later in June 1896. Both Mott and his biographers had little to say about the two opium wars waged against China by Britain and France, and the way in which Japan defeated China in 1894-5. All that is said is that these acts produced greater openness to science and technology and modernization. Mott was, of course, aware of the Chinese hostility to Christianity which had certain privileges linked to the unequal treaties which Western powers, including the USA, and Japan had imposed since 1844. Mott had been preceded in 1895 by his friend and colleague, D. Willard Lyon, as the first full-time Student YMCA secretary. During their tour, Mrs. Mott wrote that "self-supporting churches are springing up, ... every Chinese who could possibly help has been pressed into service".' By the end of their visit, packed with many meetings and speeches, Mott convoked a delegated body of eight Chinese and twenty-four foreign representatives from twenty-two Student YMCAs. A strong national committee was appointed of seven Chinese and seven foreigners, with Lyon as national secretary.

Mott visited China again in 1901, after the Boxer rebellion. He had started a series of WSCF world conferences, the first being at Northfield, USA, in 1897. Ting Ming Uong was a delegate to this meeting, and on his return toured all the Student YMCAs in China "which resulted in great. good". A national convention was held in Nanjing with 170 delegates, of which 131 were Chinese, and Ting Ming Uong was vice-president. Mott described it as “the most representative and influential gathering of Chinese Christian workers ever held. It united the Christian forces of China as no other occasion could possibly have done". The great hope was to develop an intensive program of Bible study, literature and evangelistic work "to lay siege to the literati". In 1896 Mott had described the "literati" as "the Gibralter of the student world". This time he used the metaphor of "the Jericho of the student world", since there were signs that "the walls will some day fall”. 2 By 1902, China was represented on the General Commute of the Federation in the person of Professor W. C. Chen.

Of striking significance is the report of the Student YMCA in China for 1904-5, nearly ten years after the formation of the WSCF. It records many new associations, conversions, especially in North China, vocations to the ministry, and students financially supporting various social efforts among the poor. The report goes on to say: "The student associations are essentially self-governing, self-supporting, self-perpetuating and self-propagating." While in 1895 there were four student associations in China, in 1905 there were thirty-nine, with a membership of nearly 2000, all "United in a strong brotherhood".[3]

In March 1907, Mott paid a third visit to what was being called “a new China". In twenty-five crowded days he concentrated on eight great centers; Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Suzhou, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Beijing, and Tianjin. He met many public figures, spoke on "The Aims of Education", addressed a crowd of students at Nanjing University, interpreted by Cheng-ting Wang, who later became the first Chinese Vice-chairperson of the WSCF. He attended and spoke at a YMCA Conference in Shanghai which was conducted in Chinese. On his way to Japan, Mott wrote to his friends: "The Association Movement has become indigenous in China. I am fully

persuaded that were it to die out in America and Europe, it exists with such vitality and propagating power in China that it would ultimately spread from that country back to the West."

The big Federation event of 1907 was the Conference and General Committee meeting in Tokyo in April. This was the first international conference ever held in Asia. Although it was planned since 1902, it took place at a time when Japan was basking in its victory over Russia 1903-5, and its military protectorate of Korea. In that age of imperialism, messages of greetings were received from President Theodore Roosevelt, and the kings of Britain and Norway. A Japanese statesman, Count Okuma, told the conference that if Christianity were dominate the thought and life of the Orient, it would be indispensable "that it should be done by the might of the Japanese people." Chen-ting Wang, as a convinced Christian and an adroit politician, put the matter in a quite different way:

> The students of the Orient are responsible for the world's evangelization because our Lord was an Oriental. This may sound a little strange in the ears of Occidentals; but to Orientals a statement like this carries much weight. That Orientals have their own way of thinking and acting is their singular characteristic. But Christianity is eyed with grave suspicion that it is a foreign or Western religion. Much hindrance to the propagation of the blessed Gospel is the outcome of this prejudice. The Oriental students are, therefore, responsible for the exposition of their Lord's teachings in the Oriental way, for he was in his teachings, environment, customs and expressions an Orientals

There were some significant facts in relation to this conference. There gathered together 627 delegates, more than 500 of whom were Asians, and twenty-five countries were represented. This was the first event that women participated with men and spoke at a Federation Conference, and were represented proportionally in the General Committee meeting. In Tokyo at that time there were over 15,000 Chinese students. There were evangelistic meetings among them, as among the Japanese. The Conference was countered by a peaceful World Student Anti-Christian Federation made up of "the Great Japan Buddhist Conference" and a "Shinto Priests' Conference." They both brought greetings to the WSCF conference. All in all, this was the first that Asian Christian voices, both of women and men, were heard with confidence in terms of their selfhood as authentic members and witnesses of the Church of Christ.

Another occasion when a Chinese student leader's voice was heard with power and consternation was at the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. Cheng Cheng-yi was the youngest of the seventeen non-Western delegates among the more than a thousand present at Edinburgh. John R. Mott, who chaired the meeting, encouraged Cheng to speak on "The Church in the Mission Field." He said:

> "The problem of China is the independence of the Chinese Church. I use the word meaning nothing more than Church support and Church management. Really there is no independence of the Church. All Churches of Christ are dependent first upon God and then upon each other. Some of our friends are a little afraid of the Chinese Church movement. They are afraid of the inability of the Chinese Christians to accomplish that which they have started, and they are also afraid that the Christian Church in China is still too young, and weak, and feeble, and cannot undertake such a great responsibility. Speaking frankly, we are both weak and poor,

> but experience shows that out of deep poverty Christian liberality may abound, and again the feebleness of the Chinese Christians will not be a hindrance in the way. It is the principle of mission work and the ground plan of the future Chinese Church. Every Christian in Christ should be a soul winner, and every Christian is a part of the Church. References have already been made to the recent spiritual awakening among the Chinese students of Peking, of which I was an eyewitness. It will be our interest to watch with great expectation the Chinese Christian students at home and abroad, and it is in them we hope for the future of the Chinese Church. I hope with all sincerity that this Conference will recommend and take measures towards helping the Chinese Church movement. May the will of God be done in this matter."

It is curious to realize that most hearers of this short intervention were deeply hurt and disturbed. But the Continuing Committee did take action, largely through the initiative of Mott himself. National Christian Councils were soon set up in Asia and elsewhere.

Another WSCF conference at which a Chinese SCM leader made a clear and strong contribution was in Constantinople in 1911. This was the first time that the Federation was meeting in an Eastern Orthodox setting. Cheng-ting Wang was elected Vice-Chairperson at the General Committee the first Chinese to have this position. He spoke on "Students and the Missionary Problem of China".

C.T. Wang raised the vexed question that the missionary problem seemed always to be discussed from the standpoint of the mission sending West. He was going to speak from a Chinese position - because for the Chinese student, whether Christian or non-Christian, there was a problem. The difference between the two was that "whereas the Christians believe that in spite of very serious dangers to which our nation is exposed in consequence of the presence of missionaries, yet their very presence is a blessing to the people; the non-Christians, however, can only believe that the missionaries are both a menace and a source of trouble to China. This apprehension ... is fully justified in view of the bloody riots of the past, the precarious nature of extra-territorial rights enjoyed by the missionaries at the present time, and the source of religious animosity that might be stirred up in the future." Wang mentioned three causes for the violent attitude to missionaries: misunderstanding of their motives; racial prejudice and resentment of foreign interference; and religious antagonism. "Missionaries come without invitation and in ignorance of China's civilization. Their racist and haughty comportment provokes strong reactions, but they are protected by extraterritorial rights, and at times Chinese land can be possibly grabbed. The people's pride is offended when their religion is considered inferior."

Wang went on to consider three solutions to the overall problem. The first is suggested by Confucian students. It is to reconstruct Confucianism as a system of ethics, with some help from Western science, philosophy and religion, recognizing that "to live is to learn how to live well". Chinese Christians provide the second solution. "It is to substitute native workers in place of missionaries. That they appreciate the teachings of Jesus and wish them known throughout the length and breadth of the land goes without saying. Equally clear is their firm belief that if China is ever to be evangelized it must be done by Chinese people themselves. To preach Christianity is to wage war upon selfishness, covetousness, and all evils,

Persecutions are inevitable ... But when a Chinese Christian falls, there he dies a martyr for the Cause. There is no international complication, no indemnity, no loss of territory. The sooner the missionaries are dispensed with the better off will it be for China..." The third solution is cooperation. "It is the application of the true principle of evangelization", over against proselytization. "The work of the missionaries is to present the great principles as revealed in Christ, leaving to the Chinese themselves to apply these principles in their lives. The missionaries have no right to impose any creed, dogma, or form of worship or Church government for the Chinese to follow and live by." Cooperation also means that 'the active work of evangelization, such as preaching, organization of the Churches, and general administration, should be left with the natives."

Wang asserted that the second solution was ultimately the real and only one, "because in the long history of evangelization has there been ever a nation that was not evangelized by the efforts of its people?" However, he knew this solution was not expedient for the present. The only alternative was "sincere, sympathetic and active cooperation". That was precisely what the WSCF and its meetings stood for and promoted. "Here we meet exchange views, make acquaintances, and broaden our sympathies and stimulate our cooperation."

1911 was the year of radical change in China from being the most ancient Empire in the world to being a republic. This happened while the foreign powers continued to exercise extraterritorial rights and economic and military power. The country itself was divided and ruled by warlords. World War I exacerbated matters. A person like C. T. Wang moved from being a YMCA leader to various political positions. In January 1913 Mott and J. R. Oldham (one of the pioneering SCM leaders and organizing secretary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference) arrived in China as a follow up of that Conference. Mott had an audience with the tough, wily President Yuan Shih-kai who remarked, after listening to him: "Mr. Mott, I have listened earnestly. Confucius teaches us the truth, but you have been talking about a personality who enables men to obey the truth." Mott and Sherwood Eddy certainly addressed large audiences. But when the party met with the Chinese Church leaders, there was a clear resolution that "the Chinese Church, and not the foreign organization, is the permanent factor in the evangelization of China". Self-government, self-support, and self-propagation were stressed and church union was encouraged. The conference spoke of "The Christian Church in China". Mott, who had always encouraged Chinese SCM leaders who became church leaders, was riding high in the esteem of the Chinese. Indeed, his friend, President Woodrow Wilson, tried hard to persuade him to become U.S. Ambassador to China. But Mott knew well that his mission was to be an ambassador for Christ. "

During what was described as the European civil war (1914-1918), China contributed over 100,000 laborers who worked in France with the allies against Germany. Five hundred forty-three were lost at sea, and nearly 2000 died in the battle fields of France and Flanders. This was the first time that China was involved in a global conflict. China hoped by this act of support to negotiate favorable terms with the occupying powers in China. When the Versailles peace talks took place in 1919, China sent a delegation of sixty-two, which included such Christian leaders as Cheng-ting Wang. The WSCF Officers' Meeting met in

Paris in April 1919, and Wang participated fully as Vice Chairperson. Ruth Rouse, who greatly respected and admired Wang, wrote in her history of the first thirty years of the WSCF that many delegates to the Peace Conference were deeply impressed by the fact that Wang, a leading member of the delegation from a non-Christian country, was present at church every Sunday. She wrote: "He brought a breath of inspiration from the East, most invigorating to the somewhat war-worn and jaded secretaries." But while she writes much about the harsh terms on the defeated Germany, she is quite silent about the disastrous betrayal of China. Nor is there reference to it in Hopkins' very full biography of Mott. Indeed, the Chinese students' May 4, 1919, protest all over China is only touched on in relation to the WSCF Conference and General Committee meeting in 1922. But, as the American historian, Jonathan D. Spence, remarks in his *Search for Modern China:* "A new generation of Chinese activists was henceforth to direct probing questions at the nature of Western moral values, disgusted as much by the bloodshed of which Western nations had proved capable as by their duplicity." [10]

How did the Chinese SCM respond to this tragedy and the attacks against Christians? First, they petitioned the first post-war General Committee meeting of the Federation in 1920 to have its next meeting, as well as a conference, in Beijing. At the meeting of the Executive Committee in 1921, T. Z. Koo was present to give a detailed account of the situation in China and the reasons for meeting in Beijing. He said:

> China is at the crossing of the roads. Materially, China may be said to be undeveloped; therefore, to develop along a purely materialistic line is to develop along the line of least resistance. The European War and the decisions of the Peace Conference only confirmed in the minds of many of our young men that, after all, might is right. During the next eight to ten years the direction of Chinese development will have gained such momentum that it would be difficult for anyone to affect its onward rush, and therefore if we wish to give to the development of China the Christian impress we must waste no time in putting in a great effort... by bringing this international conference to China next year we would produce a profound impression upon the minds of the entire nation which will bear its fruit for the Kingdom of God in many years to come.
>
> Another most grave reason for the meeting of the Federation next spring in China is that the right of the Federation to the student field in China in being challenged. Nothing will strengthen our position more than to give this practical demonstration that the Federation is occupying this field adequately.
>
> Another reason for the holding of the conference next spring in China is that in May, 1922, the first national gathering of all the Chinese Churches is to be held. The topic for this convention is, The Chinese Church, ... In this convention important decisions of policy will be made among which the future of the Student Movement in China will also be affected.

The Committee agreed. The program for the Conference of the WSCF was left to the Chinese movement, which was made up of the student YMCA and the Student YWCA. It must be noted that this was the first time that a Federation Conference was being organized by the SCM of the host country.

The Federation Conference was held in Tsing Hua College on April 4-9, 1922. The motto which dominated the hall in Chinese and English was an old Confucian saying: *"Tian xia yi* jia", "Below Heaven, one Family". This was clearly seen in relation to the Federation motto, *"Ut omnes unum sint"* - "That they all may be one". In spite of the difficulties of finance and travel, this was a very international gathering with persons from thirty-two nations.

The dominating concern of the Conference and of the General Committee both before and after the conference was that the Federation had to put some reality into one of the two lines of activity which the 1920 General Committee had adopted - "To lead students to realize that the principles of Jesus Christ should rule in international relationships, and to endeavor by so doing to draw the nations together". The conference was divided into six open Forums on the following subjects:

I. Christianity and International and Inter-Racial Problems
II. Christianity and Social and Industrial Reconstruction
III. How to present the Christian Message to Students of Today
IV. Christianizing School Life
V. The Students' Responsibility in the Work of the Church
VI. How to make the Federation a more Vital Force in World Reconstruction.

These subjects were chosen by the Chinese preparatory committee. As they were open Forums there was no constraint on participants to attend any particular one. In fact, most were interested in the first and second forums. These were subjects whose hour had come.

This open discussion and debate must be seen in the context of what was happening around the conference. In fact, the strong student movement which had mobilized the opposition to the Versailles treaty decision about Shandong had also organized powerful Student Unions. They strongly objected to the Student Christian Conference, and formed an Anti-Student Christian Movement. One of the things which incensed these students was a missionary atlas entitled "The Christian Conquest of China", in which the maps had assigned China to various foreign missionary agencies. They chanted slogans against the Christians and many critical articles were written. This Anti-Christian student movement accused the Federation of being opposed to science and free thinking. Of course, among the addresses at the conference were "Science and Christianity", "Jesus Christ and Culture", "The Relation of Christianity to Pure Philosophy", and "Christianity and Modern Industrial Conflict". What in fact happened was that the attacks on the conference drew a great deal of public attention. It is also remarkable that there were no ugly scenes or attempts to disrupt the meeting.

The Beijing meeting will always be remembered in Federation history as being the first occasion when it wrestled with international relationships from a Christian perspective. This was greatly helped by the Chinese context in which the meeting was held, by the program so tense world situation and relationships between countries represented by the participants.
Following the WSCF Conference and General Committee, there was the National Christian Conference meeting in May in Shanghai on the theme, "The Chinese Church". Cheng Cheng-yi, who had spoken passionately on this subject at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in

1910, chaired the meeting. Six hundred and sixty-four Chinese delegates and 486 missionaries represented nearly 400,000 Protestant Christians. The outcome of this Chinese initiative was the formation of the National Christian Council as a first step towards the Chinese Church.

At the General Committee meeting of the WSCF in 1924, representatives of SCMS from countries around the Pacific discussed the problems peculiar to that vast area. There was a proposal to hold a Pacific Area St[u]dent Conference in 1927. The Chinese SCM, with T. Z. Koo as the driving force, agreed to prepare the meeting. Its purpose would be "to consider international, inter-racial and economic questions from a Christian point of view". Studies were made, and various countries visited. All the preparatory material was printed in Shanghai where the meeting would be held. But civil war broke out and reached Shanghai. The meeting had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, the work done by the Chinese SCM, which had its repercussions on the SCMs and the Churches in the region, finally bore fruit in a Federation conference which took place in California in 1936.

This meeting must be seen in the context of the deep trials which China had been undergoing - civil wars, Japan's attacks on Manchuria in 1931, and its steady encroachment on Chinese territory. The discussions in 1936 led to the prophetic warning: "Viewing developments in the Pacific basin, we could not help feeling that some volcanic eruption is not far off. There are at least two areas of conflict which may lead to war. First, the area of conflicting interests, political and economic; secondly, the area of conflicting ideologies such as those of capitalism and communism. The promotion of international understanding as a preventive for war is a most important concern of Christian Students." 11

The following year China was invaded by Japan. The SCM, under the dedicated, wise and competent leadership of Kiang Wen-han, who was also Vice-Chairperson of the Federation for many years, played a very significant role of accompanying the thousands of displaced students who were forced to move from the south and east to the north-west of China. Even there they were subject to frequent air bombings by the Japanese. With the assistance of the worldwide fellowship of the Federation, the SCM was able to be the Church in dispersion, providing all kinds of services, and conducting evangelistic campaigns and giving pastoral care to students. But the Chinese SCM also maintained a reconciling and cordial relationship with the Japanese SCM, celebrating with them every year in the last week in April a special Day of Prayer, while they also participated in the Federation's Universal Day of Prayer for Students. The Chinese SCM never failed to raise funds for the Federation's World Student Relief. In all this, the SCM manifested the Church's calling to be both local and universal. One interesting fact is that when Roland Elliott, the Federation Treasurer and also the coordinator of World Student Relief, visited China in 1945 and went to Yenan city, Mao Tse-tung came himself to express thanks for the aid which World Student Relief had been giving during the hard years of struggle and spoke of the courageous way the students and SCM behaved.

When K. H. Ting, and his wife, Kuo Siu May, came out of the fiery furnace of Shanghai in 1946 to North America, it was against this rich and eventful background of the Chinese SCM and of its contribution towards the Chinese church. By 1948 he was on the staff of the WSCF, and it was appropriate that he should have as his portfolio the missionary concern of

the Federation. He brought an understanding of mission which, though intellectually understood in the West, was not yet part of the inner motive of SCMs and even of the Federation. This became evident when the General Committee met in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, in August 1949. He was responsible for the Commission on the Growing Church, while I was chairperson of the Commission. One of the advisors was secretary of the American Student Volunteer Movement for world mission. He was even at that late date most concerned about getting as many recruits as possible to go overseas, and not least to China. Our first report was rejected by the General Committee which was in fact more preoccupied with the issues of the world struggle and of the University than with missions, even if it was dressed up as the Growing Church. At this point K. H. and I set to work to write a key paragraph on the primary missionary task. K. H. did most of the drafting. What emerged was the following:

> The primary task is not in the realm of educational methods but in rediscovering under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the nature of the Gospel for our day. Evangelism, which is a natural and integral part of the Christian life, will then inevitably be recovered. We need to know God at work, redeeming and re-creating the world. We need to rediscover the Christ by whose life, death and resurrection God has given mankind a sure hope for the Kingdom. We need to discern, behind all the events and movements of men, the on-going, saving purpose of God, bringing history to its consummation and the whole creation to perfection. We need to recapture a vision of the glory of the Church as the Redeemed Community, in all its worship, witness and suffering cooperating with God in bringing His warfare to its ultimate triumph. We need to understand vocation anew as nothing short of the offering of one's life and work to this creative and redemptive purpose of God in obedience to whom is our true freedom. We need to see that Evangelism in the expression of our worship of God and our sole vocation.
>
> With this compelling vision of God and the Church and our great calling as Christians, missions cannot be regarded as a subject to be 'sold' to students. It is an indispensable instrument in God's purpose of bringing history to its destined fulfillment. *12*

What this meant was that the whole life of the SCM and of the Church should be missionary, both at home and abroad as part of God's design to fulfill history in Christ. On returning to the British SCM, I proposed to its General Council that we cease to promote the old Student Volunteer Missionary Union as a separate part of the SCM, and so orientate our work that the whole SCM is missionary in purpose and action, or it is not an SCM. While the General Council overwhelmingly accepted this, many senior friends felt that great harm had been done to the missionary cause.

Before K. H. left the WSCF to return to China after the communist revolution, he was responsible for a WSCF Missionary Consultation at Rolle, Switzerland, April 3-7, 1951. Both in the statement which emerged from this meeting, and in his editorial notes in *Student World*, great emphasis was put on the fact that the frontiers of mission and evangelism are everywhere and demand our active obedience. What was very touching about this call to the

multi-dimensional frontiers was a statement which had direct reference to what K. H. and Siu May were about to face:

> This call to the frontier will not be heard as long as the prevailing sense of insecurity creates a covetousness for false security. In the face of this the Church, and the Federation as the servant of the Church, must challenge the present student generation to live on the frontiers without any other security or hope than that security and hope of the Gospel which are given to those who are completely available in God's service.13

During these forty-four years K. H. has remained faithful to his convictions, and has been an inspiration to us all. He has served and led the Chinese church with calm assured wisdom and with the patience of hope in love. We salute K. H. with respect and affection.

Stuttgart

Rev. Dr. Philip Potter was General Secretary of the World Council of Churches from 1972-1984. He first met K.H. Ting in 1948 and they renewed their friendship at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Vancouver in 1983. Dr. Potter is a recipient of the Niwano Peace Prize and widely recognized for his contribution to the ecumenical movement.

1. *John K Molt: A Biography* C. Howard Hopkins (Grand Rapids. MI: Eerdmans), 1079.p,183.
2. Ibid.. p. 259
3. *Reports of* SCMs. "Report of the Conference of WSCF. /eist, Holland". M 1905.. p. 165.
4. Hopkins. p. 313.
5. Report of Conference of W'SCF. Tokyo Japan April 1907- p. 138.
6. Report of Commission 11: The Church in the Mission Field. World Missionary Conference. 1910. pp. 352-353.
7. Report of the WSCF Constantinople Conference. 1911 pp 248-256
8. Hopkins, *p. 394-400.*
9. *The WSCF.* Ruth Rouse (London. *SCM* Press). *1948. p 213.*
10. *The Search for Modern China* Jonathan 1). Spence. *(NY* Norton). *1990, p. 294*
11. *Student World IV. 1936. p. 446.*
12. WSCF General Committee Minutes. 1949. p. 40.
13. Student World 1. 1952. pp. 13-14.

18. A Church Leader of Vision – Wang Weifan

Many brothers and sisters who love the Lord are praying for the Church in China, but the prayers of Bishop K.H. Ting are the deepest and most profound. Many are working for the Church in China, but he has expended the most effort. He has shed no tears, but I know that countless tears have fallen in his heart for the sake of our Church. I want to say a few words about the K.H. Ting whom I have come to know over the last forty and more years.

In 1980 as the Chinese Church emerged from the valley of the shadow of death, the pattern of Christian existence which came most easily to mind was one in which Three-Self organizations led local churches. After 1958, with the "unification of worship," the Chinese Church entered a post denominational era. This was a special gift of grace from God, bestowed upon the Chinese Church 450 years after Luther's Reformation. But at the same time, this gift left the Church with certain problems. First, how could a Chinese Christian patriotic political organization supplant the ecclesiastic and administrative structures of a church? Second, in the midst of great turbulence, could recently united "post-denominations" achieve genuine mutual respect in theology and liturgy? After a lengthy period of reflection, Bishop Ting set about dealing with this situation at the Third Chinese National Christian Conference in 1980. The two issues mentioned above were of primary concern. It was in this situation that the China Christian Council was established. It became the forum for an ecclesiology in which the practice of mutual respect was raised anew. These two issues can be summed up as general principles for the building up of the church and running it well, which means making the Chinese Church a church which is administered well, well-supported and one in which the work of propagating the gospel is carried out effectively.

At the 1982 meeting of the Enlarged Standing Committee of the CCC/TSPM in Beijing, Bi Yonggin, Wang Zhen and other evangelical representatives were invited to take part. Earlier in 1982 in Nanjing, Bishop Ting had called a working meeting on the topic of mutual respect which was attended by some of the incumbents at the municipal and provincial levels. In his remarks Ting raised the issue of mutual respect for the liturgical practices of former Seventh Day Adventists and the Little Flock.' He spoke very forthrightly and one statement he made at this meeting has become well-known: "Where particularities of belief are concerned, it is not the case that the minority must follow the majority, but that the majority must show kindness and concern for the minority."

Bishop Zheng Jianye shed tears at that meeting because some participants were opposed to "mutual concern" for such weak members of the body. And some of Ting's remarks also incurred the opposition of his colleagues. He had instructed me to be prepared to argue the case, but one morning he ended our meeting by saying, "I am taking back all that I said yesterday". He said this for the sake of unity, but I knew he felt very sad. However, this pain gave birth to a variety of Eucharistic liturgies which could now be used at the grassroots in many places. At the same time, there were to be blow-ups in a small number of unrelated house meetings with different denominational backgrounds. The situation was very complex.

Before the Fourth National Christian Conference in 1986, Bishop Ting asked me to edit a small book, *The Shepherd's* Staff, which consisted mainly of affirmations of Three-Self by well known evangelical preachers such as Jia Yuming, Yang Shaotang and Tang Shouling. The final piece in the book was a transcription of some remarks on "The Achievements of Three-Self' given by Bishop Ting at Nanjing Seminary. But because of the opposition of some colleagues in the CCC and TSPM, this piece was deleted at the very last minute. This was an indication of the situation in the CCC/TSPM.

A sermon Bishop Ting had prepared for this conference, "May God Strengthen the Work of Our Hands," based on Rev. 2:1-7 and Eph. 4: 15-16, contained the phrase "the Holy Spirit wants the church to repent". He called on the Church to return to the love it had at first, but which it had abandoned, and to allow God to build up the church in love. He went on to say, "In the overall work of the CCC and TSPM, where there is brokenness, we must yield to others; where there is struggle, we must yield to tolerance; where there is tearing down, we must yield to building up. We must uphold Three-Self and implement it. We must implement Three-Self so that the Church may be well-run ...." Originally the sermon was scheduled to be given on the second day of the conference, August 16. But it was rescheduled for the final day, at the closing worship on August 23. Ting gave in on this point. But one colleague was still opposed to Bishop Ting making any statement at all about repentance. For this person, the past struggle "was also a kind of love". As we discussed the matter, I said sarcastically, "Are you saying that in those past struggles, when people were attacked as rightists and as counter-revolutionaries, that love was at work in the Church?!" I was in Bishop Ting's room when I made this remark, and I have never seen him so angry. How could someone call the struggles of the past a kind of love? The atmosphere in the room froze and he said in a steely voice, "Allow me to really be president of the China Christian Council for just one day, and then no one will keep me from speaking out!" After the very difficult discussions of the day, I suggested that he and I go outside for a stroll. It was already late at night, all the delegates were asleep and we walked in the garden of the guest house for about twenty minutes. It is difficult to know how great an effect the original sermon would have had, for it exposed and criticized the influence of the "leftist" line of taking "class struggle as the key link" within the Church. Bishop Ting was advocating the path of "building the Church up in love", and this has been his consistent coach.

Beginning in 1988, two issues dominated debate within the Chinese Church.

First, "Could the term which in Chinese means "associated or joint" and which in English is subsumed in the word "council" (in the title China Christian Council), be eliminated and the name of the organization be changed simply to the Christian Church of China? [In Chinese, elimination of this single character changes the name from one to the other. -ed.] In other words, could our national council become a national church? The change of this single Chinese character, however, touched upon a sacred tenet of ecclesiology for those of certain denominational backgrounds. The first to dissent from Bishop Ting's proposal were former Baptists and colleagues with a Little Flock background. They could not accept a church which transcended the local church. Bishop Ting was very understanding of this viewpoint. He once said to me, "It seems that we shall have to hang on to the term 'council' for quite some time yet." He did not underestimate the difficulty of union, and he was quite flexible.

But on another issue, that of the re-ordering of relationships between Three-Self and the church, his attitude was unusually firm. Bishop Ting insisted that the Church must have Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone as its head. This issue caused a great debate among colleagues during this period: some said that Three-Self had been achieved, victory could be declared and the matter closed. Others said the Three-Self task could be brought within the ministry of the China Christian Council (CCC). In late 1988, at a meeting at Shanghai's Tianlin Hotel, Bishop Ting did not go along with these ideas, nor did he commend the views of those colleagues who called for the "red flag" of Three-Self to be upheld. He simply raised the point that the function of Three-Self must change. Three-Self should not interfere in matters of faith. The TSPM does not direct the Church, but only promotes independence and self-government. It can open up the way forward for the Church, and thus Christians can set their hearts at ease." He went on to say, "For Christianity itself, the re-ordering of relationships is essential. But if it is only relationships within the church that are re-ordered and not those between Church and government, can the issue be completely resolved? I believe that we should expect to see the principle of separation of Church and state carried a step further."

In the latter half of 1989, however, the so-called "Tianlin Meeting" was slandered by a small number of colleagues as a "black" meeting that "opposed the leadership of the Party and engaged in capitalist liberalization on a grand scale." Bishop Ting was directly attacked and the pressure on him was enormous. He received a letter from overseas that asked, "in a situation like this, what meaning can there be in continuing to pour your energies into Chinese Christianity?" Bishop Ting sought me out to discuss this issue a number of times. All I could say was "To know something is impossible and yet do it - this is the tragic tradition of Chinese intellectuals." Of course, we did not advocate a sort of "smashing eggs against rocks", an expression which implies hopeless opposition. Bishop Ting's way was more difficult because of the ambiguity.

After the changes in Eastern Europe, some political authorities in China came to the conclusion, quite unwarranted by the facts, that "religion is a hotbed of peaceful evolution", and thus that religious policy should be tightened up. They wanted to root out a great number of home gatherings and meeting points. At this historical juncture, Bishop Ting assumed a role similar to that which he had played during the Cultural Revolution. He became the protector and defender of countless home gatherings which took up their position outside the Three-Self organization. On the floor of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and in discussions with national leaders, Bishop Ting and Mr. Zhao Puchu, head of the Chinese Buddhist Association, spoke with one voice, playing the role of a "loyal opposition." They spoke their minds and upheld the policy of religious freedom, pleading for the thousands of home worship gatherings. Today, this situation has changed somewhat, yet Bishop Ting's heroic undertaking will never be forgotten. It is said that many who gather in their homes or simple places of worship continually pray for Bishop Ting, whom they know as a fellow Christian and a loyal servant of God.

Bishop Ting has been presiding over the two national Christian bodies since 1980, the very period of China's policies of reform and openness, a period during which the Chinese Church, with its independent self-governing image, joined the World Council of Churches. He believes that Three-Self does not by any means include "self-isolation" or "closing oneself off." But he also believes that only by becoming identified with its own people, can a Church become truly

ecumenical. Without independence, there can be no interdependence. Although Bishop Ting has studied overseas and has worked in the West, he has always maintained the integrity and dignity of a *Chinese* intellectual, a *Chinese* pastor and church worker. There are some grassroots church leaders who would sell out the authority of the church in order to get foreign funds. Bishop Ting feels this is entirely wrong. He has told me more than once: "This attitude is tantamount to begging!" This is why he particularly stressed the "independence" of the Church at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the TSPM/CCC in Beijing in late 1994.

As Bishop Ting grows older, he is still filled with hope for the Chinese Church. And his hope is founded on the democratic running of the church and making use of young people. The first he has stressed many times, especially in one of his speeches in late 1993. As for the second, the ordination of over forty young colleagues at the Fifth National Christian Conference, was a great demonstration of his faith in young people. At working committee meetings of the two national Christian bodies and from the important base of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, he is gradually moving younger people to the front line. He cares for the budding potential of each first year class at the Seminary like a mother.

In all these things, one sees his greatness of heart and the extent and breadth of his vision.

Nanjing

Rev. Wang Weifan is Associate Professor of New Testament at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and Head of the Publications Office. He was a student at Nanjing Seminary in the 1950s when he met Bishop Ting. Since returning to the Seminary in 1978. he has worked with the Bishop on a variety of projects at both the Seminary and the CCC.

' This group, Known in Chinese as the "Christian Assemblies," objects to any formal church structure or name as inimical to Christian belief. In their view, the church can exist only when and as Christians come together to worship. Thus no overall administrative structure is possible. There can be no Church. only churches.

19. The Love, the Light and the Language of Christian Mission – Raymond Whitehead

In Canada today there is anxiety about the decline of churches - in membership, in financial resources, in influence on the world around us, in moral stature. Some Christians become depressed being part of a weak and imperfect Church, and long for the "glory days" when the Church was the center of the community, and when culture and values were "simpler".

For most of the world, for most of the last 2000 years, the Church has been on the margins of life. The 17th and 18th centuries were not a time of widespread church participation. Our picture of 19th and early 20th century church life in North America (often idealized) does not represent the experience of most Christians in most historical contexts.

In China the Church today is larger and more active than at any time in history. Yet it is only a small fraction of the population, perhaps one percent. Its financial resources are small and its visibility in society quite limited. Bishop K.H. Ting has lived his eighty years in the context of a Chinese Church that for the most part has been small and weak. In that setting, however, he and his co-workers developed a perspective not marked by despair and depression but by faithfulness and commitment to the church's mission of justice and healing and peace. Christians in China hold little power, but the Church has a theology that engages the world and stays in creative encounter with strong, politically committed revolutionaries. The Church remains grounded in its faith stance and in its theological self-understanding, and maintains Christian integrity in the midst of a changing and complex society.

K.H. Ting talked of the relations between Christians and revolutionaries, and stated, "We pray that the day will come when Christians will have the love, light and language to communicate with revolutionaries on matters of basic conviction, thus strengthening mutual understanding and national unity".' What are we to make of these terms, 'the framework provided by K.H. Ting to develop an interpretation of how this Chinese theology functions in relation to the urgent concerns of North American church life.

1. Christian Love and Christian Mission

We are not as likely to fall into depression if we see the world as worthy of our love. Bishop Ting and the Chinese Church affirm the biblical witness to the Christ who is "in the beginning", the "cosmic Christ" in whom all things were created in heaven and on earth (Colossians 1:15-17). Since the "Word" was in the beginning, and all things were created through the Word (John 1: 1), then how can the world be looked upon as other than lovable? In China, where a longstanding culture exists that was not shaped by the Judeo-Christian tradition, this cosmic dimension allows for an affirmation of the good in that Eastern culture, before any contact with Christianity. And in contemporary China this understanding supports Christians when they affirm that social revolutionaries are not devils to be condemned but are children of God worthy of love and reconciliation. Chinese Christians were able to make

such affirmations at the time when Western countries were caught up in McCarthyism and political witch hunts.

For Christians in the West, who fret about the loss of Christian values in our "post-Christendom" era, there may be learnings from the Chinese experience. We may look askance at some of the new age practices to which this generation turns in its search for meaning (TV advisors on love, psychic power, health, and get-rich schemes, for example). Rather than condemn followers of these trends we can affirm that these seekers too, are God's children and worthy of redemption. We live in a culture that lacks unity and coherence and meaning, but so did Paul, and so did Augustine, and so did John Wesley. All attempts to achieve self-esteem and to find direction in life deserve respect as at least starting points for something deeper. At the same time we can ask ourselves why we have not been able to interpret the meaning of Jesus Christ for the world today and to advocate effectively the Christian way in terms that this confused generation can grasp.

Two biblical figures appear often in K.H. Ting's sermons and essays; Jonah, and the elder brother of the Prodigal Son. Jonah did not at all care for Nineveh, yet God called him to preach salvation there. Jonah grumbled but reluctantly carried out the task. The elder brother saw himself as the one who sacrificed self for the sake of the family, but his parents rejoiced more over the prodigal who returned from wasteful living. The elder son just did not understand this celebration and refused to enter the house and enjoy the banquet. Bishop Ting compares Jonah and the elder brother to disgruntled missionaries. One suspects that Ting encountered a few such Western Christians in China in earlier years. They carry out their call with a sense of self-sacrifice and duty, but without joy. All of us have experienced similar folk within the Church, joyless Christians. And many of us have our grumpy moments when we feel those who are not as "pure" as we ourselves get all the breaks.

Chinese Christians such as K.H. Ting developed a life-affirming theology, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep, not begrudging others inside or outside the faith their space, their creativity, their leadership, their well-being. The Amity Foundation is an excellent example of work based on such a theology. The Foundation was initiated by Chinese Christians but from the very beginning others, outside the Church, regardless of political philosophy, who shared similar goals about education and welfare, were invited to be part of the experiment. Unlike the Western mission approach that established church-controlled schools, hospitals and institutions, Amity opened its doors to cooperative work with any and all.

2. Light for the Journey

The Word was in the beginning with God. The Word was life, and this life was the light of all people (See John 1:1-4).

When Bishop Ting writes of the light that guides us on our journey he has again a comprehensive view. From the very beginning of creation there is an enlightenment that is part of the human person. Yes, sin and finitude are also part and parcel of the human condition, but "Christians in China ... still find it impossible to ignore the latent image of

God in each human being and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the world." In this context K.H. quotes from the *Daode jing* and asks whether a passage such as the following can be considered worthless simply because it emerged outside Christian tradition:

> There is already begotten before
> Heaven and earth came into being:
> serenely silent, peacefully alone,
> eternally faithful,
> the Immovable Mover, like
> the caring Mother of all things. I do not know its name
> And describe it as Tao.

Bishop Ting again alludes to Jonah, and to the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son, who were disdainful of that which was outside the tradition or did not follow accepted norms. "We should affirm," writes Ting, "any and every move, however slight, that is made in the direction of God".3

Modern communications and travel have brought once distant religions and cultures of the world into close proximity. The theological insights developed by Chinese Christians could help the Western Church enter into a relationship with people of other faiths and cultures based on appreciation and mutual support rather than antagonism. We can move away from seeing a split in the world between those who believe in Jesus Christ and those who do not, to a broader affirmation of all that is good and just. Instead of excluding everything beyond the Church, we can begin to see many contemporary ideas and movements not as destructive of Christian hopes and values but as opening the way to them.

We can also learn from this faith stance to affirm diversity within the Church. Being rooted and grounded in faith we can in confidence build upon our strengths, firmly standing for political justice, economic equality, racial and cultural mutuality, and inclusive respect for varying ways of sexual integrity.

3. A Language for Encounter

> "Over the centuries, the gospel has taken upon itself the imprint of various philosophies and social patterns encountered through its journeying. Our knowledge of' God is enriched through that process. In the coming years Christians in India, China and Japan, each community in its own way, will begin to communicate their own experience of Christ, unfettered by Western tradition. They will tell of the simplicity of the gospel, of its power to set us free. The Western world must welcome and encourage this contribution".4

These words of K.H. Ting were penned in 1948, nearly a half century ago. They are startling, both as an accurate prediction, and as a reminder of how the world has changed in these decades. It takes an act of concentration to recall that time before "unfettered" expressions of the gospel began to flow from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and in the West

and elsewhere from women, native peoples, and people of African and Latin American backgrounds, to name only a few.

Not all in the Western world (the white male Western world, that is), have welcomed and encouraged this contribution, but some have. The variegated spiritual wisdom of those outside the old Western patriarchal culture reveals unending depth of expression, and ceaseless nuancing of the mystery of faith. Not to welcome these contributions is to ignore a rich treasure. It is also to keep oneself further from the fullness of truth. No one tradition or theological expression encompasses all spiritual wisdom.

K.H. Ting felt that in China, in order to express Christian truth rightly, it was necessary "to be conversant with non-Christian language and culture". Only to describe Christ in Western terms would mean describing Christ inaccurately to a Chinese hearer. To struggle to interpret the meaning of faith in the Chinese cultural context is not only to learn to communicate better but to gain a deeper knowledge about what one started with in the first place.

In the West, our anxiety over the loss of Christian values in society may be the product of our lack of attention to interpreting Christian truth in the emerging new languages of contemporary culture. In our world of new information technologies and communication advances there is also a spiritual hunger that the old formulas do not necessarily meet. In the era of the word processor what does it mean that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us"?

The English translation of the Gospel of John uses "word" for the Greek phrase "logos". In the beginning was the logos. Logos can mean word, or concept, or idea, or study. When Christians sought to translate "logos" into Chinese they decided to use "Tao". In the beginning was the "Tao". Recall the passage from the Daode jing quoted above. Preceding creation was the Tao, "serenely silent, peacefully alone, eternally faithfully, the Immovable Mover, like the caring Mother of all things".

In the beginning was that eternally faithful, serenely silent force, peacefully alone. Reading John 1:14 we can ponder the truth that the Tao, "the caring mother of all things," became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

It may at first have seemed that in the framework used here, "the love, the light and the language" of mission, that love and light are spiritually rich terms, while "language" is more mundane. Language, however, this simple human means of thinking and communicating, is at the very core of life and culture and touches our spiritual essence. Translating logos as the Tao floods us with deep new meanings. But that does not negate the value of also translating logos as Word. In the beginning was the word, the language of God. Our God touches us through words.

The struggle of K.H. Ting and the Chinese Church to find the love and the light and the language of encounter may inspire us to move beyond despair. The issue is not the power and

prestige of the Church, but our faithfulness to the mission to which we have been called, in a world created through the Tao of God and that we confidently call our home.

Toronto

Rev. Dr. Raymond Whitehead is Secretary for Theological Education and Higher Education. United Church of Canada and adjunct faculty member. Toronto School of Theology. University of Toronto. His first contact with K.H Ting was by letter in 1973 and the two met when Dr. Whitehead visited China in 1977 while living and working in Hong Kong. Dr. Whitehead was instrumental in organizing the international conference "God's Call to a New Beginning" in 1981.

1. *No Longer Strangers: Selected Writings of Bishop K H.Ting.* Raymond Whitehead. ed Maryknoll. NY: Orbis Books. 1989. p 32
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.. p. 33.
4. Ibid.. p. 29.
5 Ibid.. p. 42.

20. **With Regard to Anglicanism** – Robert Whyte

Anglicanism may not at first sight appear to have any relevance to the future of Christianity in China. The *Shenggong hui* or Chinese Anglican Church was a comparatively small denomination in preLiberation China and its origins in the Established Church of England might indicate a church closely allied to Western imperialism.

The reality was somewhat different. Different Anglican Provinces took responsibility for different parts of China. The Episcopal Church of the USA and the Canadian Anglican Church each made distinctive contributions, and the fact that the Church of England tended to work through voluntary societies such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) brought diversity to Chinese Anglicanism. In 1949 the episcopacy was almost entirely Chinese, a fact that was to give the *Shenggong hui* considerable influence among non-Roman Catholic Christians in the years after 1949.

It was this Church to which K.H. returned in the early 1950s and in which he was consecrated Bishop of Zhejiang in 1956. He had been deeply influenced by a particular strand within Anglicanism as well as by wide ecumenical experience. His was the Anglicanism of Bishop R.O. Hall of Hong Kong, of T.C. Chao, who had come to Anglicanism because he found within its sacramental theology a resonance with Chinese tradition. lie found a kindred spirit in David Paton, an English Anglican missionary whose book *Christian Missions* and the *Judgment of God* published in 1953 caused a furor within missionary circles. The two were to become lifelong friends until David's death in 1992. Contacts over the years may have been few, but each retained a sense of a shared vision which transcended political and ecclesiastical separation. It was David Paton who was to pioneer renewed British church links with China in the early 1970s.

An Anglican Heritage

As an Anglican K.H. understood the incarnational nature of the Church. The Anglican Church claims to be a particular embodiment of the one holy catholic Church. It is perhaps difficult to define the distinctive characteristics of "Anglican theology" but in its finest expressions it has always sought to be both "catholic" and "reformed". It has been molded by its roots in a parochial system, even where this does not exist in its classical English expression. The universal Church must always be incarnated locally so that it is embodied in each and every place and is there to serve the whole of society. A parish church is never there only for those who worship as members of that church. Thus civil society has always remained important to Anglicans and it is natural to look for common ground with non-Anglicans and even non-Christians. It is a theology of "presence" which values the culture and society in which the Church is set. Despite some Calvinist influence, especially in the late sixteenth century, Anglicanism has sat uneasily with the idea that the Church should dominate State and society. Its problem historically has been its too easy accommodation to society whether expressed in the "divine right of Kings" and the cult of King Charles the Martyr or in its later High Tory image in the British Isles. The note of prophecy can become muted in established churches.

The history of Anglicanism therefore provided both positive and negative lessons from which to learn. At first sight a tradition originating in a conservative response to the forces of the Reformation may seem inauspicious for coming to terms with revolution, the collapse of denominational structures and the struggle to form a post-denominational church in China. But over the centuries Anglicans had developed a profound awareness of the necessity both to relate to the State and to maintain a certain distance from the State. It was a hard won insight and in practice the Church of England in particular had found it difficult to maintain the balance. But the sense of necessary ambiguity prevented either the extremes of German Church capitulation to the State under Hitler or the opposite extreme of refusal to accept the legitimacy of secular governments. Anglican history taught the dangers of the identification of Church and State but it also taught the creative possibilities of "critical solidarity" with society.

Engagement with China

Anglicanism in China was generally remote form the historic temptations of Establishment and K.H.'s international experience was North American and then with the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in Geneva. This experience gave him a generous appreciation of other traditions and his Anglican background helped to ensure a commitment to an engagement with society and culture. In the context of rapid and radical social and political change K.H. was enabled to engage creatively with what was happening. Thus while retaining a profound loyalty to the Anglican tradition he was able to move beyond denominational structures in response to the realities of life in postLiberation China.

Throughout his life K.H. has wrestled with the issue of how the Chinese Church can be present in China in ways that both affirm that which is best within the life of society while also summoning people to repentance and Christian discipleship. For him his episcopacy has been the visible expression of this inner vocation. Many have wondered how he can be content to be a bishop without Episcopal jurisdiction in an emerging post-denominational church in which few seem to appreciate the office of bishop. Perhaps the answer is to be found in an understanding of episcopacy as the focus of unity through which the "episcope" of the whole people of God is enabled.

In China the political constraints on the Church have confronted Church leaders with a serious problem. K.H. has been able to bring his fine sense of political realities to bear on this question. Like many Chinese intellectuals of his generation he welcomed the possibilities for radical reform offered by the Chinese Communist Party and like many he was prepared to work within the system for the benefit of both society and Church. Without doubt the period from late 1957 until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, made it almost impossible to exercise any effective leadership within the Church. But we can now see that the hard experiences of these years paved the way for the outstanding role played by K.H. since he was able to resume a public role in 1978/9. As the most prominent leader within the Protestant tradition in China, he has sought to build up a church that takes its context seriously. Compromise is not capitulation, but the art of negotiating for the possible rather than holding out for what is usually the impossible. Diplomatic skill, tact, an appreciation of the point of view of those with whom one might profoundly disagree are essential characteristics of an effective church leader in China. Possessing all of these characteristics has

enabled K.H. to lead the China Christian Council in the years since the restoration of the United Front in 1979 in an effective and constructive way. While many problems remain and the policy of religious freedom is still ill-defined and open to considerable abuse, a genuine space has been created for Christians in China. How far this can be attributed to one leader is of course impossible to say, but the clear and increasingly courageous leadership of K.H. has been one very important factor.

Looking to the Future

The years ahead seem likely to bring new and in some ways more complicated challenges to the Protestant Church in China. K.H. has expressed his great concern about the problems now looming. As China opens her doors to the world, the old structures of control are breaking down. It is difficult to know how far this will go, but already the pressures resulting from economic and social changes are posing serious questions to the present leadership of the Church at all levels. Fragmentation and serious disagreements over doctrine are underway. Elderly leaders are finding themselves in conflict with more spontaneous forces.

A central question facing Chinese Christians is the relationship between charismatic experience and "catholic" order. On the one hand there is the free movement of the Holy Spirit and on the other hand there is the need for institutional structures. It is an issue facing churches in many parts of the world and while the tension has always been a part of Christian experience today its ramifications are on a world scale. In China this has found expression in the first half of the 20th century in various "indigenous" movements such as the Little Flock, True Jesus Church, Jesus Family, Spiritual Holiness Church and other independent congregations, and was a major element in the China Inland Mission. Today the upsurge of "Christianity fever" in some rural areas shares a similar disregard for the historic traditions of Christianity and for their institutional expression. More traditional leaders of the TSPM old guard seek to use administrative controls to bring some order into what is perceived as an anarchic situation.

It has been noticeable that K.H.'s response has been very different and this has been apparent in his defense of groups not associated with the TSPM to worship in public and in his attempts to remove the TSPM from running internal church affairs. He has tirelessly pointed to the dangers inherent in the situation although he sees this not in purely institutional terms but rather in terms of ecclesiology. This is a crucial difference. Authority can in the end only reside in the Church as "catholic". The alternative is to claim that authority resides in the individual's religious "experience". The complex interaction between scripture and tradition is dissolved in favor of the individual's claim to interpret scripture. Here, perhaps unexpectedly for some, the issue of Episcopal order einerges as central to the discussion. The relevance is to be found in the fact that a bishop embodies the unity of the Church in a person rather than in a structure. Thus in principle the bishop is the servant of the whole people of God and the Church is understood as more like an organism than an organization. There is no necessity for a bishop to preside over a "diocese" in classic Western pattern, but he or she must be a person who can command widespread respect because of his or her spiritual quality. Protestantism in China is in urgent need of facing the question of

ecclesiology both to resolve the problem of fragmentation and to overcome the bureaucratic control of some of the present church leadership.

K.H. may perhaps be likened to some of the great Anglican bishops of 16th and 17th century England. While, of course, they played a central role in the politics of the day, and K.H. is an apparently minor political figure, there are distinct similarities. K.H. has always been aware of the need to work within the political arena in order to create space for the Church. Inevitably within the Chinese context this has meant working through the many informal networks that link government and party to civil society, bypassing where necessary the more formal structure. For some Christians both inside an outside China this has led to suspicion and even outright denunciation. Yet, those close to K.H. have known that his actions have been rooted in a deep personal faith.

Relations with the Anglican Communion

Ever since the disappearance of the *Shenggong hui* or Chinese Anglican Church in the late 1950s the position of the surviving Anglican bishops has been anomalous, both in terms of the Three Self Movement and China Christian Council and in terms of the Anglican Communion. It is to the credit of the Anglican Communion that it has never sought to force the issue. After 1979 the Anglican Primates meeting agreed that the China Christian Council should be considered the legitimate successor to the *Shenggong hui*. The visit of Archbishop Robert Runcie in 1983 as leader of the British Council of Churches Delegation cemented a firm friendship between K.H. and the Archbishop. Lambeth since then has showed a great sensitivity in its approach to relationships with China and Archbishop George Carey continued this tradition during his visit in September 1994. Bishop Ting's attendance as an observer at the 1988 Lambeth Conference was another expression of this mutual sensitivity.

The implications of all this for Anglicanism have hardly been considered. Much now depends on whether episcopacy continues in China. The recent deaths of Bishops Shen Yifan, Zeng Youshen, Xue Pingxi and Sun Yanli have reduced the surviving bishops to three with only K.H. and Stephen Wang remaining from the *Shenggong hui*. *I* have suggested that the issue of Episcopal order is important for the future of Protestant Christianity in China. K.H. is himself aware of this. The issue is not about restoring Anglicanism in China that would indeed be a retrograde step. But for many Anglicans outside China the matter of apostolic succession is a vital one as the recent discussions with Lutheran churches in Scandinavia and the Baltic have shown. These discussions have also demonstrated a willingness to see "succession" in wider terms than an actual historical succession supposedly going back to the apostles. Nevertheless, future ecumenical relationships will become more difficult if episcopacy is allowed to disappear from China in the next few years.

Conclusion

Episcopacy is by no means the only issue at stake. K.H.'s ongoing theological concern for a Chinese Christianity that is rooted in its own culture; which takes seriously the experience

of non-Christian Chinese from a range of backgrounds; that sees the Church as having things to say to and about society as well as making a positive input to the society - these are all expressions of a theology that takes seriously the meaning of the Incarnation. At the same time the prophetic, critical dimension has never been absent from his thinking. It found early expression in his article in the *Nanjing Theological Review* in 1957 and has come to maturity in recent years. The pietism and fundamentalism that is the hallmark of contemporary Chinese Protestantism does not give hope of an emerging theological maturity. This too has been a major concern of K.H. and accounts for his continuous commitment to theological formation as well as his more recent interest in the phenomenon of intellectuals expressing appreciation of Christian theology.

K.H. combines a rich variety of theological and ecclesiological concerns in his thinking and has sought to express his insights in his contributions to the life of the Church in China. While I have looked in this essay at the relationship of his thinking to the Anglican tradition, it would be wrong to suggest that this has been the only major source. Rather, it has perhaps provided the underlying sub-structure which has been enriched by his own experience and by his ongoing encounter with Chinese culture and society as well as the experiences and insights of other Christian traditions. The result *is* a clear and unsentimental vision and a mature wisdom. For this Christians, both Chinese and non-Chinese, have much to be grateful for.

Tunbridge Wells

Rev. Bob Whyte first met K.H. Ting in 1979 in Canada while Project Officer of the British churches China Study Project. Since then he has met with K.H. on many occasions, most recently while accompanying the Archbishop of Canterbury on his visit to China in 1994. lie is Vicar of St. Paul's Church in Tunbridge Wells in England and Moderator of the China Study Committee of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CC BI)

21. **An Ecumenical Theologian** – Philip L. Wickeri

For more that fifty years, Bishop K.H. Ting has served China and the Church. The essays in this volume reveal that he has been many things to many people - student leader and Christian activist; ecumenical Christian and Chinese patriot; church leader, people's representative and international Christian statesman; teacher, colleague and friend. Alongside all of these, K.H., as he is affectionately known to friends all over the world, has been a theologian active in both the church and the world. Formed in the Anglican tradition, informed by the political and ecumenical currents of his times and transformed by the twists and turns of Chinese revolution, he has continued to question and reflect upon the movements and ideas which shaped him. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, it is fitting to reflect on the ecumenical and theological significance of K.H. Ting.

What can we learn from Bishop K.H.Ting today? It is an important question because theology inspires and informs it lives only if it is useful and can be applied. Ting asked the same question about Y. T. Wu (1893 - 1979) at a symposium marking the tenth anniversary of Wu's death in 1989. Y.T. Wu was his predecessor as leader of the Three-Self Movement and spokesperson for Christianity in China, and in many respects, the two are very much alike. Despite their age difference, both were involved in the Chinese Christian movement in the 1930s and 1940s, both were important Christian leaders during difficult times and both played important domestic and international political roles in the years after 1949.

Y.T. Wu and K.H Ting are also theologians who have been in dialogue with their times. Everything Ting has written has been in response to contemporary issues of church and society. The earliest essay which I have seen was published in the St. Peter's Parish Youth Magazine in 1937, and it calls upon the churches to become more open and take youth more seriously. 2 This has been an abiding concern for the past fifty years, and it has been reflected most recently in the need for the China Christian Council to bring more young people into positions of leadership.

In the late 1940s, when he was working for the Canadian SCM and later the WSCF, Ting was challenging churches to develop a new understanding of mission, especially insofar as it involved international and social issues. When he returned to China in 1951, Ting stressed both the new challenges to Christian faith and the continuing importance of bearing witness to the gospel. And in the 1980s, after the long and difficult years of the Cultural Revolution era, K.H. Ting now president of the China Christian Council, began focusing on a related set of issues, all of which were crucial for both Church and society: confronting "ultra-Leftism"; reforming government religious policy; building up the Church; exploring new directions in theology; promoting dialogue between sympathetic intellectuals and a conservative Church; and developing international ecumenical relationships on the basis of mutual respect.

Y.T. Wu was both friend and mentor for K.H.Ting for more than forty years. ring's essay "What Can We Learn from Y.T. Wu Today?" reflects themes which were very much on his own mind during the trying and difficult times of the summer of 1989, just after the "June 4" events. This essay reveals much of what K.H. Ting has appropriated for his own theology by

stressing three things which Christians can learn from Y.T. Wu: the importance of spirituality and communion with God; the need to restore ethics to its rightful place in contextual theological reflection; and building up the Church as a school for the democratic spirit.

1. K.H. ring has never said or written very much about his spiritual life, but it is reflected in who he is and in all he does. As a young SCM secretary in Canada, he wrote of the priority of appropriating a personal sense of the Gospel message. "The theological discipline should come only after we have been captivated by the compelling reality and the simplicity of the message of the New Testament." For the theologian, a basic affirmation of Christian commitment must precede reflection: "Christianity can mean much more to us if we have only five ideas or convictions from the New Testament that we can really claim to be our own, that we can really live and die for, than merely tossing back and forth ten thousand theological terminologies which are empty words only."[4]

K.H. Ting was raised in the faith, and he grew up in St. Peter's Church (Anglican), where his maternal grandfather had once been priest. From an early age, he was influenced by the prayerful and personal piety of his mother. She used to establish peace among her unruly children by turning to Psalm 136, reading the first half of each verse, and instructing her children to repeat the refrain "For his steadfast love endures forever." This verse became part of Ting's experience during childhood, and it has been with him ever since. 5 His early Christian formation has produced a spirituality which contributes to K.H. Ting's sense of the rhythm of life, a rhythm which is reflected in his sense of calm and confidence, and in his ability to pace himself and to see the broader picture. More deeply, his Biblical understanding of God's steadfast love is expressed in a faith which is both personal and catholic. As he himself wrote in a different context, such faith is related to a belief in the Cosmic Christ and gives one a personal sense of meaning "by becoming harmonious with the principle by which the universe is run."[6]

2. For all of his life, K.H. Ting has been stressing the centrality of ethics and of political involvement to theological reflection. Love is God's most important attribute, and this necessitates and makes possible the ethical stance of Christians who must work for love and justice in society. An ethical, political and social dimension of faith is reflected in every aspect of Ting's life and work. His theology, therefore, endorses "involvements in history and does not discount, [but] in fact enhances, the quality of good earthly undertakings. In this way Christ again comes to fulfill and not to destroy.'[17] Nature and grace are seen as complementary, not contradictory, ethics is seen as a point of contact between Christians and non-Christians, and political involvement is understood as a function of one's ethical stance.

In Ting's understanding, original human nature was not completely destroyed by the Fall. There is still Sin and the Fall, but one must also take into account a more balanced and comprehensive approach to human experience and Biblical understanding. Sin does not receive the attention it does in classical Protestantism, and it is not the primary fact of human nature or of theological anthropology. Like other Chinese intellectuals before and since, K.H. Ting does not take the doctrine of sin very seriously. One former colleague has quipped that his approach is "semi-Pelagian," which is true insofar as he has a very optimistic view of the

possibilities for human beings created in the image of God. This perspective is derived from a Chinese philosophical tradition which stresses the goodness of human nature; the theological liberalism of the 1930s and 1940s; and the influence of Marxist social thought.

This implies a strong sense of continuity between transcendence and immanence, nature and grace, and God and humanity in Ting's theology, a continuity which is just as important today as it was in 1950, when he made the following observation on the theme of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches:

> Now the realization that man's activities can be in some significant way continuous to those of God is indispensable to a sense of vocation and to genuine missionary consecration. For us to stress the chasm between "God's design" and "man's disorder" so absolutely as to deny that continuity is to cut the nerve of any Christian doctrine of history, work and vocation, and is to sanction moral irresponsibility and cynicism.'

Unlike many young theologians in the ecumenical movement in the 1940s and 1950s, K.H. Ting was never very interested in the christocentric theology of Karl Barth and others in the so-called "neoorthodox" tradition. He is not a dialectical theologian, nor does he take the prominent Reformation themes as his point of departure. Ting's frequent affirmation of any and all human action which moves, however slightly, in the direction which God has intended for humankind shows his appreciation of natural theology. In this sense, his thinking owes more to the English theology he learned at St. John's than to continental Protestant theology. There he was influenced by works of Bishop Charles Gore (1853-1932) and others, who sought to approach social problems from a perspective which was both catholic and progressive. In the 1930s and 1940s, Ting also developed a keen interest in theologians who were seeking a common cause between Christians and Communists. In the 1990s, this interest is expressed in his continuing appreciation of Teilard de Chardin, Process Thought, Liberation theologies, and the creation centered tradition of Celtic Christianity.

In his most recent reflection written for the China Christian Council, K.H. Ting continues to pursue this line of thinking by questioning the doctrine of "justification by faith" as the defining feature of Protestant Christianity. He reasons that in the Chinese context this doctrine creates an unnecessary distance between the ethical actions of Christians and non-Christians, and it goes against a true Christian humanism. Christians need to see justification by faith alongside other Christian teachings including God's continuing work of creation, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, Pentecost, and Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount .[9]

3. K.H. Ting's interest in the Church as "a school for the democratic spirit" has its origins in his own participation in the student movement in the 1940s. The SCM and the Student Department of the YM/YWCAs were at that time the most progressive and democratic wings of the Christian movement in China. It was therefore natural that his experience in that movement should carry over into his understanding of the need for a democratic spirit in the churches today.

In the 1980s and 1990s, K.H. Ting has been a tireless advocate for young people who want to see more democracy in the churches. In 1989, he spoke about the importance of the

Church as a training ground for democracy, an idea which he relates to "running the church well":

> Good government requires first of all the development of the democratic spirit and the democratic style of work. To run the Church well implies the idea of people's participation in management. It is with the democratic spirit that we can run the Church well ... To run the Church really well, any one person or any group cannot be allowed to lay down the law."'

As leader of the two national Christian bodies, one of K.H. Ting's major contributions in the 1980s has been shifting attention away from the Christian movement to the Christian Church. This is reflected in the transition from "Three-Self' to "Three-Well" in Chinese Protestantism. In the 1950s, the Three-Self Movement stressed self-government, self-support and self-propagation for the Church in China. In the 1980s, K.H. Ting shifted the emphasis to "running the church well" so that churches could be well-governed, well-supported and well-propagated. This transition emphasized the ecclesiastical needs of the churches, and found expression in the decision to create the CCC alongside the TSPM in 1980, when Ting introduced the idea of "running the church well" in his opening address to the Fourth National Christian Conference."

Most of K.H. Ting's theological writings have been cast as a theology for the church and addressed to the church. As he wrote in 1992, "theology is the Church in the act of thinking."[1]2 Perhaps the fundamental difference between K.H. Ting and Y.T. Wu centers on this point. Y.T. Wu was a social activist totally identified with the Christian Movement. He was distrusted, unfairly some would say, by many more conservative Christians in China and overseas. He may have been the leader which Chinese Christians needed in the 1950s, but he would not have been appropriate for the 1990s. In contrast, K.H. Ting is and has always been more of a churchman, but a churchman who has been active in the world.

Despite the efforts of earlier generations of theologians, the categories of church and world were never really integrated in Chinese Christianity. In the China of the 1950s, moreover, the artificial division between political and religious realms increased, in large part due to the political movements of the times. These categories had been integrated in K.H. Ting's life and work in the ecumenical movement in the 1930s and 1940s, and although he would continue to speak as both a churchman and a statesman after that, he would have to speak differently in different situations. This was an unfortunate but unavoidable concession to the reality of Christian existence in contemporary China. It was doubly unfortunate because it reinforced the beliefs of those Christians who maintained that theology should remain "a-political". Only in the 1980s could K.H.Ting begin to speak of the reintegration of political and theological categories with his discussion of the Cosmic Christ and the continuity between creation and redemption.

In the process, Ting's standing as a churchman was recognized even by Chinese Christians who disagreed with him, for he has contributed a great deal to reconciliation and unity in the Church in the 1980s and 1990s. He has consistently stood up for small conservative groups within the Church and has reached out to Christians at the grassroots. In

recent years, Ting has urged the CCC to work for reconciliation with groups outside who, for historical reasons, are dissatisfied with or suspicious of the CCC and the TSPM. These include communities like the Little Flock and the True Jesus Church. In relating to grassroots Christians, Ting has used the image of church leaders as locomotives pulling many carriages along with them. The locomotives must go slowly so they don't leave the carriages behind.[13] The CCC must go slowly, in order to include as many people as possible. Similarly, theology must be in conversation not only with its social context, but more importantly "with the minds and hearts of the masses of the Christians within the fold of the Church."[14] Theologians must therefore exercise restraint for the sake of unity, and not advance positions which are too far in advance of a relatively conservative laity.

A theology written for the Church must take the faith and feelings of ordinary believers into account, but it must also seek to challenge them. K.H. Ting has done this by speaking of the Cosmic Christ, the Christ of John's Gospel, Ephesians and Colossians. The message of the Cosmic Christ, in whom all things hold together, is that the Church must widen its horizon and understanding that God also shows concern for the culture and society and history of a people who do not yet recognize Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." Ting's understanding of the Cosmic Christ was not developed as an abstract category of thought, or a means of promoting dialogue with the culture, but as a practical theological message addressed to a Church whose vision and theology are too narrow. It is his method of reintegrating the theological and political categories mentioned above. Chinese Christians cannot focus exclusively on questions of redemption and individual salvation, for they must also take account of God's work in history and creation. This necessarily involves action in politics and society.

In his preaching and Biblical interpretation, Ting has continually sought to help the Church understand its mission as a response to the calling of the Holy Spirit. A favorite Biblical passage has been the message to the seven churches in Asia Minor as contained in the Book of Revelation, chapters two and three. The Spirit has different messages for each of the churches, and each church has its own particular problems and strengths. But the concluding message is always the same: "Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

In 1952, shortly after his return to China, he compared the Chinese churches to the Christians in Laodicea who lacked commitment, and were neither cold or hot (Rev. 3: 15-16).[16] Thirty-four years later, he preached at the closing service of the Fourth National Christian Conference on the message to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2: 1-7), a church which had been through much trial and tribulation, but which had abandoned the love it had at first. 17 The Spirit has different messages for different churches at different times. He returned to the message of Revelation 2 and 3 both when he argued for greater attention to international exchanges at the thirtieth anniversary of the TSPM in 1985, and when he addressed the World Council of Churches at Canberra in 1991, calling for mutual respect and support for the particularity of individual situations among member churches.

Although K.H. Ting's theology has always been written in response to the issues of Church and society, his basic approach has not changed a great deal since the 1940s. His

thinking has certainly developed since then, but his starting point and categories of reflection have remained the same love as God's major attribute; the Cosmic Christ; the continuity between transcendence and immanence; the interrelatedness of creation and redemption; ethics and the importance of active involvement in the world; Church unity and reconciliation. It is possible to trace these themes through at least four stages of his life and work:

From his formative years to his return to China in 1951. It was during this time that he developed a theology which was distinctly Anglican, but also ecumenical; distinctly Christian, but willing to learn from other disciplines;

The 1950s, when he had to rethink what Christian involvement would mean for the Chinese revolutionary movement;

The Cultural Revolution era. There are no writings from this time, but it was without doubt a time of testing which prompted further rethinking on theological, social and political issues.

The re-emergence of the Church since 1979, when Bishop Ting became leader of the China Christian Council and Three-Self Movement, and when as a theologian for the Church he has spoken most clearly.

K.H. Ting has had neither the time nor the inclination to write a systematic theology. But if one were to develop a comprehensive theology on the basis of what he has written, it would be both theocentric and trinitarian. When he addressed Nanjing Seminary students just prior to the outbreak of the Anti-Rightist Movement in 1957, he spoke of the continuing relevance of Christian theism in what was then a revolutionary and materialist society.[18] This was a very forthright and courageous essay considering the time in which it was written. He was providing students with an affirmation of faith and a Christian apologetic for the difficult times ahead.

His trinitarian perspective is also quite clear. For God the Father, his emphasis is on God as a God of love, on divine immanence and on the God who also depends on humankind, "not that the Almighty Creator has to, but that the Loving Father must."[19] For God the Son, he concentrates both on the humanity of the Jesus of the Gospels and his ethical teachings, and on the Cosmic Christ who embraces the world. For God the Holy Spirit, he explores the Spirit's message for the Church in every time and place, the Spirit who is Comforter of believers, Guardian of the Church and Enlightener of the whole human race.20 Father, Son and Holy Spirit work together in the ongoing process of creation, redemption and sanctification, and our human task is to join in this process and contribute what we can. The language used here is gender exclusive, but it should be mentioned that K.H. Ting was among the first to encourage Chinese Christians to think about God from a feminist perspective.21

The message which Ting's trinitarian theology has for the world is both progressive and catholic. On the one hand, there is positive affirmation of people and ideas which are

working for change and human development, however far they are from approaching an understanding of God in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, K.H. Ting wishes to help those outside the Church understand the deeper and broader significance of God's action in a world embraced by the Cosmic Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Only this can provide the reassurance which is necessary for the restless and weary heart and offer the individual a faith which is eternal:

> There are situations in which the Church has to tell the Inquirer, 'Go and sin no more.' But quite often the Church's message is to encourage the people to carry on their valuable work, to see it from a higher point of reference and to relate it to the loving purpose of God in all his work of creation, redemption and sanctification, thus to gain a new and fuller sense of its value. Then the undertakings acquire a deeper grounding and are in tune with the love which is the reality at its deepest level, thereby giving the Christian a peace, a confidence, a calm, a faith, a lack of fear that is the result of his or her consciousness of being at one with the ultimate.[22]

The defining characteristic of K.H. Ting's theological style is its consistent understatement. This is partly a result of personality - he is shy and reserved - and partly related to the influence of Chinese culture. But the exercise of restraint also has theological underpinnings. Like many other Anglicans before him, K.H. Ting is conscious of practicing the wisdom of Gamaliel: if a plan or undertaking is not of God, then it will fail; and if it is of God, then to work against it is opposition to God. In such cases, the best course of action is non-action and leaving things alone. This, of course, also coincides with the taoist side of the Chinese cultural tradition.

Restraint and understatement are also related to political and ecclesiological considerations. The Chinese Church is in a weak position vis-à-vis the political order, and outspokenness has been compared to "smashing eggs upon rocks". Such action would not be responsible for one in a position of leadership whose role it is to both guide and support others. In addition, the unity of the CCC is very fragile, and it has been important for church leaders and theologians to 'hasten slowly' in introducing new initiatives. The exercise of restraint under these circumstances is in part an expression of weakness, but it is also a source of hidden strength in upholding tolerance of others and respect for the church as it is.

Because of its understatement, the theology of K.H. Ting has tended to be suggestive rather than definitive. Yet by being suggestive, Ting is in some way able to have something to say to all people. To theological conservatives, he offers the expansive vision of the Cosmic Christ. To political critics at home and abroad, he says that the Church of China has a "certain amount of space" for religious freedom, and that it should not speak of martyrdom too easily. To liberal and progressive church men and women he insists that theology should be for people in the pew, and that theologians should neither advance positions which are beyond the average Christian or exaggerate what they as theologians have to contribute. To the extremists of the left and the right, he urges tolerance, "seeking truth from facts" and working together for the common good. And to people everywhere, his theology embraces a

message of God's love which both liberates men and women for creative action and binds them together as part of a common human family.

K.H. Ting has continued to speak, to write and to reflect as a Christian in a diverse set of circumstances. He has maintained a strong faith and human integrity in what have often been difficult situations. He has responded creatively to what God is doing in the church and the world. For all of these reasons, K.H. Ting is an ecumenical theologian who makes a continuing contribution to Church and world for the times in which we live.

Hong Kong

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3. "The Simplicity of the Gospel(Il)." *The Canadian Student.* 46:3 (January. 1948). p 47.
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9. “Reviewing the Path We Have Taken." unpublished manuscript. April. 1995. '° "What Can We Learn from Y.T. Wu Today?." p. 41
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12. "Foreword *to Theological Writings from Nanjing Seminary." p. I.*
13. Interview with K.H.Ting. 25 August, 1991.
14. "Preface." *Chinese Theological Review* (1985). pp. vi-vii
15. See. for example. "Theological Mass Movements in China." *The Chinese Theological Review* (1985). pp. 66 -78
16. *Behold the Lamb of God* (Shanghai: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1952). p. 42
17. “Building Op the Body in Love." *The Chinese Theological Review* (1986), pp. 103 ff.
18. "On Christian Theism." Nanjing Seminary Review 7 (August, 1957), New translation by K.H.Ting (1985) in Ray Whitehead, ed., No *Longer Strangers Selected Writings of K. H. Ting* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books. 1989), pp 42-49.
19. "Some Reflections on Students and Missions." (1950) p. 2
20. Interview with K.H. Ting. 25 August, 1991.
21. See ,"Femininity, Motherhood and Divinity," *Theological Writings from Nanjing Seminary, pp.* 32-35.
22. "The Experience of the Church in China," *China Notes* (Spring. 1983)

22. An Intentional Life – Lois Wilson

It was a fine evening in 1946 in Winnipeg, Manitoba when I first met K.H. Ting. He had just arrived as part of his cross-country tour of SCM groups in Canadian universities to educate students about the role of Christian churches in the world. He had a smile that invited conversation. He was a man of average build, of above average graciousness, wit, and intelligence, and of extraordinary intentional obedience to the gospel.

In the course of that week he asked me what I was going to do with my life. I answered, "Get married." His impassive face betrayed nothing. He repeated the question, claiming that I had not answered him. Heavens, I thought to myself, was he actually urging on me the double role of mother and working woman, a role seriously discouraged in the Western post war world?

It was sometime later before I discovered that K.H. had assumed the equality of women. After all, his spouse Siu May Kuo was one of the first generations of Chinese women to have completed her professional training but who also chose to marry and raise a family. But for me, the question was a landmine.

Much later, in a 1987 visit I made to China along with thirty Canadian theological students, K.H. asked me to give a lecture on Feminist Theology at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. The wheel had finally come full circle. Looking back, I find I have learned from K.H. in a number of important ways.

Missiology

The Canadian SCM of the 1940s was in many respects an irreverent bunch. One of our favorite songs was composed in response to an attack on the SCM-by a conservative student faction.

> The SCM has found its true vocation
> In poisoning the student mind.
> Its leaders by astute manipulation
> Are poisoning the student mind.
> The pious souls are sure that we will go
> To toast our toes at furnaces below
> If we give heed to leaders who they know
> Are poisoning the student mind.

K.H. intrigued my student generation to heed him in matters missiological, theological, ecclesiological and ecumenical.

At Christmas, 1947, the Quadrennial of the Student Movement was held in Kansas, USA, and I was there. The opening address was by Walter Judd, one of the strongest voices for the China lobby in the U.S. Congress. He spoke on the "Forces of Light (Kuomintang) against the Forces of Darkness" (Communists). The conference exploded with theological/political

debates both pro and con. It was the Canadian students who were most critical of Judd's position - a tribute, I think, to K.H.'s missiological education of many of us in the preceding year. He had helped us to understand the tangled web of motives in the mission practices of the day, as well as the ways the American churches, in this instance, were in captivity to the prevailing understanding of their government as to the demonic nature of Communism. Shortly afterwards, in 1951, all foreign missionaries were expelled from China as "cultural imperialists," and the Chinese churches withdrew from the World Council of Churches. In the midst of this turmoil, K.H. intentionally returned to China.

One of the most pressing questions for the understanding and practice of missionary faithfulness today is the inter-relationship of the hope offered by the gospel of Christ with cultural diversity. That is why the World Council of Churches has invited a worldwide study of the gospel in diverse cultures. It is a tribute to K.H. that he recognized so early that culture and identity are interdependent, and that authentic witness within one's culture is necessary for the gospel to put down strong roots. The Church in China has now, in his words, "ceased to be a dot on the missionary map of other churches, and has come to be itself." Too many churches in the world are still tied culturally to their "mother church" in another country.

Another key missiological issue today is the role of Christian churches in multi-faith pluralistic societies. We all live in a world where very different faith communities now share the same geography. North Americans used to think Hindus and Muslims all lived "over there." No longer so. Shall we ignore each other, co-exist, or simply tolerate each other? "We used to condemn all things outside Christianity," K.H. freely admits. "But the Holy Spirit is important and works in its own way." Is not the key question to historic faith communities whether they are willing to bring the redemptive and healing energies of their faith to a wounded world? Are we able, we Christians, to bring the richest contributions of our tradition and faith to the creation of provisional community in concert with those faiths quite different from our own? Have we the grace to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in our time?

Theology

At the time of Mao's revolution many a Sunday school pupil was being taught that Chiang Kai-shek was a model Christian gentleman, fighting against the forces of godless Communism. K.H.'s return to China was a demonstrated theological statement for the world wide churches on that point. "The revolution happened because forty families had amassed the wealth of the country," he said. Thirty years later he would write, "Today there is in China a Christianity to which revolution is no longer a stranger, and a revolution to which Christianity is not such a stranger either." This is not a widespread understanding in North America or Europe today, even though both continents are not unacquainted with revolutions. It begs the question, "How then can middle class congregations, who prefer to avoid conflict, be saved?"

His return to China sent out another signal. It is that creation itself and all its creatures are the primary object of God's love, and not just Christians. In 1980 he wrote of missionaries, "Those whose first concern is not so much the institutional church and its 'public relations' as the true welfare of the masses of the people, can achieve some sort of breakthrough as a

result of their ... ability to see signs of hope in the people's struggle for independence and liberation. They have not allowed themselves to be deterred by the fact that the struggle is under the leadership of persons who in large number profess an unbelief in God but have proceeded to make friends with them and try to learn from them. They have found meaning for themselves in serving the people's cause."

That is a word relevant to increasing numbers of Western churches that are rapidly becoming dinosaurs, weighed down by buildings, and concerned mainly with their own institutional survival amidst a sea of secularism and unbelief. His theological viewpoint underlines for me the central Christian affirmation, "that God so loved the world." It means that we must try to keep one foot planted firmly in God's Church, but one foot planted just as firmly outside, among marginalized people in struggle. The justice struggles of people are central to the gospel, and not just "good causes" for interested people. Are we Christians able to work with unbelievers and "serve the people's cause?" Are we willing to pay the cost?

Years later, K.H. told some of us that his first observation upon returning to China was that everyone seemed to be wearing shoes, even in rain and snow. Education had been extended; people voluntarily gave up tips; there were fewer flies. He intentionally set his observations in a theological context. God is the cosmic lover he claimed and nothing truly good is lost in God's reign of love. "Look at the events of 1949 in that light." Contextual theology before it became a widespread practice!

Ecclesiology

Perhaps the most exciting development in China for the worldwide ecumenical community is the emerging ecclesiology that roots the churches in the national soil of China. "That's why the Word became flesh," says K.H. "How can we possibly be negative about our own tradition?" He describes the China Christian Council as post liberation and post denominational.

When much of the rest of the student world embraced liberation theology as the coming thing, K.H. told Canadian students on a 1987 visit "The Chinese are not Latin Americans, in need of liberation and food and economic justice. Liberation is not a theme in China that is theologically important. We support it in Latin America but the word "liberation" for us has a particular historical meaning relating to events of 1949. Today we live in a post liberation time." Again, it was the imperative to think theologically and seriously out of one's own historical reality, not someone else's.

Post liberation means that reconciliation, not liberation, is the passion and calling of Chinese Christians, particularly after the many years of struggle that created hostilities in families, and between people nationwide. Their history demands it.

Post liberation requires ways to be found for gospel themes to inform the culture. Visitors to Nanjing Union Theological Seminary come away clutching their precious Chinese papercuts - folk art that is the art of the people, not the emperors. These visual arts are vehicle and symbol of the fact that, while belonging to the Church universal, particularity and selfhood are the seeds from which the China Christian Council has grown. Papercuts expressing Christian themes are not used to instruct or to proselytize. They represent an effort to express the values of love and

sharing in a culturally acceptable way that Chinese can understand and accept. They are one of the contributions of the students to the social fabric of their country, and to the ecumenical community world wide. Fully Chinese; fully Christian!

Chinese Christians affirm their unity in Christ despite their bedeviled denominational heritage bequeathed by the West. When K.H. spoke at the admission of the China Christian Council to the World Council of Churches in 1991, he noted that in all the discussions of unity, the "Chinese post-denominational experiment" does not seem to have received attention and study. Nor has there been a serious evaluation by the WCC of the Three-Self Movement, which such a new-born thing in the church surely deserves.

Anyone who visits Nanjing Union Theological Seminary discovers the post-denominational church. Practices of all former denominations are affirmed. If a Seventh Day Adventist misses a Saturday course, someone tapes it for her. In Beijing the Eucharist is celebrated in five different ways, and many marriage forms are used. A mutual commitment to unity has proved compelling to pursue despite some still unanswered historical and theological questions. Is there not a message here about priorities for the churches' seemingly endless bilateral and multilateral unity talks around the globe?

The post-denominational church is the imperative of Chinese Christian identity and selfhood, but it is also for the sake of the true universality of Christian faith. "It's a courageous experiment for the Church universal," K.H. reiterates. "So why not wish us well?" Christians elsewhere are learning that China's gift to the ecumenical movement may be first of all, its ecclesiology. Does it not call into question the validity of the fixed historical patterns we continue to perpetuate?

Ecumenism

Although the Christian Church in China was a founding member of the World Council of Churches in 1948, it withdrew in 1952. It was in no small way due to K.H. Ting that at the 1991 Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches, the China Christian Council intentionally took its place at the world ecumenical table. That re-entry had been preceded by numerous visits to China by church personnel from every continent, and by the careful building of trust and respect.

After numerous dinners and delicate negotiation, it became clear that the membership of the China Christian Council in the WCC would in no way impair the independence and integrity of any church outside Mainland China. I realized that the Holy Spirit was again using K.H. as an instrument of reconciliation. One of the more memorable images of that Assembly, etched on the memories of ecclesiastical leaders from around the world, was the WCC General Secretary holding aloft the arms of both the Taiwanese church leader, C.M. Kao, and of K.H. Ting as they agreed to sit together in the same fellowship - reconciled and committed to trust each other. Could anything better demonstrate his intentional life?

Canada

ESSAYS AND SERMONS FROM THE NANJING THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

23. Theological Symposium I: On Theology

If the Chinese Church is to be run well, the development of theology is extremely important. Theological competence is the key to improving the quality of faith in the church. Theological construction and running the Church well cannot be accomplished by one or two individuals, but relies on the common effort of everyone involved in theological work, as well as all brothers and sisters interested in theology. Theology should not be restricted to the scholar's study, it belongs among the people; everyone should participate in theological construction. For this special column, we have selected some articles and letters received that relate to this issue. We hope that our readers will be inspired to participate in the discussion of theological issues that interest them by sharing their own views with us in future. - the Editor, *The Nanjing Theological Review*

Chinese Theological Probing and God's Balance

Chen Xifan, writing from Canada

Theology is theory, but it must also be practical and useful on the local level. Theology talks about God, but also about people and the church. God has revealed himself in many different cultures and this has been a major theme of theology. As Eastern and Western cultures blend, people come to recognize the universality of God. Rev. Yang from Shanghai gave me a tape of Chinese church music, which I circulated among Christian friends here. They were all enthralled and said it was wonderful! Spontaneous praise such as this is engendered by the new thinking emerging from Chinese efforts to build up our own church well and the praxis involved. In my opinion the influence of these few pieces of church music on Western churches is very strong. I remember Dean Chen Zemin's long-cherished hope that one day the Chinese church would have its own systematic theology this is a heavy responsibility.

In recent years, I have been pondering one attribute of God, his balance. Looking into nature, history, salvation, etc., I increasingly perceive that God causes everything to develop in a balanced fashion. But balance does not mean equalitarianism. Through their fall, people have lost their balance in God's eyes, but through salvation God restores their lost balance. God's balance - and its power - is even more evident in creation. Whether forty years of "Three-Self' have made us lose balance is worth pondering. The issue of worldliness versus spirituality is similar: giving attention solely to the spiritual body while ignoring the body of the flesh shows an imbalance in knowledge of faith. 1Kings 19:7-8 says: "And the angel of the Lord came again a second time, and touched him, and said, ‘Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you.' And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God." Chinese Christians need to keep spiritual and material matters in balance. A diet of prayer without food and drink, would leave us with little strength for our "great journey." The "Golden Mean" has value

here. It sets out something China's ancient sages and men of virtue had a deep knowledge of I would not say that God is balance, but I have seen this attribute of balance in God and in his ways. If we are aware in everything and at all times of the need to keep our balance, we will not go to extremes. Going to extremes is effective in the short term, but never for eternity.

Postscript to Theological Construction

Xu Xida, alumnus

During the fortieth anniversary celebrations of Nanjing Seminary, I participated in a discussion group on "Theological Construction". Time was limited and I did not get to say all that I wanted to during the discussion. I take this opportunity to write further on the matter and hope others will be inspired to add their comments.

First, I think that theology should be geared to the people. Discussion of theological issues and research in theology should not be limited to a small number of theologians. Theology should cater for the needs of the people and mobilize them, so that theological research becomes an issue that all believers care about. To cater for the needs of the people, theologians first and foremost need to consider the reading abilities of their readers and write their articles with these readers in mind. It would be best to use colloquial language, explaining the profound in simple terms so that the readers can take it in. If articles are written in an abstruse way, readers will feel that theology is beyond them and they won't even consider reading such articles. The great poet Bai Juyi wrote his poems to be "easy to comprehend"; he should serve as our model.

When Chinese theologians expound theology, they quite often quote the works and viewpoints of Western theologians. Leaving aside for the moment whether or not their content is appropriate for Chinese conditions, the structure and rhetoric of the translations alone are rather different from Chinese habits of writing. This makes reading them a complicated matter. Moreover, some passages are quoted without naming the source, making it even more difficult for the readers to understand them. When I read such articles without reference to date or place, so that I cannot even check with a reference book, I stop reading. Some articles are translated literally instead of meaningfully, and reading them takes a lot of effort. I hope that translators could "sinicize" these articles more, both in style and content.

Secondly, Christians still make up less than one percent of the Chinese population. Why is our number so small? Isn't this worth thinking about? Do we feel responsible for this? Shouldn't this make us feel inadequate before God? If we have a sense of responsibility about this, then we need to think of ways to act. We need to act with enthusiasm instead of waiting passively. I believe the first step is theological construction. Let's get working together.

Some people have raised the problem of the contextualization of theology. Many of the views on this have been positive and everybody hopes that in this way Christianity in China can develop. As I understand it, contextualization means that the Chinese church has to fit the situation of China, and that we cannot distance ourselves from our present environment. Not only that, Chinese Christians should take an active part in all that their age demands of

them. For example, our country is currently engaged in the vigorous pursuit of reform and openness. People all over the country are responding with enthusiasm, and we, of course, cannot be the exception. This is because we are also part of the Chinese people. How can we spread the Gospel of the Lord if we fail to give witness among them?

The contextualization of theology reminds me of something St. Paul said, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor. 9:20-23). Paul says that to spread the Gospel well, one needs to adapt to one's surroundings, to be in touch with reality, to become one with the masses. Isn't this exactly what "contextual theology" means?

Thirdly, I am very happy to accept the theological concept of the "Cosmic Christ". Of course, I still need to spend more time to really understand the whole content of the theology of it. I think that "Cosmic Christ" theology will widen our field of vision to embrace all aspects of life outside the church, that we may know the God who fills everything. Humanity is inherently limited and we have more often than not limited God's love and grace. In the beginning, the Israelites thought that God was only their God, that God's saving grace could only be imparted to the Hebrew people. Similarly, today in the church there are still some people who draw a line between believers and non-believers. This runs completely counter to God's intention. God regards all people .in the world as his sons and daughters. From Jesus' story about the shepherd who left ninety-nine sheep to go and look for the one which was lost, we see that God's love isn't as selfish or as narrow as some people think.

Since everything that is true, right and beautiful has its wellspring in God, what excuse do we have for setting aside good people and good things outside the church? The good deed that the priest and the Levite failed to do was performed by the good Samaritan. We are all very familiar with this story of Jesus', but have we really understood its deepest meaning? Can't we still get new enlightenment from it?

Fourthly, as I have said above, theological construction must be geared towards the people and mobilize them. To this end, I suggest that the *Nanjing Theological Review* start a special column to discuss the development of theology, so that through this column theological thinking will be invigorated and the church's work pushed forward thereby.

Theology and the Development of the Church

Li Yanchun

Bishop K.H. Ting has said that theology is the Church thinking. Presently, the Chinese Church is developing very quickly, but we know that a developing church needs theological construction. The growth in the number of Christians, the return of church property and the fact that every three days, two new churches are being opened - these alone don't mean that the Church is really developing comprehensively. As the Church is developing, we should be aware that we need to raise standards at the same time that we increase numbers.

The term standards here, of course, refers to the standard of faith, which includes our spiritual level and Biblical knowledge as well as theological growth. While the first two are attained through each person's spiritual cultivation and worship, the latter is the sum of all our spiritual experiences which we use to guide our life of faith. The standard of a Christian or a church worker does not just depend on their spiritual level and knowledge of the Bible, but very importantly on whether they have had any proper theological training. Church workers must have proper theological training, otherwise they cannot feed their hungry sheep well. Therefore, raising the standard of believers and running the Chinese Church well cannot be separated from Chinese theological construction and improving theological expertise.

First of all, it is necessary to improve the standard of church workers, so that we do not find the blind leading the blind, theologically speaking.

Actually, we should have no fear of theology. As Rev. Chen Zemin has said: "Theology is the theory of the church's spiritual experience, it is the sum of the religious experience of a particular time." Therefore, theology should never be too difficult to master or terribly mysterious. After all, it is the sum of the Church's spiritual experience, the assemblage of the spiritual light of many people. It would be impossible to do theology shut away in one's room, without close communication with God, without the practice of the church, let alone produce a theology that has life in it. Then again, it is not enough just to have spiritual experience, one must sum up, distill and purify that experience. Moreover, it must be tested in the practice of faith, so as to give it an extensive mass character this is the meaning of "coming from the Church and going to the Church." A person without a high spiritual level and a proper theological foundation cannot do this well.

If in training church workers, our seminaries aim only at producing people who can carry a hymn tune or put together a sermon, then our Church will forever only be able to attract uneducated old grandmothers and rural believers. But the Chinese Church of the future will not be a crowd of illiterates. Besides the old ladies, some educated people with all kinds of knowledge want us to feed them. Therefore, we need a certain wealth of knowledge and spirituality. We need to be conscious of the fact that the Church doesn't just exist for today, but for eternity; we need to be not only today's church workers, but also the church workers of years and decades to come.

The development of theology has its roots within the Church, but at the same time it is influenced by the environment in which it finds itself: by politics, economics, culture and society. China has its own characteristics, so the theology of the Chinese Church cannot be the same as that of the West. For example, the Chinese Church experienced decades in which church doors were closed, and even before this the "foreign teaching" was enveloped by dark clouds. We need to understand China's history and culture, and as we understand the mentality of the people who have undergone such deep suffering, the Chinese Church will frequently have an understanding of suffering, perseverance, tolerance, love and the cross that differs from the common understanding of these terms. All of this is certainly very good source material for our theology.

There is something else worth suggesting: theological construction in the Chinese Church cannot be separated from its self-building and self-strengthening. Some of our church workers know a little bit of Western philosophy or psychology, and it is as if they had found a treasure. They talk these things up in the pulpit, but in fact many of these ideas have long been discarded by Western churches. If in "self propagation" we don't do our own thing, but use other people's spiritual experiences, whatever we write will be as dry as dust, as stale as food that has already grown cold. Our theological thinking and education will forever remain poor and there will be no vital theological thought. Theology has its own contemporariness, the language of theology must be variable, it must contextualize the discussion of the Bible if God's word, this forever unchangeable truth, is to be understood and received by today's people.

Finally, to research theology doesn't mean expostulating in an ivory tower. Barth's theology has life power because Barth had practice in pastoral work. In this vast land of China, we should not seek to touch God with just our individual heart, but with a Chinese person's heart a heart that loves China, one that is deeply involved with brothers and sisters, understands their sufferings, their thoughts and feelings, and understands China's tradition and culture. Chinese theology cannot be done apart from Chinese culture, on the contrary, it needs to take root in it and grasp all kinds of knowledge.

Theological construction in the Chinese Church needs profound church practice and keen discernment; it requires that we look with the eyes of the spirit to observe and discover. This demands of us that we be spiritual people, because only spiritual people can penetrate to the heart of things. We face numerous questions these days; for example: How can we develop the Church in an atheist nation? How can we handle the relationship between the Church and the government in a good way? How does our environment and the economy influence the church, and how should the Church react to it? There are many people who have doubts about the continued existence of "three-self"; about whether or not it has completed its historical role. The question of sin and sinlessness, God's love and his justice, the one-child policy and abortion - these and other questions follow hard on each others' heels, and we need to deeply ponder them; then answer them with responsible and completely honest hearts.

History - Faith - Context

Han Qing

For the Israelites, history and faith in God have from the beginning been indissolubly bonded together, and as the circumstances of their history took a definite form, the blank page of history became their context. It is often the context of a certain time and place that forms a direct relationship with faith, because only through an encounter with real life, interpreted through that life, can faith produce a genuine guiding meaning.

As we peruse the Israelites' history and faith, the narrative which unfolds before our eyes often embodies an interpretation of that history. This interpretation was without doubt influenced by the record keeper's vision of history, because for the Israelites, history was not

merely the knowledge of things past. Their view of history includes a vigorous realism which produces a direct relationship with things as they are in the present. The Israelites looked at history through the way of faith, and discovered God's actions in it. This clever integration of faith and history constitutes a twofold relationship between the two. On the one hand, history takes faith as an object: history enters into faith, preventing it from becoming illusory and empty. On the other hand, faith, through the prophets, looks at history and clearly discerns its direction; faith enters history, thereby giving expression to its concrete reality.

With faith as the coordinates of historical research, one can discover the meaning of history for faith, and from this emerges a guiding meaning for real life: "to forget history means to betray it." I think that the betrayers have not only lost past history, even worse, they have lost the faith in their lives. Of course, there is a problem here between inheriting and developing. This concept may have some light to shed as we undertake theological construction in the Chinese Church.

The Israelites' use of specific contexts is also shown by the way in which they drew on Babylonian and Phoenician mythology (a story describing the fight of two enemy kings, with the just king gaining victory) as a metaphor for their own history, e.g., when describing the fight between Yahweh and Rahab (Isaiah 51:9-10). Faith in the God of history leads to the Rahab of myth being turned into some kind of historic reality, to better stress the sovereignty of Yahweh, and to better express this faith. Today, we are face to face with the question of theological contextualization. The context is simply our current condition, which is interrelated both with the past and the future. Without doubt, we cannot fail to think about our past, future and present. How to make our context enter into the midst of faith, or, shall we say, how to introduce faith into our context and allow it to exert a very real influence, is a big question concerning the life force of our faith. Christianity has come from the West, and what Westerners have experienced and expressed about faith in God may not necessarily be appropriate to China's specific history, society, politics, and cultural environment. In this land of China, the flower of faith with Chinese characteristics -Chinese theology must flourish.

Today, we find ourselves in a society that is reforming and opening up, and every new trend of thought inevitably assails our faith: this is our context. Perhaps we can borrow the Israelite habit of retrospection and pondering in considering the history of our own faith, listen attentively to the little voice of God going out to us in the midst of our context, and find the responsibility we have in today's historic context to make great efforts to develop our theology, so that we can build the Chinese Church even better.

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24. Theological Symposium II: Democracy and Church Management

The most important thing for the Church is to let Jesus be the Lord, because Jesus is the Head of the Church, and the Church is the Lord's body. But the Church on earth is an organization with a visible form. How do we allow the whole body to more effectively show Jesus to others? Does the Church need to better implement democratic Church management? And if so, how? We hope that the following articles will be useful to a consideration of building up the Church in China. the Editor, *The Nanjing Theological Review*

Democratic Life in the Early Church and What it Reveals to Us

Song Yongsheng

There is a close relationship between the Church's ability to strengthen itself and to lead a democratic life. The early Church has provided a strong tradition to follow in building up the Church according to democratic principles and living together under the cross.

1. Democracy in the life of the early Church was demonstrated through elections.

The fellowship which existed among the disciples after Jesus' resurrection and before Pentecost can be called the prototype for the churches. Acts 1:15-16 records that about 120 people held a meeting to elect a twelfth apostle and following preliminary discussions, two candidates were put forward. Afterwards, through prayer and the casting of lots, Matthias was chosen to fill the position formerly occupied by Judas, the Lord's betrayer. Before the meeting, when Peter stood up to speak, he used the expression "brothers"; this was to fulfill the Lord's teaching in Mark 3:34-35, "Whoever obeys the will of my Father, that one is my brother, sister, and mother". This demonstrates that in the Lord's fellowship, the believers are equal, just like brothers. "Everyone prayed, everyone cast lots and everyone elected..." this fulfilled the democratic principle that everyone who attended the meeting was equal. This too clearly demonstrates the equality of the democratic life in the early Church.

After the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the apostles received power to bravely witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 6:1-7 records how the number of the disciples greatly increased; nevertheless the Hellenists complained that some of their people were being neglected in the distribution of food. The apostles called the whole people together for an unprecedented democratic election of seven deacons who were chosen to be responsible for the distribution of food. The church's problem was thus solved. Before the election, the apostles announced what the qualifications for deacon were. It is easy to see that these qualifications are a product of the apostles' common understanding, and a result of their mutual discussion. We can also see that before the election, the apostles must have had a brief meeting together. From our knowledge of the times, we know that the apostles had complete authority to discuss between themselves and even to choose by themselves the seven deacons needed for the great task, without involving others in an election meeting. Since the apostles decided to work in this way, however, it clearly demonstrates the

importance of democracy for the building up of the church and the universality of elections in the early church.

2. The democratic life of the early Church is expressed in its method of problem-solving.

The light of the gospel spread swiftly, starting in Jerusalem and going out to the nations. The newly established church in Antioch had to face an ambiguous question, the crux of which was the Old Testament law of circumcision and its relation, if any, to Christianity or salvation. At that time everyone had different ideas (Acts 15:1-2). In order to seek an answer to the problem, the first church council in history was held in Jerusalem. The atmosphere was one of complete equality and democracy among brothers. All the members could speak freely to air their views, culminating in a consensus on how best to help the church in Antioch. We must pay special attention to the verse which speaks of Paul and Barnabas being "appointed" by all the disciples (Acts 15:2ff). This tells us that the church in Antioch did not make its decision on these issues until Paul had gone to Jerusalem to receive instructions from the apostles and elders. This demonstrates that the early Church in Antioch was one in which all people had a responsibility. Everyone took part in problem-solving and the whole assembly of believers followed the Spirit's leading to take part in building up the Church.

Paul, as the leader of the Gentile church, paid special attention to the democratic life of the Church. His theology emphasized that in Christ's substitutionary redemption, everyone equally shares in God's grace. This is the central core of justification by faith. In this is included the democratic principle that everyone is equal under the cross. The way he dealt with problems in the church, reveals this even more clearly. ... Paul did not use his authority as an apostle to influence others from above or to force them to go along with his own personal desires or feelings, appointing a particular person to a responsible position in the church, rather he let the believers participate in this decision. This participation by believers in solving church problem is another demonstration of the democracy in the life of the early Church.

3. What the democratic life of the early Church reveals.

From the above, it can be seen that the early Church always existed in a democratic atmosphere, from its inception to its establishment, as the church in Jerusalem to its expansion into a Gentile church, from the preaching of the apostles to Paul's missionary travels. The fellowship of believers was established on the foundation of equality among its members.

Since God made weak spiritual fellowships into the Church, thus He must lead the Church into becoming a collection of better spiritual fellowships.

The democratic idea that all people are equal under the cross must continue in the Church until God comes to tabernacle among humankind (Rev. 21:3).

Now the Church in China proclaims the three-self principle, and we have established a uniquely Chinese Church. To run the Church well, we cannot forsake the democratic

lifestyle, because the quality of democracy is part of "self-government, self-support, and self-propagation".

Many unsatisfactory things and abnormal phenomena exist in our church today. This has been brought about by rapid church growth in recent years, the failure of the democratic life of the church to keep pace, and a separation between Church and believers. Though today we cannot mechanically apply the early Church model of democracy, still we can draw upon their practical experience in democratic practices in forging a suitable democratic style for our Church. For example, a system of representation for believers where one representative is elected to represent every fifty believers to participate in the church work and organization to strengthen bonding and transparency in the Church. This is the only way to win the approval of believers.

When democracy is missing from church life, believers will feel alienated from the Church. They will lack the powerful bond of true fellowship. Therefore if we wish to build up our church in a distinctly Chinese way based on the "three-well" principle, the crucial issue is how to successfully practice democracy in church life and raise the believers' awareness of the need for their participation.

The facts tell us that the foundation stone of the Church is to establish it according to the principle of democracy. This too is the guarantee of a well-run church and the standard by which the gospel flourishes. Therefore for us to ponder the theological connotations of the democratic life of the early Church for our own democratic management of the church will be very beneficial and enlightening for our work of running the church well.

Democratic Management in the Chinese Church from the Perspective of the Jerusalem Council

Fang Ping

According to the Book of Acts, the early Church was troubled by "certain individuals who came down from Judea". They taught that unless a man were circumcised, he could not be saved. Therefore Paul and Barnabbas went to Jerusalem to discuss this problem with the apostles and elders (Acts 15:6). After much debate, Peter stood up (15:7) and told the people to be quiet and listen to Barnabbas and Paul (15:12). These verses give a brief account of the meeting and fully express its democratic atmosphere, which could be described as everyone having the chance to speak. After that James, known as a pillar of the church, summed up. He drew conclusions from what Peter and others had said, as well as from the prophets and the Bible's teaching. Many people took part in this meeting; there were apostles, elders and evangelists. The meeting, however, was conducted decently and in good order; none of the participants lorded it over any others, and the apostles were no exception. Issues were debated and explored on a footing of equality and all were free to speak their minds. Although there were different points of view, there was one common purpose, and that was to allow the Holy Spirit to do his own work and to allow the truth to prevail. From this we can see that on the one hand, there was active debate in which everyone was free to express their own point of view, and in fact this was very animated. Yet on the other hand, everyone

was concerned with the pursuit of truth. Thus even though some people had some very strong opinions, no one voice was able to control the entire meeting. Therefore James' summation was based on everyone's mutual understanding and was happily accepted by all. There was no opposition. This was a very successful democratic meeting. Everyone could express their opinion freely and openly, while at the very same time being ready to humbly listen to others.

The Church in China today has run into many problems including matters of faith, church affairs and management. These problems need to be addressed. For a variety of reasons, such as the shortage of clergy, the relatively poor standard of faith in the Church in general, and the management difficulties which arise from a union based on denominational backgrounds, it is difficult for the Church to solve our practical problems. I believe that the relationship between local churches and church organizations is very similar to that in the early Church. Therefore there are many aspects of the early Church that are worthy of our study so we can benefit from its experience. The Jerusalem council is just one example.

Right now the Church in China lacks the early Church's spirit in democratically exploring the future development of the Church. Many problems of management exist in the Church today. One important reason for this is that there is still not a truly democratic system. Some local churches do not have any democracy at all. This results in a lack of transparency in the church, financial confusion, people monopolizing the pulpit, autocratic decision making, and even concentrating authority in a single person. People cringe at such things. Democratization of church management must be put rapidly upon our agenda. The Church is waiting for the day when every church worker participates actively in the work of the Church, making the work of the Church their personal business. In such a situation each one will boldly and sincerely offer their own suggestions, while remaining open to other people's points of view and adopting what is good in them, in order to seek truth and what is most beneficial for the Church.

Besides this, we need to hear the lay Christians and see what types of requests they have. The Jerusalem council was successful because, in addition to earnestly seeking the truth, they were not simply building castles in the air, but were discussing things that mattered: "all the miracles and signs that God had done through them among the Gentiles." We should remember that Peter had first-hand experience of evangelizing the Gentiles, that Paul and Barnabbas came to the meeting directly from the Gentile churches, and they discussed these issues in terms of things that genuinely affected the life of the churches. We really need to learn about these things so that we can properly manage the Church in China today. The Jerusalem council gives us a great example of doing one's best to seek the truth. It also points out a practical way to work. We hope the leaders of the CCC and TSPM at every level will immerse themselves in the church at the grassroots, will go among the people and allow more church workers from the grassroots to attend national church conferences in order to strengthen both communication and understanding, so that there will really be some muscle in all of our talk of church democracy. For only in this way can we formulate or apply policies and better spread the spirit of democracy in the church, making use of our collective wisdom and finding the way forward for the Chinese Church.

What Type of Polity Should the Church in China Have?

Ye Dawei

The Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century produced three mainline denominations: the Episcopal system of the Anglicans, the Presbyterian and the Congregational.

The Episcopal system originated in England, where it took the form of dioceses headed by bishops responsible for all church administration, ministry and ordained clergy. As successors to the apostles, they also allowed lay believers to participate in the running of the church, with church councils being established at the grassroots.

The Presbyterian system was started by Calvin. He felt that the Church was a fellowship of all the believers. The pastor was responsible for preaching and the sacraments; teachers were solely responsible for what was taught, deacons oversaw the church property, elders and the pastors worked together in running things. These elders were elected, the church council was composed of the pastor and the elders and pastors, while a united meeting of elders served as the highest administrative organ. Lay believers had authority to elect elders.

The Congregational Church whose polity is special in that all church business is managed directly by the congregational members themselves was established in England. Every congregation is completely independent; there is no overarching organization. Pastors are called democratically. The church council is directly elected by the congregation, as are other offices of the church, who all assist the clergy in running the church. In this type of system, all the people come together of their own free will, and all are equal.

To summarize, in the Anglican system power is relatively centralized. In the Presbyterian system, although the office of Bishop is abolished, and church management is taken over by elders, as Calvin himself said, actually it is just a changed form of bishops, since the Church is headed by one person holding the crucial power of deciding what is and is not heresy. The Congregationalists do not establish a supreme administrative organ and thus appear to have the most democratic spirit. Yet these three kinds of churches share a common concern for democratic governance and democratic elections, even though in the Anglican tradition there is a set of strict regulations governing the ordination of clergy. Thus it appears that they are all inheritors of the four marks of the Church, that they follow the Bible's teachings and that the whole body of believers have a say in church affairs, including dismissing those who are blatantly irresponsible and obviously corrupt. It is clear that the Lord is the one head of the Church, that the body is composed of different members who together form one healthy and active Body in a spirit of unity (1 Cor. 12:4-31).

Should the Church in China set up some similar type of church polity? What type of church polity is suitable for China with its national and church traditions? Should it simply select one of the mentioned above? The Church in China needs to set its root firmly in China itself; at the same time it is a part of the universal Church. Although the Chinese Church has already entered a period of post-denominationalism, that is not to say that we do not need

any type of Church polity. A Church should have some type of standardized regulations. But still the establishment of a polity for the Church in China should not be a matter of taking whatever is to hand, because the development of the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Congregational Church were by no means accidental. Rather they have a very profound social and political background.

In China there is separation between Church and State. Christians still comprise a small minority compared to the national population. Although the denominational consciousness of foreign mission agencies has left its mark on today's Chinese Church, nevertheless since 1958 and the unification of worship, the concept of denominationalism has grown weaker by the day. But still, as the Church in China considers what type of polity to adopt, it ought to select the best parts of the above-mentioned systems. Also it ought to be bold enough to create something new, so that we can effectively mix the tradition of the Church with the distinctive characteristics of our own situation.

Presently the main weaknesses of our system of church management are: 1) Over-emphasis on the proportion of volunteers, church workers, and three-self personnel. Many names are listed for the church council, but most of the time they are not actually working in the churches; they don't receive one penny from the church, and they don't know much about the running of the church, and though they have duties, you seldom actually see them in meetings. They are not of much use. 2) Over-centralization of power. The colleagues mainly responsible for the church are busy with so many duties and wear many hats. Everything, large or small, all require their approval and they always need to be consulted. And thus it is hard to improve the quality of visitation, worship, and preaching.

This writer feels that: 1) The position of Bishop as administrative and spiritual leader should be retained. 2) Representative assemblies of laity should be established on democratic principles at all levels to serve as the highest organ of authority and important issues, such as dismissal of unsatisfactory employees, should be submitted to them for discussion and authorization. 3) Non-ordained elders and lay Christians should be elected to form a management committee responsible for the administration of church work other than ministry. 4) Ordained evangelists, elders, and pastors should form a pastoral conference to discuss and decide upon matters relating to ministry, so that pastors can set aside administrative work in order to concentrate on pastoral work; 5) Lay volunteers too should have their own fellowship groups to realize their potential, so that under pastoral guidance they can carry out their meaningful tasks according to their own ability.

24. **May the Lord's Church Grow in Health** – Ah Wen

The Chinese Church does not trust in power or ability, but on the work of the Sovereign Lord Himself so that the number of those who believe and are saved daily increases. Churches too have sprung up across the land like bamboo shoots after a Spring rain. The Christian Church is bearing fruit in China.

However, behind this thriving picture, there are problems.

First of all, the system of church organization is not ideal. The various denominations which united in the one Chinese Church have brought with them problems that make church management difficult. In 1992 the two national Christian bodies put out a "Trial Order for Church Use" which has had a positive impact on making the local church well run. But difficulties remain.

In the Chinese Church today, there is a small number of evangelists whose work is substandard and insufficient emphasis is placed on the problem of training the next generation of church workers. This hinders the Church from being the "golden lamppost" to glorify God and help the people. How are we supposed to solve this type of problem?

For example, in a northern industrial city, there are about 2000 believers in the city proper. The sole pastor, who is already over 70 years old, is assisted by only two co-workers. After several seminary graduates returned to the city, the church not only failed to arrange any work for them, but sent them home and told them not to evangelize without the church's permission. These brothers and sisters found the church's actions incomprehensible.

When the writer had a chance to observe these conditions and speak to the person in charge about how these problems might be solved, he only sighed and smiled without answering, and finally said that he could do nothing except make recommendations. After all the behavior of the pastor in question was not really too extreme. He had not actually gone against any regulations or been guilty of spreading heresy. He simply treated the Lord's work like any other job.

This is just one example of the actual conditions in the Church and I fear that every local church has fallen prey to such things to some extent. Regarding these irresponsible evangelists, we are utterly helpless. There is nothing we can do.

In another respect, there is a sense in which the relationship between the provincial Three-Self and Christian Council and the local congregations seems to have come apart. Not all local congregations are willing to accept the leadership of these two provincial bodies. Actually almost congregations today are "self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating". So if the provincial level bodies send an evangelist to work in a troubled county church, the responsible person at the county level may have a hostile attitude towards him or her and make their work difficult.

Not only have things broken down between the local church and the provincial Church bodies, the relationship between these bodies on the provincial and national levels is hardly harmonious. The aim of the TSPM and CCC at the national level is to serve all believers in China. This service requires the cooperation and support of the local churches. When contradictions within certain churches become particularly acute, the TSPM and CCC should have the ability to regulate the situation and the authority to solve the problem and see that things return to normal. There are thousands of churches throughout the county now. We must work hard and cooperate in everything to make the Lord's Church well run. We all need to do our best to make the Lord's Church grow in health. For any local church the world over, growth is not simply a matter of smooth sailing, but rather it is a continuous process of self-correction, to make oneself more perfect and more in keeping with the Lord's will.

Church Governance and Democratic Supervision

Li Duohao

It is truly a good thing that in China denominations have been brought to an end. But it is a sad thing to lose the organization and traditions of any denomination. The national CCC and TSPM have done their best in this regard by promulgating a church order, but there is no way to guarantee that it will be used. Disharmony between church organizations means that some church leaders have gone their own way and some have become corrupt. Yet no one dares to do anything about it or really can do anything about it! Thus God's name is put to shame and the work of the Church is interfered with. What concerns us even more is that though these people do not represent the Church or "three self", because of them, the church or "three-self" becomes the target of attack. Therefore we really must think about the problem of church governance.

In order for this situation to change, organization at all levels of the two Christian bodies should be improved as soon as possible, so that there will be a more direct guiding relationship between the national, provincial, city, district and church levels of Three-Self and the Christian Council. This will guarantee that decisions taken and regulations passed at all levels of the two bodies can be carried out. A structure like the Presbyterian form which progresses from church to presbytery to synod would change the situation in which all levels have only had the power to make recommendations, which has proved useless. Let's look at two examples.

Where the founders of local churches have been in the church for a long time, it often happens that they take over. They may force out others who worked with them in building up the church originally. As the saying goes, there can't be two suns in the sky, nor two masters in a church. And then they get their supporters together and attack each other. The pulpit becomes a battleground. It is not love the believers see, but competition and endless arguments. If the conflicts get worse, the district church may be asked to intervene. But if any one side is not satisfied, then they will gather people from the village including women and children to attack each other physically and verbally.

A Church is the body of Christ made up of believers. When believers are involved in church management and democratic supervision, the Church will benefit. It will be well run. More authority should be given to the believers so they can be more active as volunteers. Then they will

sense the responsibility and power of being children of God. Through active participation in the management of the church, they will come to a true perception of the Church as their own home. This will help to counteract the situation where one person, with or without reason, has all the say. Then those of "good reputation, wise people filled with the Spirit" can play a part in the management of church affairs. On the other hand, we must re-order the relationship between the two Christian bodies at all levels. Then the higher level of these bodies will have supervisory power over the lower levels or in the local churches. This will help to eliminate the possibility of one person having all the power in the church, or of the church being torn apart.

Both the Catholic and Protestant churches worldwide have well structured organizations and regulations so the church functions properly and in good order. In order to avoid the misuse of power or to prevent the church from becoming formulaic, it is also necessary to promote democracy. If we want to run the Chinese Church well, we must have an excellent church order with strong democratic supervision.

The Standard of Believers and Democratic Management

Cheng Zuming

Managing the Church in a democratic fashion is an important task today in making the church well run. To spur the development of democracy in the church, the first task is to liberate our thinking and come to recognize that democratic management is essential. Secondly, we need to raise the standard of faith among the believers. Speaking frankly, unless we raise the overall quality of the Church it will be hard to accomplish the goal of running the church democratically. We know that the standard of Chinese believers is generally quite low. This is a serious obstacle in the process of democratization in church management. A low standard is not only a matter of education, but of outlook. The traditional Chinese cultural concepts of inaction and "being worldly wise and playing it safe" have over a long period of time become ingrained in the timid Chinese consciousness. "Softness is valuable; and what's shameful can be endured; be satisfied with what you have; seek peace; don't be the first; don't be sorry if you're the last; be insensitive; the bird that never sticks out its head will not get shot." Add to such attitudes the feudal, patriarchal clan system and its amplification in the patriarchal style of work and you have the situation where "if one (villager) achieves something, even the chickens and dogs are elevated". Such feudal ideas, along with looking out for one's own turf and favoritism, cannot help but influence the standard of faith among believers, and restrict and impede the process of democratic management in the church.

On the other hand, the believers' educational level is not easy to ignore. In backward areas, people follow the backward and ignorant. The low overall educational level of believers makes them vulnerable to superstition. A superstitious faith will inevitably influence the democratic management of the church. Now of course we are not complaining about the low standard of faith among believers. In fact our purpose is to clarify the sickness in the Chinese Church. Then we can write out an effective prescription to cure it. We are not pessimistic or without hope - in fact just the opposite we must work hard to increase standards among the believers, and this is dependent upon their own education and upon theological education. But for a long time now we have been held up by conservative and

parochial thinking, and this has made some of our seminary students very narrow intellectually. This will not satisfy the churches need for in-depth development.

Elevating the standard believers and developing democratic management in the church will supplement one another. The low standard of believers restricts the development of democratic management in the church, but the development of democratic management in the church influences the standard of believers too. Therefore we must make progress in both of these areas at the same time. Elevating standards among the believers is a gradual process, and implementing democratic management in the church should also be a long term, gradual process. We need to go one step at a time.

Following upon the elevation of standards among believers, the democratic life of the church should also see in-depth development, thus enlarging the scope of the believers' participation in the management of the church, and enabling more people to take part. With such a mutual adaptation, the church order will be the best expression of a representative body of the believers, so that the whole congregation can participate directly in the democratic running of the church.

Finally I'd like to say that no matter what style of democratic management is used, the Church will always have a dual character. While it is in the process of developing, corrupt practices will always appear, and so we must never stop trying to perfect and renew the church, but we will never be able to think of everything.

* * *

No matter what type of advanced democratic management method we use, we must never forget that we are the Lord's body. "Love" is the center of all we do. Apart from this center, no matter what type of management method we use, we will always fail.

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Translated by Craig Molotoris. Slightly shortened.

25. Y.T. Wu: A Prophetic Theologian –Chen Zemin

YT Wu [Wu Y''aozong] (1893-1979) was a leading figure in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement from its inception until the Cultural Revolution. fie served the YMCA as editor-in-chief at the Association Press in Shanghai during the 1940s and founded the Protestant magazine, then a weekly, Tian Feng. *In November this year, the China Christian Council and the Three-Self Movement held a centennial commemoration of his birth.*

Historical Sketch

A complete biography or a chronology of Y.T. Wu's life has yet to be written. According to Mr. Shen Derong's *Profile,* beginning from the time that Mr. Wu became a Christian, we can divide his life into four periods:

1) From his introduction to Christianity (1911), baptism into the Christian Church (1918, at age 25), and the beginning of his work with the YMCA (1920) until he went to the United States for advanced studies (1924-1927), he was in what was then Peiping (Beijing). At this time he was influenced by the concept of reconciliation.' He produced over twenty articles in *Truth,* propounding Christianity and reconciliation. During his third year of overseas studies, he studied theology and philosophy at both Union Theological Seminary of New York and Columbia University, and was confirmed in his advocacy of reconciliation. After his return to China, he worked in the campus division of the YMCA, served as chair of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and as editor of the Chinese version of the *Reconciliation* journal. During this time (1931-1937) he authored over twenty articles in *Reconciliation.* Afterwards, he began to doubt "unarmed resistance" (pacifism), wrestled with the problem in his thinking for four years, and finally rejected it. In 1937 he resigned the chair of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In 1934 he published *The Social Gospel* in Shanghai, which was a collection of his writings from 1931-1934 (altogether eighteen articles), representing his religious, theological, and socio-political thinking after 1918 and prior to changing his views on reconciliation.

2) In late 1937 and early 1938, he returned to the United States and Europe, and studied for six months at Union Theological Seminary in New York. After returning to China, he worked in the publications department of the national YMCA in Shanghai. He joined the "YY1 Society," and actively promoted patriotic progressive thinking. In Changsha and Hankou, he became acquainted with Xu Teli, Zhou Enlai, and others. He traveled to India and visited with Gandhi. From 1939 to 1941 he traveled throughout China to promote resistance against Japan. From late 1941 through May of 1946 he was in Chengdu, working on literary propagation. He joined the "YY2 Society". He established the United Christian Publishing Society, and initiated *Tian Feng Monthly* and the series *Christian Collection* (1942). In 1943 he published *No One Has Seen God.* He was an active participant in anti-Chiang Kai Shek democratic progressive activities. In June of 1946 he returned to Shanghai and published "The Contemporary Tragedy of Christianity" in *Tian Feng* in the Spring of 1948. In May of the same year he was forced to resign as head of the *Tian Feng* Society. In

late 1949 he published *Darkness and Light,* a collection of fifty-three articles written during the previous seven years, representing his religious and socio-political thinking.

3) From 1949-1966 he actively joined in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, and made immeasurable contributions to the reform and building up of the Chinese Church. He actively participated in many political activities, and published many articles in *Tian Feng.* In addition, he made many speeches. However, materials from this period are limited.

4) Because materials after the Cultural Revolution are limited, it is difficult to form any judgment.

After he joined the Christian Church, during a period of sixty years, Y.T. Wu made innumerable speeches and wrote a great number of articles, only a small portion of which were published or have been preserved. I would like to suggest that the CCC and TSPM make the effort to produce a complete and in-depth biography.

A Prophetic Theologian

There is no disputing the fact that Mr. Wu played a prophetic role, or that he was an advocate of the China Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement, who opened up a new path for the Christian Church in a New China in the process of construction. However, there are inevitably some who raise doubts, criticisms, or reproach on theological or religious grounds. I would like to make some preliminary comments about such criticisms, but due to the constraints of time and resources, these may be superficial. I hope they will lead to a more fruitful exchange of views among a broader group, and would welcome all comments.

Theologically Mr. Wu has been criticized in four respects: 1) his espousal of reconciliation; 2) as an advocate of the social gospel; 3) for his liberal theology or "modernism" or "YMCA theology"; he has been branded as "unspiritual, or even as an "unbeliever"; 4) consequently, he is not a theologian. To avoid bias, we must take a comprehensive and fair view of such criticisms, studying and testing without preconceptions, basing our views on Mr. Wu's entire lifetime of contributions and undertakings, his entire corpus of speeches and writings (or at least the most important ones), his background, his conduct and tangible accomplishments, and the influence he exerted.

First, we must state that Mr. Wu as a person was extremely just, reliable, and forthright. What he said was of a piece with what he believed and thought. One can perceive his conduct and innermost heart from his speeches and writings. His heart was without deceit. His talk and his walk were one; indeed his walk bore out his talk. He did not cover up his faith, his thinking, or his point of view. He had the courage to insist on what he felt to be right, but also to correct what he perceived to be his mistakes. His entire life was one of forging ahead. Thus, we must understand that in evaluating Mr. Wu, it is most important to measure his conduct, work, undertakings, and influence, rather than base our view primarily on his thought (especially his religious or theological thought). We must realize that his conduct was guided by his thought (including his religious and theological thought and his socio-political thought).

On the basis of what Mr. Wu himself said, his thinking underwent two major changes during his lifetime. One was his acceptance of Christianity. This was the most fundamental change, and determined his perspectives on life and the world, which did not subsequently change. The second occurred during the later stages of the War of Resistance against Japan, when he "accepted the anti-religious theories of social science, and combined materialist thinking with religious faith." These two fundamental changes happened during the first period and the beginning of the second, referred to above. However, the second change was not a denial of his Christian faith, but rather deepened and developed it. (Cf. *No One Has Seen God,* 2nd. edition, 1947, appendices A and B.) Even in 1979, at the end of his life he believed in Christianity, loved the Church, and even asked, in spite of illness, to attend the thanksgiving service marking the opening of Muen Church in Shanghai.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation was a form of pacifist thinking current at the time of the First World War. It considered love to be the highest principle in dealing with people or events, and opposed the use of military force to solve conflicts or struggles in society. This indeed has a basis in Scripture (e.g., I & 2 John and I Corinthians 13). From the point of view of faith, this is completely "orthodox." However, as a principle of social ethics, on a practical everyday level, it is not easily accomplished. It calls for very difficult choices in the conflict between the ideal and the real, and it calls for great sacrifice. Once Mr. Wu accepted Christianity, he felt he should be a genuine, consistent Christian. He needed great courage and commitment in order to live according to the Sermon on the Mount. At this time an English Quaker missionary in Beijing, Henry T. Hodgkin, initiated a "Fellowship of Reconciliation". Mr. Wu and some other Christians joined this organization, and contributed their devout and eloquent abilities by writing many articles, including editorials, news stories, discussions, and replies for the Fellowship's periodical *Reconciliation* (from the first issue in 1931 through 1935, there were a total of 17 issues). Reading these articles today we cannot but affirm and deeply admire Mr. Wu's thoroughgoing commitment of faith and his grounding in Scripture and theology. This was the time when Japanese imperialism was invading China, and vast areas of the northeastern and northern China came bit by bit under occupation. Countless millions of our compatriots suffered humiliation and massacre. In the face of this national distress, with patriotic compatriots increasingly pursuing a war of resistance, he still maintained his ideal of reconciliation, pursuing peaceful non-cooperation as a way to save the country. The conflict between the two approaches, however, began a long-standing and bitter struggle in Mr. Wu's heart. From the early 1920s to 1931 (18 September), 1932 (28 January), and 1937 (the entire War of Resistance), Mr. Wu moved from pure reconciliation to non-cooperation with the Japanese, to a theoretical reconciliation, to actions that supported military opposition in the War of Resistance, to active participation with every kind of patriot in the movement to resist the Japanese and save the nation from extinction, to the use of military force for the sake of love that does not transgress the spirit of reconciliation, to singing the praises of military force to oppose aggression. In the end, he completed a long and difficult process of changing his political thinking (and also his theological thinking) (Cf. Shen Derong, "Wu Yaozong and Reconciliation," 1989).

In 1937 he resolutely resigned his position as head of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. However, this for him simply confirmed his faith in Jesus' teaching about love as the most important feature and the highest principle of the doctrine and faith of Christianity. How to express this principle of love in the face of brutal realities is the major question of Christian ethics. After Mr. Wu accepted Christianity, he perceived a sublime concept, a lofty principle in Scripture, and especially in Jesus' teaching, deeds, and suffering sacrifice. Throughout his life, Mr. Wu dedicated himself to the struggle for this concept and principle. During this time he faced many challenges, including the War of Resistance against Japan, the Second World War, the AntiChiang Democratic Struggle, the war of liberation, and a whole series of political struggles after liberation... He transformed his thinking from the principle of pacifism to accepting the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of struggle. He was convinced that in terms of purpose and basic thinking Christianity and Marxism-Leninism were one and could be reconciled, even if not in terms of the methods and theory of struggle. In terms of theory and theology, there must be a refined and reasonable explanation, and there must be a corresponding expression in terms of deeds. Throughout all of this, he was faithful to his religious faith and to what he felt to be truth. He did not violate the divine mandate of patriotism, not did he transgress the mandate given him concerning God, Church, society, or nation. During the a decade of social disruption, he continued to forge ahead, revising his understanding of struggle as a method. Even up till the time of his death, he did not set aside his ideal and conviction of love. After the 1950s, his effort to rouse the Christians of China to reform the church of China was based on this conviction and concept. There are too few theologians with this kind of wisdom and the courage to maintain their convictions, to do what should be done both theoretically and practically, and to make reasonable adjustments. (This reminds me of the young theologian in the Germany of the 1940s who gave his life in the struggle against Hitler, namely Dietrich Bonhoeffer!) Therefore, to say that Mr. Wu was a prophetic theologian is no exaggeration. (Later many things happened that no one could control or change; nor were they things he hoped for or should be held responsible for.)

The Social Gospel

Mr. *Wu's The Social Gospel* was published in September of 1934 (Shanghai YMCA Publishers). It pulled together eighteen articles written between 1930 and 1934. This was just at the time when he was in the process of rejecting the unarmed resistance principle of reconciliation, during his transition toward acceptance of the Marxist theory of revolutionary class struggle, which he compared to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. He was seeking a way to combine a love of country and a love of church, a way to remain faithful to the concept of reconciliation, while reforming society. At this time, he still held fast to his ideal of reconciliation (cf. the tenth essay, "The Shanghai Incident and the Idea of Reconciliation"; the eleventh essay, "Reconciliation Amid the Drumbeats"; the thirteenth essay, "Reconciliation and Social Reform"). But both conceptually and practically, he retained a close link between war and struggle and the problems of society (cf. the third essay, "China's Crisis and the International Situation"; the eighth essay, "Voluntary Army in the Northeast Army of Volunteers and Us"; the fourth essay, "The Prerequisite for a Way Out for Youth"; and the sixth essay, "Concerning Marriage and Love"). Although this is not a systematic work (cf. the preface), its central idea is where Chinese Christianity should be heading (cf. the fifteenth and sixteenth essays, "Our Mission Today"). The entire book takes its name from the

opening article, "The Meaning of the Social Gospel". This has led to many misunderstandings, and provided a basis for many attacks and groundless slander.

The Social Gospel was a popular movement in North American Christian theology for some thirty years, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its purpose was based on Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God in the Scriptures, namely to correct the "spiritual gospel" prevalent in North American churches, i.e., the idea that only personal salvation is important, to the neglect of the social significance of the gospel. The message of the "social gospel" both continues the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, and is based on the teachings of Jesus himself. Theologically it is completely authentic, and hermeneutically it is beyond challenge. Mr. Wu in his first article ("The Meaning of the Social Gospel") discussed this concept in great detail, and made use of the Rauschenbusch's understanding of it. This was a contemporary bugle call for prophets in evil times. Today, some sixty years later, in the society and church of China, this still has a very important and practical significance. Christianity is fundamentally incarnational, concerned with society, and is not simply concerned only with the salvation of individual souls or with a mystical religious devotion. (If Christianity had been like the gnosticism that spread along the coasts of the Mediterranean in the first and second centuries, offering individual salvation and denying this mortal world, going to the extreme of excluding other teachings, it would likely have faded from history early on, with no chance of growing, as it has today, into the largest of world faiths.) Mr. Wu certainly never denied that Christianity changes individuals, or that it is a gospel of salvation for individual souls. He followed up his first article with the second, "Social Gospel and Personal Gospel." He emphasized that "the basic power of religious life comes from the personal gospel." He used Jesus' own words to explain that the personal gospel is "a form of clarity of consciousness, spiritual harmony, inner liberation, and the power of potentiality." The personal gospel is "the seed of life." This kind of life must flower and bear fruit in one's actual situation, which then becomes the "social gospel." Thus, social gospel and personal gospel are two sides of the same coin. Personal gospel and social gospel each should lead to the other in an ongoing cycle. He quoted Harry Emerson Fosdick: "Social gospel and personal gospel are like the ends of the Hudson River Tunnel. If you go in this end, you come out that end. If you go in that end, you come out this one. But there's only one tunnel."

The social gospel was a corrective movement at the beginning of the present century, and is not in itself a complete system of theology. At the time, it had affinities with the "liberal theology" of North America. After the Second World War, in the face of the brutal realities of history, the dreams of some proponents of the "social gospel" to improve society came to naught. "Liberal theology" was criticized and declared bankrupt by "Neo-orthodoxy." During the chaotic decades after the war, there appeared around the world a personal gospel and a "charismatic movement," which characterized the upsurging "Revival of Evangelical Religion." Since the 1970s many foreign "evangelical" groups emphasize only salvation to the neglect of the social origins of sin; this is one-sided and incomplete. There have appeared "neo-evangelicals" who have placed more emphasis on concern for society, and whose theological orientation is a bit more open. This is precisely the "cycle" that Mr. Wu spoke of Liberation theology, which began in Latin America and has influenced the entire third world, can be seen from one viewpoint to be precisely this "cycle," as it develops, "flowers and bears fruit" in the new historical conditions of society. Because of the decades of difficulties

that the church in China endured, and because for a long period it was cut off from the outside world, and was indeed rather isolated, the mentality and theological viewpoint of most believers was captured in the outlook of the 50s and 60s, which was characterized by fundamentalism, unconcern about the world, personal salvation, and hostility to other denominations. Others were affected by the anti-communist propaganda both before and after liberation, and so could not understand, or even opposed, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement initiated by Mr. Wu. They consequently used Mr. *Wu's The Social Gospel*, written some sixty years earlier, as the basis for attacking him. If this was not done from ignorance, then it must have been done out of prejudice. I hope such people take a bit of time to read this small book carefully and with open minds, placing it in its contemporary social context. If so, they might be able to hear the voice of a prophet.

Concept of God

Ten years after the publication of *The Social Gospel* Mr. Wu wrote another small book, *No One Has Seen* God (early 1943, Chengdu), elucidating his views of religion and God. He went twice to the United States (1924-1927, 1936-1937) to study theology and philosophy at Union Theological Seminary in New York and at Columbia University. These were the times when the struggle between "fundamentalism" and "modernism" was at its most heated and nearly at an end. This struggle was in reality the conflict between fideism and rationalism, the debate about how, in the new historical situation and social environment, to use reason and modern scientific concepts to introduce and explain Christian faith and doctrine to the educated class. Union Theological Seminary in New York was a bastion of "modernism" and "liberal theology." Mr. Wu was himself a thoughtful person, with inclinations to the rational, ready to accept progressive thinking, and an activist who combined knowledge and action. His choice of Union Theological Seminary and his being influenced by this theological trend was no chance, and certainly was not "something he had no choice in." The view of religion and of God explicated in his *No One Has Seen God* simply reflected his established ideas. After his return to China, the growing educated class was caught up in the May Fourth Movement, there was "anti-Christian" influence, liberation thinking, seeking for freedom, and a yearning for truth. These were times when many educated young people, in times of national distress, were unsure of the future and without hope, but continued to seek truth and a viable future. The influence of Marxism-Leninism was growing daily. The anti-religious thinking presented a great challenge to religion. In Chengdu Mr. Wu met a large number of patriotic educated young people who had been exiled to western China. He used rational concepts and deep wisdom to introduce and explain the faith and truth of Christianity to them. Some people who have seen nothing more than the title of the book, and have not had time to read it carefully, conclude that this is a book that promotes atheism. In reality, Mr. Wu is simply using the Bible to explain the existence of God: in words from St. John's Gospel, "the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known," and from I John "if we love one another, God's love abides in us." The entire book does not merely explicate the Biblical view of God, or Jesus view of God; it also uses the concepts of philosophers, namely how to experience God on the basis of true feelings, beauty, or good experiences. He also discusses the problems of truth, of the meaning of life, and of materialism and socialism. Even more noteworthy is the length at which he discusses the meaning and effect. of prayer. Mr. Wu not only sincerely believed in God, but also communicated regularly with God in prayer. "Prayer is harmony, light, and strength." (Mr. Wu's understanding and practice of prayer should be the topic of another study.) Of more value still is the fact that when Mr. Wu

talks about the existence of God or about faith in God, it is not just idle talk. He expressed his faith and lived his faith in the midst of his life and work. We can say that Mr. Wu's entire life was built on his religious faith. Those who say Mr. Wu had no faith are those who espouse the judgment of him as an "unbeliever", "not a theologian". Reading the book would do them no harm. I suspect that the faith of many critics cannot approach the depth and strength of Mr. Wu's faith, nor does their "theological thinking" approach the brilliance of his.

It was not Mr. Wu's intention to establish a complete system of theology. He sought to bring faith and practice into harmony. He was involved in the midst of an intense and real struggle, which did not allow time for him to develop his theological thinking into a complete system. At the conclusion of this book, he wrote "I have many more years to go in my heart and another book, *What is Christianity?* This should be a somewhat longer and more systematic study. By contrast, this present small study is only one part of that future work; in terms of systematic thinking, this is a prelude or miniature of that book." Later, historical developments demanded that Mr. Wu devote more time and effort to more crucial immediate struggles and undertakings. His vision far surpassed the limits of seminary lectures, classes, or writings. As a result, he was not able to complete this longer writing. This duty he left for the next generation of theologians.

Conclusion

During the intense struggles of the chaotic years, Mr. Wu wrote yet another book, *Darkness and Light (1949,* Shanghai), another collection of articles. We do not have time here to analyze the contents in detail. Very briefly, this book reflects Mr. Wu's mental struggle during the difficult passage of China and the Church in China from darkness into light. Mr. Wu was not satisfied being an abstruse, conjectural, pedantic theologian. He was rather a brave and wise prophetic theologian who devoted himself to bringing together faith, ideology, and life. The prophets of the Bible and of history have always been thus. If we were to feel that because Mr. Wu did not produce several major books of systematic theology or was not a theological specialist, he therefore was not a theologian, we would not understand Mr. Wu. That would show that our vision is too nearsighted and we are too narrow-minded. Those who from their own fundamentalist perspective feel that Mr. Wu was a "liberal theologian" or a "non-believer," simply demonstrate their own ignorance and self-pride. Their slanderous attacks do not in the least damage Mr. Wu's noble vision or his great accomplishments. We should maintain mutual respect in matters of faith and theological thinking, and hopefully not stir up useless "theological conflict" on the occasion of Mr. Wu's centennial.

Perhaps we should add a few other words here. Mr. Wu's theology leaned toward the rational and the practical. At the same time, he placed great emphasis on religious feelings. He emphasized personal devotion, prayer, and mystical experience. This is a religious feeling that surpasses the rational and the practical, and expressed his continued concern for the building up of the church after the *1950s,* his fellowship with, love of, and help for coworkers whose theological outlooks differed from his, and his particularly strong feelings for a just society and politics. We can rightly say that this is the highest form of a prophetic religious feeling, and is completely different from the kind of "spiritual experience" that is content with a personal feeling of "ecstasy."

When we study the life and thought of Mr. Wu, we need to study the whole picture, objectively, historically (on the basis of the development of the contemporary social-political context). In order to reach a fair conclusion, we must proceed in a spirit of mutual respect, without denominational prejudice, and without taking things out of context.

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Translated by Henry Rowold.

Rev. Chen Zemin has recently retired as Dean of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. He is also Professor of Systematic Theology

1. Translator's Note: The Chinese rendering of this term means literally "By Love Alone".

26. **The Gracious Will of God** – Wang Weifan

In September 1993, Rev. Wang Weifan and Rev. Shen Cheng'en visited Taiwan, the first China Christian Council representatives ever to do so. Rev. Wang preached this sermon in the Huai'en Baptist Church in Taipei on September 12.

Text: Genesis 45: 4-8. 50: 15-20.

A servant of God from the mainland, in the Lord's faithfulness, extends to the brothers and sisters of Huai'en Baptist Church, and to brothers and sisters all over Taiwan, his most sincere and cordial greetings. When Chinese people meet, they are accustomed to greeting each other with the phrase "Have you eaten?" This greeting has been derided as meaningless, as being impossible to answer. But if we step into the past - to the time after the September 18 Incident [when the Japanese seized Shenyang in the process of occupying the Chinese northeast, 1931] or after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident [7 July 1937 in then Beiping, a staged incident leading to Japan's attempt to occupy all China], with the flames of battle raging everywhere and rampant starvation, in those years when our nation was sunk in calamity, the power of greeting each other with "Have you eaten?" was profound, even today the memory still brings pain.... So I still want to greet my brothers and sisters in Taiwan with a "Have you eaten?" And I would like to hear them greet me the same way. Even more, I would like to join my voice to those of my sisters and brothers in Taiwan to say to all people of Chinese descent throughout the world, "Have you eaten?" For we Chinese, "How are you?" is the secondary question, the main question is "Have you eaten?"

Rev. Shen Cheng'en, editor of *Tian Feng,* and I were late getting here and missed the Consultation on Literature and Publication attended by Chinese from around the world which was held here recently. Like so many music-lovers in the mainland, I have an inordinate fondness for the Taiwan singer Wen Zhang's song "365-Mile Road", because it transforms a time concept into one of space, it takes the passage of the 365 days of the year and transforms them into steps along the journey of a person's life. If we say that there are 365 miles in a year, then in 45 years, there are 16,425 miles. We have come limping along these 16,425 miles from the distant shore across the straits. This being the case, there was no way we could be on time, but we were deeply confident that our brothers and sisters in Taiwan would surely forgive us for being late. Due to numerous unexpected difficulties, Rev. Shen and I were separately delayed in the Shenzhen customs and the Hong Kong airport respectively. What is merely a narrow channel of water seemed as difficult to cross as endless watery torrents and mountain peaks. As I spent the evening of September 6 in the Hong Kong YMCA guesthouse, I couldn't help being overcome by all sorts of emotions, and I wrote a hymn to the tune of a Henan folksong:

Between our shores wild geese can fly,
Yet waters part us, you and I.
Waters like a mountain's breadth
Bonds of love have bridged.
God's love both shores overflows,
Joins us in life and death.'

According to Genesis, Joseph and his brothers met after the death of Jacob. The event made the brothers ponder the vicissitudes of human life, cause and effect, retribution, kindness and hatred. But Joseph saw behind all this the gracious will of God: "God intended it for good" (Gen. 50: 20). These are two different views of history, which produce different ways of looking at life.

Please bear with me while I tell you something about myself. In early 1949, my brother left Nanjing to come to Taiwan and we had no more word of him from then on. Not until a full forty years had passed, in May, 1989, did he return to Nanjing. We brothers were reunited for two days. He planned to come again the next year, never dreaming that he would die in Taiwan in February of the next year. He is buried in the Lutheran Cemetery in Kaohsiung and I plan to go there during this trip to sweep my brother's grave, and to get a clod of earth from the cemetery to take back with me, the earth of Kaohsiung, the earth of Taiwan. There he was, my older brother, dying far from home. And after forty years apart, a few hurried words became our final farewell. Where is God's gracious will in that? Maybe in this: Before, Taiwan was simply a geographical location to me, a name, but once my brother was buried in a cemetery in Kaohsiung, a small green offshoot of my heart also took deep root in Kaohsiung, and in Taiwan. I've heard that there are many people from other provinces buried in that cold and solemn cemetery: from Henan, Anhui, Zhejiang. But really, are these simply handfuls of yellow earth? Plainly each is a tendril of emotion buried deep, bound to numerous family members on the mainland!

This reminded me of the time while I was teaching in the San Yuan Bible College in Shaanxi that I went to visit an exhibition of calligraphy by Yu Youren and I recalled a poem, he wrote in his declining years:

Bury me high upon a mountain,
in sight of my native land;
If I cannot gaze on China,
Only sorrow remains.

Bury me high upon a mountain,
in sight of the China mainland;
If I cannot gaze on China,
Only tears are left me.

Today, the late Yu Youren has been buried, according to his last wishes, on the summit of Yangmingshan in Taipei. His brave spirit does indeed have a view of the distant mainland and of San Yuan, his native place in Shaanxi. The mainland and San Yuan are bound to him by his feelings: and the man himself has become an emotional offshoot of San Yuan and of the mainland.

I left Nanjing on September 5, the very day the president of Soochow University here, Mr. Zhang Xiaoci, the son of Mr. Jiang Jingguo [Chiang Chingkuo], swept the grave of his mother, Zhang Yaruo in Guilin. When Zhang Xiaoci and his twin brother were only six

months old, their mother died suddenly, and they were taken to Taiwan by their paternal grandmother when they were five. On the morning of the day that he swept his mother's grave, there were torrential rains. He knelt before his mother's grave for a long time, crying soundlessly as he read an elegy for her.

Mr. Zhang's emotions have taken root beneath Phoenix Peak in Guilin and it will prove difficult to pull them up. For those "from other provinces" still living in Taiwan, it is impossible to know for certain how many tendrils of emotion are deeply rooted in the mainland, whether living or dead.

Family feelings make up these untold threads of emotion. They linger in the mind, binding our two shores together even after all the vicissitudes of this world. They cannot be severed, yet are difficult to sort out. You can lash at the waves, they flow still! And as for the Lord's Church on either side of the straits, these tender bonds of love, are held in the loving and merciful hands of God, one end rooted in the mainland, the other in Taiwan. This is another, deeper level of God's gracious will.

God divided his holy Church in China into two parts. Where then is his gracious will? Perhaps we can put it thus: God put a minority, a smaller part of his Church on one shore where it was relatively peaceful, provided her with a new translation of the Bible and an environment of books and ideas, of publications. He concentrated her strength in people and things so that she could develop her ministry, and at the same time allowed her to take the lead in facing all the challenges which came with modernization and thus embark upon the way to the 21st century. All this would in time become part of the burden and the riches of the entire Church of China. At the same time, God placed the majority, a larger part of the Chinese Church, on the other side of the straits, to be another part of the Body of Christ and allowed her to share weal and woe and hardship with her people, to be tempered and toughened in the fall and rising, the joys and sorrows of all the Chinese people. In the course of this tempering and toughening along with one's own, she was allowed to become identified with her own people and thus to enter into the benevolent and faithful "priestly" role. All this is equally part of the burden and the riches of the whole Chinese Church in Hong Kong, in Macau and in Taiwan, as in the mainland. In the broadest sense we discover the gracious will of God in the vicissitudes of this history.

Here, I cannot do better than to turn to the exclamation of Paul, summing up, from the bottom of his heart, history and the future (Rom. 11: 33-36):

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be all glory and praise forever. Amen.

Nanjing Theological Review. No. 19 (February, 1993), p. 80. 162

1. "Bonds of Love Span the Straits." by Wang Weifan, trans. Janice Wickeri, first appeared in the *Amity News Service (ANS).* vol. 2.5, October. 1993, p. I.

27. Tearing Down and Building Up – Li Wei

Text: John 2:18-22; Revelation 21:22-27

One temple is torn down, and another is built up. The one torn down is a visible temple, and the newly built one is a spiritual temple. The one torn down is a perishable temple, and the newly built one is an everlasting temple. The one torn down is built of cold brick, and the newly built one is rich with God's unfathomable glory. The gates of the ruined one are barred to deny entry to the Gentiles; the newly built one is one which shall become the glory of the nations, because Scripture says: "The gates of the city shall never be shut by day, nor will there be any night there." The one tom down is a temple built with human hands; the newly built one is the temple "coming down out of heaven from God." Because the old is passing away, the Lord says "Behold, I make all things new."

The Jews built Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem, a temple in which they took pride. In their hearts, the temple was a symbol that God was with them. When Israel left Egypt and passed Mt. Sinai, God carved the commandments and the law on stone tablets for them, and the Israelites placed these tablets in the Ark of the Covenant. After Solomon's temple was built, the Ark containing the tablets was placed in the temple in the Holy of Holies, so the temple symbolized the tradition of the Israelites' holy law. Additionally, the building of the temple was begun during the height of King Solomon's reign, so the temple also caused the Israelites to remember the grand and glorious history of their ancestors. Thus the temple is also a symbol of Israel's glorious history and the pride of its people.

Considering the above we can understand why the Jews stress that "the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." They worshipped the stately temple, even to the point of believing it was the only place where one could meet with God. To maintain the holiness of the temple, they built a strong encircling wall to keep out the Gentiles and prevent them from "defiling" a holy place. Any Gentile who dared to pass that wall was to be executed. In 70 AD Titus led Roman troops in the conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. But even having experienced this catastrophe the Jews prayed at the ruins of this wall. After the Jewish Diaspora, even though Jews scattered across Europe lived in Jewish ghettos surrounded by stout walls, in their hearts they still longed for the temple of their ancestors. They were surrounded not only by visible walls, but even more by a wall mental which strictly separated Jews and Gentiles. Jews lived within a temple of their spirit. In the book *Jewish History,* Israeli Ex-Minister of Culture, Abba Eban, wrote: "Jews lived defended by these laws and customs, stronger than any wall. They didn't understand the daily lives and views of non-Jewish neighbors, and cared little about their cultural, family, and social life." This clearly demonstrates how Jews lived within a fortress of their own spirits and preserved what they understood as holy.

Within their minds was a wall, and behind that wall was their special status as God's chosen people, their holy law and glorious history. Over-zealously they constructed the wall and protected the temple, and never bothered to discern the voice outside the wall calling "Blessed are the meek in heart, for the kingdom of God is theirs." With an excess of self-confidence they relied on the temple and the wall, and never heard a voice crying in the

wilderness saying "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." They fervently worshipped the temple and wall, and nailed the Lord of Life to a cross. And the Lord of Life said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The Lord Jesus said to the disciples: "Not one stone will be left on another, they will all be thrown down." What was the crux of the problem? It was that the temple had already become an idol of what the Jews considered righteous. The building of the temple originally signified being with God. But when people attempted to use the temple to restrict God, when the God in people's hearts was only the God in the Holy of Holies, when people worshipped the temple more than God, when the temple thereby became a hindrance to the radiance of God's glory, the temple became an idol. The Law is the commandments of God given to humankind, a covenant with humankind, but the moment people rely on the Law for their righteousness, when they listen to the Law more than they listen to Christ's teachings, the Law becomes an idol. The radiance and glory of history bear witness to God's preservation of His people, but when people emphasize the traditions of history more than the God who determines history, history becomes an idol. People earnestly want to build a wall with the intent of protecting that which they consider sacred. But when this wall interferes with the revelation of God's emptying Himself in love, it will be torn down along with the idols. Scripture says: "Not one stone will be left on an other." What Jesus refers to here is not only the visible temple and wall, but all idols and walls which would obstruct God's love.

Let us look back at our own lives. How many times, despite the fact that these things are not necessarily bad in and of themselves, have similar idols dominated our spirits or similar walls obstructed our communication with God and with other people? Money, fame, power, prestige, an ideology, an important person these can all become our idols. But there are other kinds of idols. These may seem to be holy temples in our hearts, they may seem very noble, but the moment that people worship these more than God, they will become idols. The church can become our idol if it comes to mean a group of people, a building, a kind of familial authority, a complacent and conservative viewpoint - and if the Lord who came in the flesh is not in it. "Salvation" can become our idol if it comes to mean the separation of a small "us" from everyone else, if it comes to mean the elevation of what we consider to be the proper standard for "salvation" and if the Lord who emptied himself in love and came to be with humankind is not among us. "Spirituality" can become our idol if it comes to mean a self-righteous flaunting of one's self rather than a revealing of God's glory and life. "Offering" can become an idol if we emphasize the grandness of our own offerings more than God's call. "The authority of Scripture" can become an idol if we put aside all knowledge offered by life and become mired in words and doctrines. Please note that I am not questioning the significance of the important practice of faith embodied in the church, salvation, spirituality, and so forth, but if the situation comes to be as that described above these things can become idols.

We may build a wall to protect that which we consider holy, but the result may be to trap ourselves in a narrow cage or spiritual prison, with God and humankind shut out on the other side of the wall. Therefore let us hear God's voice saying "Cast out all idols among you."

Let us consider God's tearing down and building up, and examine our hearts to see if within us there are any of these idols. If such idols exist, no matter what they are, let God come personally to

tear them down and then rebuild. New seminary students, has anyone ever said to you "Studying theology is dangerous because it will change your faith!" If this danger in fact exists, what we need is not escape but rather courage to let God come and rebuild. If your faith was originally narrow, let the God of all things tear down the wall in your heart and enlighten you, letting you see Him in all things. If your faith was originally shallow, let God lead you into His unfathomable wisdom and grace. God's mystery and richness is a promise to us because He told us that the more we seek the more we shall receive. If originally your faith was rigid, let the fire of God test it, because that fire will test the works of each person. What we need is courage, the courage to accept the truth. I remember being at a sharing meeting last year with some classmates where we discussed ways in which life at the seminary had helped us spiritually. What I shared was: "The most important way in which life in seminary has helped me has been through helping me break many idols." This is breaking down, yet at the same time it is renewal. This implies challenge, and it implies the experience of death and resurrection. Let us have the courage to accept such challenges, to let God come and build, to let "the Lord Almighty and the Lamb be the temple."

Finally I would like to close with a passage from Scripture. This verse represents encouragement, promise, challenge, and hope. Revelations 21: 5 "He who was seated on the throne said 'Look, I have made all things new.'"

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Translated by Don Snow.

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28. Escape, Introspection and Turning to God: A Meditation on Psalm 139 – Lou Shibo

The whole of Psalm 139 is a revelation of the intimate relationship between the psalmist and God, and it is here that its greatness lies. It brings to light God's many and varied virtues. She is an omniscient (v.1-6), omnipresent (v.7-12), omnipotent (v.13-18) God, who cares for the psalmist with a tender love (the psalmist is all humanity). Many Christians are fond of this psalm because we have had lively spiritual experiences similar to those of the psalmist in our own lives.

If we look a little closer, we will find that at the same time as the psalmist comes to a profound knowledge of God, he gains a profound knowledge of himself. In the course of doing this, he sheds light on some common failings of human nature. All this deserves our conscientious reflection.

In verse 7 the psalmist says: "Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?" We may ask: Why does the psalmist want to flee from God? In the verses which follow, the psalmist shows us his mind: in order to escape from Yahweh, he wonders whether he can ascend to heaven or descend to She'ol. He thinks of flying to the farthest limits of the sea and settling there. He even longs for the darkness to cover him, so that God cannot see him. We can almost picture the scene. But he is really at a loss as to how best to flee God, finally reduced to the level of "beggars can't be choosers; flee wherever you can." For God is obviously in heaven and however the psalmist tries, he cannot hide from the face of God (see Tim. 9:2; Jer. 23:24). God is everywhere. Doesn't the psalmist know this? Of course he does! Here the psalmist shows another mood towards God, one completely at odds with that intimacy established when he addresses God in the second person as "you". It has a jarring effect which seems incompatible with the beautiful, almost musical, movement which has gone before. Put baldly, he has one wish: to flee God. A human being fleeing God!

We cannot but ask: how can one whose knowledge of God is so profound want in his innermost heart to flee God?

God is revealed in the Bible. There also we come to know our own humanity. In Psalm 139, the psalmist half-consciously lays before us a true picture of the contradictions and complications of our mortal hearts vis a vis our creator since the creation and fall. This impulse to "flee from God" is nothing new in the contact between God and humankind. When our ancestors, who could not resist Satan's temptation to eat the forbidden fruit, heard Yahweh God walking in the garden, they ran into the trees to hide themselves (Gen. 3:8). The Israelites, called the chosen people of God, trembled at the foot of Mount Sinai, for afar off they saw the glory of the Most High, but in their hearts they pondered how to hide from the face of the Lord God. While wandering in the wilderness, they repeatedly grew sick of God's leading, always thinking of their lives among the fleshpots of Egypt. Even the prophets of Yahweh tried to hide from the face of God. We all know that Jonah first tried to hide in the hold of a ship bound for Tarshish, and later fled Nineveh and even got angry with God. Even the prophet Elijah, brave enough to struggle with hundreds of prophets of Baal, that

"man of God" full of zeal, begged for death under the broom tree. In the New Testament, Jesus' great disciple Peter likewise ran from Jesus' call. If we look carefully, such examples abound in the Bible.

We can find other examples throughout the long stream of human history. Poets speak of going up into the heavens to escape God. We can describe generations of idealists this way. They always attempt to make the leap to the most high, most beautiful, true and just "paradise", but can such a kingdom be ideal if God is not there? It's just an empty illusion. Perhaps the shadowy realms of earth where the dead live are a place where God can be escaped. In every age there may be people who long to step out from under the heavy burdens they bear and gain release from death, but this cannot exempt them from the final terrifying judgment. Humanity today seems even better equipped to run from God: rapid technological development allows us to conquer the depths of the universe, to take humanity to ever higher, ever further places. But humankind is the same as before: terror-stricken at the emptiness in the depths of our hearts and at the lack of meaning in life. There are some people who simply place God outside the pale, denying God by all possible means. These people would use ideas to kill God off if they could. They think that it is possible to sit back and relax in such a realm of darkness. Time and again the heavy hand of God smote Godless cultures of every description, like Babylon of old, but humanity blithely continues to lay it plans.

So many examples of flight from God should give us pause, and cause us to ponder how humankind has come to fall into this terrifying error.

We must begin with our progenitors' fall, with Satan in the Garden of Eden and his temptation, "you shall be as God(s)", rousing in them the unwarranted desire to be equal to the Most High. They broke God's ban and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Humanity understood good and evil, and furthermore, seemed to know that their status was that of creature. But what happened? Suddenly, humanity saw its own incompleteness, that all it had rested in God's hand. Adam and Eve felt unfree and when they realized that all their thoughts, too, were known to the God who knows all things, they were shaken by the terrible idea hidden in their own hearts, of rebelling against the Creator. Adam and Eve were profoundly ashamed, as though they had stood a long while before an all-revealing mirror, and seeing their own baseness reflected there, were all undone. Human beings grew up. We cannot tolerate a God who can ferret out even the darkest comers of the soul, where our secrets are revealed to God's eyes, our shameful secrets made public. Such a merciless warder produced in humans' inmost heart, a kind of terror, even a hatred of, God, or even more deeply, a vicious revolt. Aren't there some arrogant thinkers who would willfully "kill off' God? Their aggressive so-called theories have also become ideological ammunition for despotic systems in history. In their eyes there is no God and behavior is arbitrary. It is indeed as Psalm 2:1-2 says: "Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed." They no longer show shame due to a sense of inadequacy or unworthiness, but shame becomes anger and they band together to attack God. Yet, "He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision" (Ps. 2:4).

At this point, some brothers and sisters may say that those of us who dwell in the Lord Christ's house would never be among those who seek to flee God. But in fact, that is hardly the case. From a

certain point of view, not only have we too run from God, some of us are still running, and some, I fear, will run in the future.

Of course, there is no need for us to run from what is in our own minds an unattainable, nearly ideal image of "God." Perhaps for us God is but the expression of the cosmos, natural law and the progress of history. Such a God seems to have no involvement in our lives, and there is no need for us to run. But the reality is that we strive to pursue a God who gives us a deep love. All we need to do is ask and She will give. Of course we would not flee from such a "goody-good God." No one would run from such a God. I thought the same way when I first turned to the Lord. I saw God as a God who would give me every assurance for my life. Certainly there is nothing terribly wrong with such an understanding. However, we should not think that by this we understand everything about God, because this is a very superficial sort of understanding, so much so that it is mere self-serving surmise. Such an understanding of God unconsciously falls into a common human error. If we look into the facts, it is indifference, denial, a fleeing from God's holiness and God's justice.

Undeniably, God is a loving God. The majority of those who answer the call to become Christians do so because of God's love; they have tasted of the beauty and goodness of God's grace. A Christian with a mature will, however, knows that being called by God does not simply mean asking God to make you a snug little nest where your needs are satisfied as a baby's would be and you cry to God if things do not go your way. Quite the opposite, at the same time that a Christian is called by God, the Christian becomes involved in God's holy work, accepts God's commission and accepts being purified, tempered and refined.

Some people take all the sacrifices in the Old Testament as a metaphor of Christian dedication, whether it is being stretched thin, cut into pieces, or burned to ashes: all imply the shattering of the self, including an assault on the rationality that one felt was so whole and healthy (but which in fact was prejudiced), the destruction of the personality you thought was whole (but which was in fact impaired). Individual ideals or fine desires, even the plans laid for expressing one's zeal in the ministry of God, even such bold expressions of will, must be flung to one side. All that is of the human self must be reevaluated by God. In the process, we feel not only pain in the usual sense, but also a life and death struggle of physical and mental suffering. Like the author of Hebrews we may cry out: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). It comes as no surprise then that the self-assured and courageous Moses repeatedly rejected the mission God entrusted to him, while Peter, fierce and straightforward, begged the Lord to go from him, because he felt his own sin and felt he was not worthy to inherit the glory of God. Several times he fled back to his previous occupation among the fishermen. Even someone as zealous for the Lord as Paul could sigh that it was not of his own doing that he spread the gospel. Thus, we will have a deeper appreciation of Bonhoeffer's famous proclamation during the Second World War as this young German theologian spread the gospel: When Christ calls a man, He calls him to die. People want to flee God, for they had foreseen the inevitable test waiting behind God. Because of this, some people say that one who has never attempted to flee God is one who has never yet encountered the true God.

When we, like generations of God's people and servants, are called and given a commission, we frequently find our ability falling short of our wishes. This is because Christians, knowing that they are justified because they have received grace, still live in a world polluted by sin. Satan's assaults and the temptations of this world engender in our hearts many forbidden thoughts. When that all-knowing, all-present God quietly appears before you, or before me, we will both have that panic-stricken feeling that there is no place to hide, no place to run. Especially when, to rid you of the unrestrained arrogance at the very center of your ego, God destroys the old you which you have been painstakingly guarding, what we discover is a God whom we simply have no way to bear. A faith struggle ensues which cannot be escaped, and may follow us all our lives. If you have not truly cast aside your ego, you cannot turn completely to God. But for a person who lives in this world, a total rejection of the ego is a very difficult thing. We know, however, that the growth of a person is just the opposite: a process of the gradual expansion of ego consciousness. Therefore, when a person is in the process of choosing between the ego and turning to God, a struggle between wanting to flee from God and wanting to turn to God is inevitable. A spiritual person is one who gains serenity of the spirit only after this sort of burning, a burning deeper than any external pain. Such a struggle is one which we can by no means resolve by ourselves. There are other Christians who are able to live without a place for God in their hearts. They stick to their old ways of doing things, yet talk of God - and what talk of God it is - is always on their lips. Not only is this deceiving God, it's also the action of a self-deceiving hypocrite. But can such a struggle of faith be pleasing in God's eyes? Obviously not. Although there is no lack of honesty toward God and oneself in this type of struggle, a Christian caught between the two poles of God and humanity, swayed by considerations of gain and loss, may very well fail. There is no peace on the path he or she follows. Who among us would be willing to fall into such an erroneous, inescapable struggle?

It is as the psalmist felt in his psalm - the profound experience of the existence of God is deeply rooted in the deepest recesses of' our spiritual world. She seizes us fast, so that we have nowhere to run. But for incomplete humans, the erroneous inborn sense of wanting to flee God is ever tripping us up. What shall we do? The three types of behavior which the psalmist describes are those which generations of God's people have sought to shake off, so they might go further and return to God's path. They are worth studying.

First, we can easily understand the zealous mood of praise for Yahweh which permeates the entire psalm. The psalmist praises God for God's honor and majesty. He praises God that he is a marvelous creation of God, the inescapable God who was the source of his own existence. When the psalmist lifts his vision from the finite, weak ego and turns it to God's omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, God's body of light incomparably holy, loving and, just, can he help but pour out his praise? The glory of God causes us to dismiss all idea that humans had no choice but to sin after the fall. When we come to a clear understanding that God prepared a complete plan of salvation for us sinful humans we will praise and feel blessed by the abundance of God's love even more. In praising God, we perceive that although we are the lowest of the low, yet by no means are we hay or straw, totally without value. We can praise because we know that humans are in the image of God. We feel blessed for the life God has bestowed upon us. When we understand that our own lives on earth and all that passes and is to pass is overseen by God with thorough attention, we cannot but

loudly praise God together with the psalmist: "How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!" (v.17) This can serve as an explanation of why praise has become a hallmark of our Christianity. In praising God, our little self melts into a vast cosmos of the eternal kingdom of God; our own spirit and all sorts of emotions are sublimated.

The psalmist offers us another approach, one that has a completely different feel about it from that of praise: the curse. In verse 19, the psalmist says: "t) that you would kill the wicked, O God". Praises and curses spoken by the same tongue; this is unexpected indeed. This sudden burst of hate and cursing from the psalmist obviously is based on the feeling that God will hate whoever the psalmist hates, that his enemies are God's enemies. Such resentment and cursing makes the psalmist feel he is on a par with God, that our human thoughts and ideas are equivalent to the will of God. This is truly a type of religious arrogance and bias.

These days, we need especially to understand how to be humble. There are people today who promote Christian dialogue with other religions. Along with developments over the past hundred or more years in Biblical criticism, this creates challenges for traditional belief. Can we understand this as God urging us to reflect, to heal our past habits of overweening conceit? At this juncture should we not come to understand that the reason God wants to shatter our original whole and perfect "self' is precisely to broaden our embrace to accommodate a larger commission? Yet we arrogantly reject this and even go so far as to curse any thinking or attitude that differs from our own. How can such narrow-mindedness on our part be compatible with that tolerance of God which encompasses all phenomena? In China for example, when we discover that it is very difficult for our traditional Christian faith to take root in this soil, should our response be to curse the traditional culture which generations of our own forbears labored to create? No true descendant of the Yellow Emperor could do that. Shouldn't we examine ourselves? When we see that there are still ordinary people in China struggling to exist, shall we just stand alongside gesticulating, blindly exposing the shortcomings of our culture and do nothing whatsoever constructive? When the church sees these needs and promotes social service, is it reasonable to casually label people as "social gospellers" or brand them as "unspiritual"? Should this be our image --we who profess to be respectable priests and prophets of the people? It looks as if what God is destroying is the ivory tower of our hearts, our sectarianism, in order that we may gain a wholly new reformed self, brand new and able to share saving grace with others with no wall between. A Christian must be genuinely concerned, not primarily for words, but for that faith which is expressed most abundantly in effective action, before he or she is able to better bear witness to the glory of God among our compatriots or to sink a firm and dependable foundation for the wide dissemination of the gospel in our land.

The psalmist too seems to have felt this wickedness, this wanting to flee God, followed by the feeling that one is equal to God. The last two verses of the psalm offer us the best way back to God, a kind of prayer in which we can see that the psalmist has won out over the attempts both to flee God and to feel himself equal to God. He knows that for all mistaken human attitudes toward God, the final saving solution is humble recognition that one is but human, a created being, and that only by returning to the light of the countenance of the Creator, does one become human. That sort of gall which dares to compare itself to God can

only be self-destructive (there are more than a few such examples in history), and we also need to understand, that no matter how high one is, one is still human. We must accept God's scrutiny of us which leaves nothing unexposed. We must constantly examine ourselves in the light from God's face and become aware of our own wrongful arrogance. We must seek to share with others and not blindly condemn; moreover we must constantly examine and criticize the self. Of course, this may be very difficult for an adult who already has all sorts of prejudices, but this is the road we as individuals must take toward giving positive meaning to our lives.

Let us with sounds of praise pray to the Lord of Life. We can praise God in the green pastures, beside streams where God leads us. We should praise God for testing our faith and leading us through the valley of the shadow of death and this vale of tears.

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