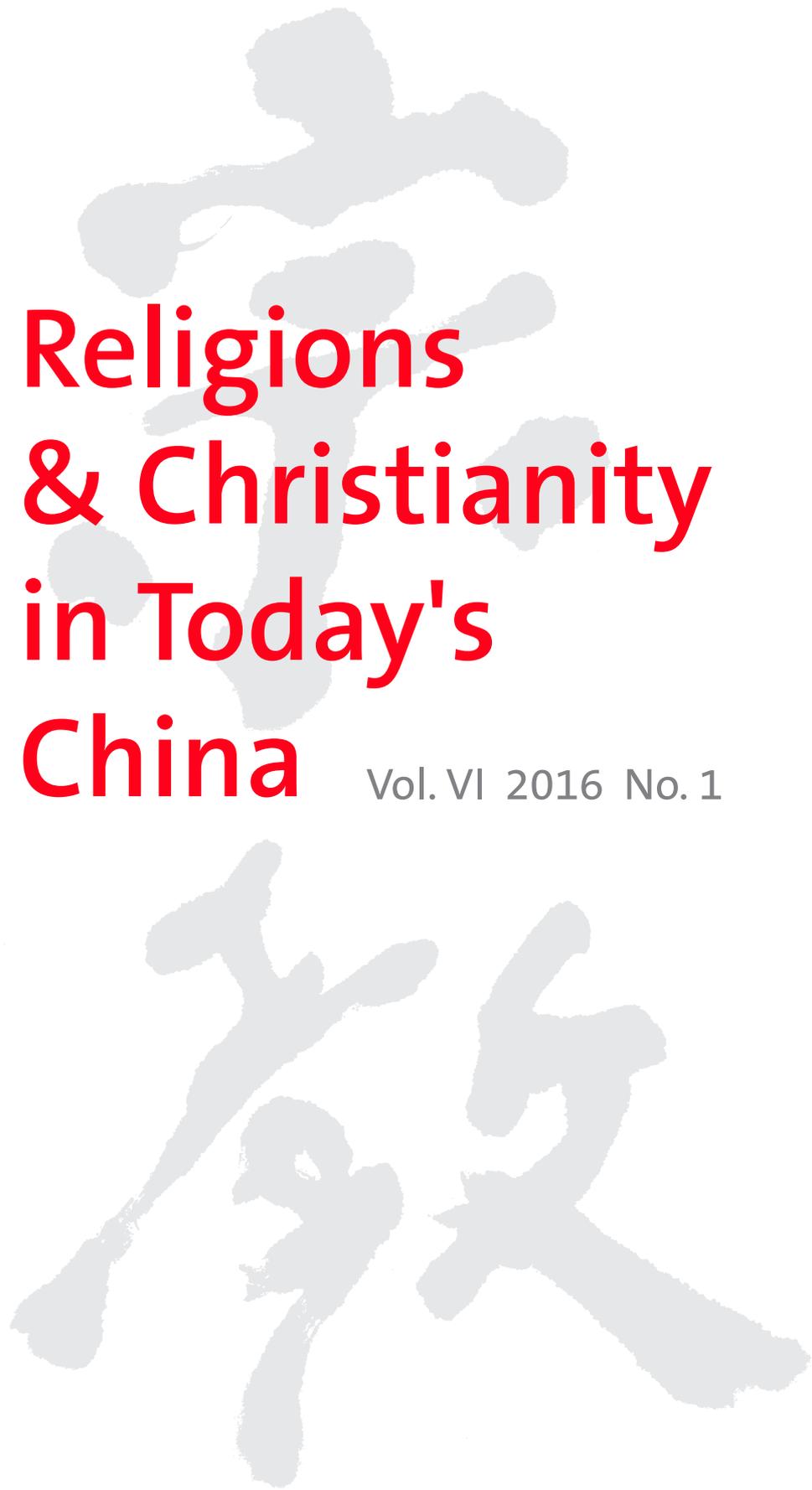


Religions  
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in Today's  
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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

We wish you peace and joy for the lunar New Year of the Monkey!

Today we can present to you the first issue in the year 2016 of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中国宗教评论).

We continue with the publication of the proceedings of the 9th European Catholic China Colloquium on the topic “Challenges of Evangelisation – China and Europe” which took place from 10–13 September 2015 in Konstancin/Warsaw, Poland. You will first find a detailed conference report by Raimund Kern (Stollberg/Germany) which will give you an overview of the lectures given at the Colloquium, followed by a contribution of Dmitry I. Petrovsky (Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate) on “Perspectives and Experiences of the Russian Orthodox Church Regarding Evangelization in Russia and China” and the lecture of Fr. Bruno Lepeu MEP (Hong Kong) on “Evangelisation among Young People in China since 2005.” – In the coming issues of *RCTC* we will continue with the publication of further contributions to the Colloquium.

As in previous issues, this number furthermore includes the regular series of News Updates which give an insight into recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

*Religions & Christianity in Today's China* is freely available on the website of the China-Zentrum, [www.china-zentrum.de](http://www.china-zentrum.de). Additionally, readers who subscribe to *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* will regularly receive e-mail updates providing web links to the contents of each newly published issue.

The China-Zentrum is a non-profit organization. For the publication of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* we are dependent on the generosity of our friends and readers. In order to help us cover inevitable costs, we would be very grateful if you could consider sending a voluntary contribution.

*Sankt Augustin, February 2016*

*The Editors*

## News Update on Religion and Church in China September 18 – November 30, 2015

Compiled by Katharina Wenzel-Teuber and Katharina Feith  
Translated by David Streit

*The “News Update on Religion and Church in China” appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today’s China (RCTC). Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between “News Updates” of two consecutive issues of RCTC. In these cases stories referred to in earlier “News Updates” will not be repeated. All “News Updates” can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum ([www.china-zentrum.de](http://www.china-zentrum.de)). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2015, Nos. 3-4, pp. 3-44) covered the period March 4 – September 28, 2015.*

September 18, 2015:

### **Xinjiang: Many dead following attack on coal mine**

According to reports from the US-based broadcaster *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, the first to report on the incident, at least 50 people were killed and 50 others were wounded by attackers armed with knives at the Sogan coal mine in Bay (Baicheng) in the Aksu Prefecture of Xinjiang. It took almost two months for the Chinese government to confirm that the attack had occurred, and the government only acknowledged it on November 14 – the day after the terrorist attack in Paris. On November 20, the government news agency *Xinhua* mentioned that there were 16 dead – 11 civilians, 3 policemen and 2 members of the security forces. Most of the victims were apparently Han Chinese coal miners. The attack took place amid preparations for state celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang on October 1, 1955. On November 20, *Xinhua* reported that police had shot and killed 28 of the terrorists who had fled into the mountains. One had turned himself in to the authorities. *Xinhua* said that “the terrorist group was directly guided by an overseas extremist group” and was headed up by two local men by the name of Musa Tohniyaz and Mamat Aysa. Already on October 16, *RFA* had quoted a local government official as having identified relatives of these two men (among whom were three women and two children) and of one other Uyghur man as being suspects in the attack. The official suggested that one probable motive for the attack could be retaliation for being harassed by the local government in the course of its campaign to root out religious extremism. While – as has been reported by *RFA* and by other sources – many in foreign countries, as well as exiled Uyghur groups have been blaming the repressive policies of China in Xinjiang for the ever-growing wave of violence in the Region, President Xi Jinping, in comments made while attending the G20 summit meeting in Antalya on November 15, called for the world to stop using “double standards” when speaking of global terrorism (*Ming Pao* Sept. 25; *Radio Free Asia* Sept. 22, 30; Oct. 8, 16; *South China Morning Post* Nov. 23; *UCAN* Nov. 16; *Xinhua* Nov. 20).

September 28, 2015:

## “Climate Pilgrims” march in Hong Kong



Climate pilgrims on their way. Photo: *Ucan*.

On September 28, two hundred and fifty persons of various faith traditions – Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, followers of the Baha’i and Sikh religions as well as Brahma Kumaris (Daughters of Brahma) – met together on Lantau Island for a climate pilgrimage. The pilgrimage was organized by the Hong Kong Interfaith Climate Network in preparation for the World Climate Summit scheduled to begin in Paris on November 30. Similar activities took place all around the world. Ciara Shannon, chairperson of the Interfaith Climate Network Hong Kong, said: “The People’s Pilgrimage for Climate Action is a positive and peaceful way for people of all faiths and none to call for a strong and ambitious UN climate deal and 100 per cent clean energy.” In her comments, she made a reference to *Laudato Si’*, the encyclical letter of Pope Francis, as well as to the Islamic Declaration on climate change. The Hong Kong climate march paused at a number of sites, accompanied by reflections given by Bhikkhu Phap Kham, director of the Asian Institute for Applied Buddhism, by the Rev. Catherine Graham of Hong Kong’s St. John’s Anglican Cathedral and by Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing, spiritual director of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Commission for Justice & Peace.

Ciara Shannon also referred to the Global Catholic Climate Movement, which had collected signatures to be presented in Paris prior to the beginning of the UN Climate Change Conference. The Hong Kong Network had also supported the January Declaration of the Colloquium of Six Religious Leaders of Hong Kong on the topic of climate change (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Oct. 17; <http://catholicclimatemovement.global>; see also *RCTC* 2015, No. 2, p. 14).

September 30, 2015:

## Chinese Foreign Ministry responds to the friendly gesture of the Pope – “China is sincere about improving relations with the Vatican”

During his flight back to Rome on September 27 at the conclusion of his visit to the U.S.A., Pope Francis told journalists that he loves the Chinese people and that he hopes for a possibility of good relations. Hong Lei, spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, told the *Global Times* on September 29: “China is sincere about improving relations with the Vatican and has made consistent efforts [toward this goal].” The state-run newspaper also reported on the Pope’s wish to visit China which he had expressed during his return flight from Korea in August of 2014, and on his telegram to President Xi on that occasion. The article, which also addresses the open question of episcopal appointments, nevertheless sees détente between China and the Vatican as being within the realm of possibility, since both sides have changed a lot over the years. *Global Times* cited an earlier statement by Yang Fenggang of Purdue University, U.S.A., an expert in religious studies, who sees evidence of certain similarities between the two leaders, namely, that Pope Francis comes from a developing country and is taking steps to address the need for reform and the problem of corruption in the Church. Wang Meixiu, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who specializes in Catholicism, was quoted as saying: “Underground churches and the lack of authority of some bishops have become a problem which can impact the stability of Chinese society. We cannot solve those problems without the Vatican’s involvement” (*Global Times* Sept. 30). – See: *China heute* 2014, No. 3, pp. 140-143 (in German); *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, p. 43.

October 7, 2015:

## Official Chinese website notes that the selection of the clergy and the division of the dioceses in China is not matter of “foreign groups”

On October 7, an article entitled “Uncle Xi speaks on religion,” appeared on the website *Zhongguo Xizang wang* (*China Tibet Online*) and was picked up the next day by the site *Zhongguo minzu bao* (*China Ethnic News*). The article analyzed statements about religion made by President Xi Jinping – in particular, statements from his speech at the Central Conference on the United Front Work on May 20, 2015. The article says that, according to President Xi, one of the basic principles of China’s policy on religion is the “adherence to the principle of autonomous self-government.” With an apparent swipe at the Catholic Church (without naming it), it explains that autonomous self-government of the Church means that “the Chinese themselves take care of the training and selection of the clergy as well as the division and the management of religious dioceses, so certain groups abroad no longer need to break their heads over this question.” The article stresses that autonomous self-government does not mean, however, just to do whatever you want to do; rather, “Uncle Xi” said that religions should be actively guided to adapt to socialism.

The Catholic news agency *UCAN* was of the opinion that, with that article, China’s Communist Party was sending a signal that controls over the Catholic Church and over other religions were going to be intensified. The appointment of bishops and the division of dioceses are central points of contention between the Vatican and China ([www.mzb.com.cn](http://www.mzb.com.cn) Oct. 8; [www.tibet.cn](http://www.tibet.cn) Oct. 7; *UCAN* Oct. 9).

For other aspects of Xi's May 20 talk, see the entry of November 20–21, 2015 (Sinicization of religious work) and the German translation of an interview with Liu Peng in *China heute* 2015, No. 4, pp. 226–231 (strengthening the rule of law in religious work).

**October 8, 2015:**

### **Exhibit of works of Castiglione opens in Taiwan**

To mark the 90th anniversary of Taipei's National Palace Museum, among the largest in the world, an exhibition was opened featuring the works of the famous Italian Jesuit missionary Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766). Castiglione was active in China for 51 years and died in Beijing. He served as court painter to several emperors and was instrumental in making Western painting known in China. He was also known for his ability to integrate Western oil painting with Chinese ink painting (*AsiaNews* Oct. 12).

**October 11, 2015:**

### **Chinese Hajjis return from Mecca**

According to the Chinese Islamic Association (CIA), which is the central organizer of this pilgrimage for China, 14,500 pilgrims from the People's Republic of China took part in this year's Hajj to Mecca. Saudi Arabia fixes the quota of pilgrims from every country who are permitted to travel to Mecca each year. According to a representative of the CIA, each pilgrim has to pay around 38,000 Yuan for the Hajj. Three Chinese pilgrims were among those wounded when a construction crane toppled onto the Great Mosque in Mecca on September 11, an accident in which more than 100 persons lost their lives (*China Daily* Sept. 14; *Global Times* Aug. 25; *Xinhua* Oct. 11).

**October 11–16, 2015:**

### **“Secret” visit by a Vatican delegation in Beijing for a second round of discussions**

According to *UCAN*, which reported on the delegation visit – an event handled discretely by both sides – the six-member Vatican delegation was composed of representatives of the Secretariat of State as well as of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. The news agency then gave some further information which they had received from Fr. Jeroom Heyndrickx, CICM, of the Verbiest Institute at Louvain: According to Fr. Heyndrickx, the rumor had spread that both sides had agreed to leave aside – for the time being – negotiations on the more “thorny questions,” such as the release from prison of Bishop Su Zhimin, the clarification of the status of the excommunicated bishops or the normalizing of the situation of Bishop Ma Daqin of Shanghai, and to focus instead on an agreement on the question of the appointment of bishops. Fr. Heyndrickx reported that on October 14 the Vatican delegation visited Bishop Li Shan of Beijing (recognized by Rome and Beijing), and the next day visited the National Seminary, where they were received by the (illegitimate) Bishop Ma Yinglin, Chairman of the official Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference, which is itself not recognized by Rome. Fr. Heyndrickx saw both visits as positive signals that the negotiations had gone well.

Neither the contents and progress of the talks nor the names of those involved were made public. According to *UCAN*, the October meeting was the second to take place following the resumption of formal talks in June of 2014. On October 28, Cardinal Secretary of State Parolin confirmed to Vatican

Radio that the visit of the Vatican delegation to Beijing had taken place. When questioned about the progress of the talks, he said, “The very fact that we are able to talk to each other is a significant step.” He added, all that is being done, is being done in order to reach an understanding and to have normal relations also with China, as with most other countries in the world (*Radio Vaticana* Oct. 29; *UCAN* Oct. 16, 22).

October 13 / November 9, 2015:

## Tibetan exile organization reports mass expulsions and other acts of repression against monasteries in Driru County

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) in Dharamsala has reported that in Pekar (Chinese: Baiga) Township in Driru (Biru) County in the Tibet Autonomous Region's Nagqu Prefecture, for three days beginning from September 27, the head of the county government visited Jada Gaden Khachoeing Nunnery and expelled one hundred out of a total of two hundred nuns from the nunnery. The expelled nuns were prohibited, under threat of serious consequences for their families, to wear their habits at home or to go to other areas to continue their studies. The authorities have also adopted rules which would force even registered nuns over 50 years of age to leave their monasteries and move into retirement homes, the TCHRD said.

These measures were preceded on September 19, 2015, by the adoption of Document No. 224 of the Party and the government of the Driru County, which calls for an intensified purification and reform of religious institutions in the county. According to the TCHRD, which reported on the document, it contains the following provisions: the finances and activities of all religious institutions are to be closely monitored. Both monks and nuns will now be required to take part in weekly political education sessions. The county government has the sole right to appoint reincarnations and other prominent religious figures. Reincarnated and other prominent religious personalities are barred from the traditional practice of using their mediation skills in resolving local disputes. Monks who were accepted into the monasteries beyond the quotas permitted by the government are to be expelled. According to the TCHRD, officials who fail to implement these measures will be warned or punished with salary withdrawal and/or dismissal.

The TCHRD wrote that Driru County is considered by the Chinese authorities to be particularly unstable. It said that it knows of 104 Tibetans in Driru County who since 2012 have been arbitrarily arrested, tortured, imprisoned or have disappeared; four of them have disappeared permanently and four have died in police custody ([www.tchrd.org](http://www.tchrd.org) Oct. 13; Nov. 9).

October 19–24, 2015:

## Patriotic course in Guizhou for leading official Catholic clergy – Administration for Religious Affairs urges “steadfast adherence to the autonomous self-government” of the Church

According to information provided on its own website, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) has organized a tour to southwest China's Guizhou Province for a 25-member group of bishops, priests, sisters and lay people. At the event marking the official launch of the tour, Chen Zongrong, deputy director of SARA, spoke about the meaning of the “love for the country and love for the Church” and how to persevere with it even more in the new situation. He added that the main expression of this love in the current phase is: to firmly implement the religious policy of the Party, to reinforce one's own [i.e., the governing board's] self-construction, to persevere in moving in the

direction of Sinification, democratic governance of the Church and service to society. Chen urged the church leaders to adhere unwaveringly to the principle of autonomous self-government of the Church [meaning: independent from Rome].

The chairmen, vice-chairmen and secretaries-general of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the official Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference as well as Church representatives from some other important provinces and cities took part in the trip. According to the SARA report, the trip also included a concelebrated Mass in the cathedral of the "Guizhou Diocese" ([www.sara.gov.cn](http://www.sara.gov.cn) Oct. 27; see: *UCAN* Oct. 30).

**October 21–23, 2015:**

### **Message of Pope Francis to international Ricci Congress**

Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin has sent a telegram on behalf of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to Msgr. Nazzareno Marconi, the Bishop of Macerata/Italy, on the occasion of the international congress on the Jesuit Fr. Matteo Ricci. Macerata is the native city of Matteo Ricci. The congress on the topic "New perspectives in the studies on Matteo Ricci" was organized by the University of Macerata and the Confucius Institute of Macerata and held from 21 to 23 October. In his text, the Pope expressed his appreciation for the initiative, "intended to facilitate detailed study of the missionary work and cultural activity carried out by Fr. Ricci, born in Macerata and a friend of the dear Chinese people." The Holy Father also expressed the hope that "the memory of such a zealous man of the Church, attentive to social changes and committed to interweaving relations between the European and Chinese cultures, may reaffirm the importance of dialogue between cultures and religions in a climate of mutual respect and with a view to the common good" ([www.jesuiten.org](http://www.jesuiten.org) Oct. 22; [www.news.va/en](http://www.news.va/en) [*Vatican Information Service*] Oct. 22; [www.diocesimacerata.it/news/25-in-evidenza/443-telegramma-del-santo-padre-francesco-per-il-convegno-internazionale-a-macerata-su-p-matteo-ricci.html](http://www.diocesimacerata.it/news/25-in-evidenza/443-telegramma-del-santo-padre-francesco-per-il-convegno-internazionale-a-macerata-su-p-matteo-ricci.html)).

**October 24–25, 2015:**

### **Fourth World Buddhist Forum (WBF) in Wuxi**

More than a thousand participants from 52 countries took part in the event. The Forum – like the three previously held World Buddhist Forums – was organized by the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) and the China Religious Culture Communication Association, an organization under the umbrella of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA). Speaking at the closing event, Wang Zuo'an, the director of SARA, said that the state considered the event to be of great importance. In his opening speech, Master Xuecheng, chairman of the CBA, called on Buddhists all over the world to cultivate an exchange between the different Buddhist traditions, between different religions and between Buddhism and modern science and technology. One Forum panel discussion dealt with the theme: "Buddhism and New Media." In another panel discussion, the 25 year old state-appointed Panchen Lama spoke on the formation of young monks and on the importance of monastic discipline, saying that young monks need to learn self-control and resistance to external temptations. According to *China Daily*, he spoke of the phenomena of roaming monks, many of whom have broken monastic precepts, and said that they remain a challenge and a problem which the religion needs to monitor and rectify. In the face of great social change, he exhorted monks of Tibetan monasteries to adapt themselves to these new times and to the new society (website Buddhist World Forum: [www.wbfls.org](http://www.wbfls.org); *China Daily* Oct. 25).

October 29, 2015:

## Changes in China's birth control policy: One-child policy abolished

At its annual General Assembly, the Central Committee of China's Communist Party decided that, in future, all couples in China are to be allowed to bring a second child into the world. The corresponding change in the law is expected to be adopted by the National People's Congress in March of 2016 and then implemented by the provincial governments. Previously, it was already legal for rural families to have a second child if the first was a girl. The one-child policy had already been eased a few years ago with a ruling that married couples, who themselves were both only children, were permitted to have a second child. And from 2013, families where only one of the two parents was an only child would also be allowed to have two children. – Many families in the countryside did not comply with the requirements and had several children, which resulted either in heavy fines or in many illegal existences when births were not registered. Children born beyond the quota allowed by the state have no legal civil status. The one-child policy, introduced in the late 1970s, led to an increase of selective, sex-based abortions; this, in turn, resulted in a disproportionately high number of male births. The policy also led to a rapidly aging population without adequate government support and even labor shortages. Many women were traumatized at being forced by the authorities to undergo abortions and sterilization against their wills. – In recent years, relatively few couples have submitted applications for permission to have a second child. According to an October 30 article in the *South China Morning Post*, the high cost of living, limited health care, enormous costs for a child's education, deteriorating air quality as well as the pressure to support the elderly have kept many couples from thinking about having another child. Experts are of the opinion that, from a demographic point of view, the change in the one-child policy has come too late – the damage is already done. The new policy is more of a political and humanitarian character than a cure for demographic ills, thus the experts. The projected increase in population growth, rather lower than expected, would not be sufficiently large to alter the age pyramid or put an end to the shrinking workforce (*South China Morning Post* Oct. 29, 30; Nov. 16; *Xinhua* Oct. 29; Nov. 19).

October 30, 2015:

## Buddhist sect founder Wu Zeheng sentenced to life imprisonment

A court in Zhuhai has sentenced Wu for “organizing/using a cult to undermine implementation of the law” (12 years), “rape” (life), “fraud” (14 years) and “production and sale of harmful food products” (6 years). In addition, the court imposed a fine of 7.15 million yuan (1.13 million U.S. dollars). Three of Wu's followers were sentenced to prison terms of 3 or 4 years. The Hong Kong-based organization Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) described the fine imposed against Wu in a closed trial as “excessively harsh and grossly unjust.” The state news agency *Xinhua* said, however, that among other things, Wu had convinced women to sleep with him by claiming that he was able to give them supernatural powers; he was also said to have accumulated 6.7 million Yuan in ill-gotten profits.

In the early 1990s, Wu Zeheng founded the Buddhist-inspired group Huazang zongmen. In 1999 he published an open letter calling for government reforms. In 2000 he was sentenced to 11 years in prison for economic crimes. According to the website [www.chinachange.org](http://www.chinachange.org), following his release in 2010 he was placed under house arrest in Zhuhai, but still found ways to build up his religious following, “attracting thousands of believers around the world.” In July 2014, he and dozens of his supporters were arrested in raids on several companies and on various houses belonging to the Huazang zongmen

movement (www.chinachange.org Nov. 3; www.chrdnet.com Nov. 5; *UCAN* Nov. 2; *Xinhua* Oct. 31). – See: *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, p. 31.

### End of October 2015:

## Reports: Campaign to forcibly remove crosses in Zhejiang has subsided – but at least 20 Christians are still being detained in unknown locations

*UCAN* reported in an article on October 29 that since September the campaign by the authorities in Zhejiang Province to tear down crosses from Christian buildings has subsided. On October 30, China Aid quoted a local Christian as saying that the Cross removals have mostly come to an end. Since the beginning of 2014, roof and steeple crosses had been removed from more than 1,500 Protestant and Catholic churches in the province.

China Aid, citing local sources, reported that between August 25 and October 24, 2015, in the cities of Wenzhou and Jinhua, at least 20 Protestant Christians who had resisted cross removals have been placed under “residential surveillance in a designated location.” (For further details on this form of *incommunicado* detention see the entry of November 12, 2015). It is unknown where these individuals are being held, China Aid reported. It said that the authorities deny them access to their lawyers on the grounds that they are suspected of having illegally obtained and passed on state secrets. According to China Aid, among those being detained in this manner are Pastor Huang Yizi of the Fengwo Church (who had been released from prison on August 1, 2015, only to be rearrested on September 12) and the Beijing lawyer Zhang Kai and his two assistants. Zhang Kai had founded the group “Lawyers for Protection of the Cross” to offer legal advice to Protestant congregations in Zhejiang who wanted to protect their crosses. On August 25, he was arrested on charges of, among others, leaking state secrets to foreign organizations (www.chinaaid.org Oct. 30; *UCAN* Oct. 29).

### November 7, 2015:

## Summit meeting between Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou in the run-up to the presidential elections in Taiwan and speculation about the position of Taiwan in the current Sino-Vatican negotiations

On November 7, the historic, first ever meeting between a President of the People’s Republic of China and a President of the Republic of China on Taiwan took place in Singapore. Even as the summit meeting between Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou was taking place, in Taiwan the election campaign for the presidential elections on January 16, 2016 was in full swing. Although neither the summit nor the Taiwanese elections directly involve the Vatican, some observers saw the potential impact of both on the Sino-Vatican relations. They said that the People’s Republic of China has no interest in harming Taiwanese President Ma and his Kuomintang party, which represents a policy of rapprochement with Beijing, by establishing diplomatic relations with the Vatican. This could change, however, should the presidential candidate in Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, whom the polls indicate is in the lead, win the election on 16 January 2016. Tsai’s Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) tends to favor Taiwan’s independence from Mainland China. Francis Kuo, writing for *UCAN*, said that if Tsai wins the election and steers Taiwan on a course towards independence, some observers think that Beijing probably will pressure the Holy See to break off its diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In tandem with Tsai Ing-wen, Philip Chen

Chien-jen, a Catholic and an independent, is running for the office of vice president. The Holy See is one of the few political entities in the world still maintaining diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan, and Beijing insists on the termination of those relations as a precondition of normalizing its own relations with the Vatican (*UCAN* Nov. 6, 10, 17, 20).

November 8, 2015:

## Chinese “underground” priest dies in mysterious circumstances



Pedro Yu Heping. Photo: Internet.

On November 11, police informed relatives that the body of underground Catholic priest, Father Pedro Yu Heping, had been discovered in the Fen River at Taiyuan (Shanxi) on November 8. The circumstances of his death were unclear, however those who knew him well absolutely ruled out any possibility of suicide. According to the Chinese Catholic website *Tianzhujiao zaixian*, the police investigation had not been completed as of November 26.

Fr. Pedro Yu Heping was born in Shanxi in 1974. He studied in the underground seminary of Baoding and was ordained a priest in 2004. He belonged to the Diocese of Ningxia in the underground. From 2001 he studied in Spain, where he obtained a Master's Degree in Canon Law and a further degree in Catholic Social Teaching. He returned to China in 2007. Fr. Yu had been one of the co-founders of the popular Catholic website *Tianzhujiao zaixian* in the early 2000s. According to *UCAN*, in recent years he busied himself with the editing of a theological journal and also spent his time on research of theological and cultural themes. He gave retreats and formation workshops and also accompanied young Catholics on various service projects in outlying regions of China (*AsiaNews* Nov. 16; [www.cardinalkungfoundation.org](http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org) Nov. 13; [www.chinacath.com](http://www.chinacath.com) Nov. 13 [information superseded by an update on November 26]; [www.china.ucanews.com](http://www.china.ucanews.com) Nov. 16; *UCAN* Nov. 16). – See also *China heute* 2015, No. 4, pp. 208-210 (in German).

November 9, 2015:

## Party chief of Tibet calls for action against “two-faced” Party cadres who believe in a religion and secretly follow the Dalai Lama

A ruling party with 87 million members will only be able to preserve its unity, combat strength, cohesive force and purity when there is observance of political discipline, said Chen Quanguo, Party chief of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), in an interview published in the “Chinese Newspaper for Discipline Inspection and Control.” This is especially important in Tibet, Chen said. He stressed that the Party must strictly investigate and punish those party cadres who “in the question of true and false ‘have two faces,’ whose understanding of nationalities is incorrect, and who pretend they do not believe in a religion, when in fact they secretly do believe.” He demanded the same thing for cadres who are “followers of the clique of the 14th Dalai Lama, who take part in infiltration, who travel abroad to worship the Dalai Lama and to take part in [his] Dharma gatherings and Sutra lectures, and who send their own children to schools of the Dalai Lama clique.” According to Chen Quanguo, this year in the TAR there already have been investigations into 19 cases of breach of discipline and 20 persons have been

punished (*Zhongguo jijian jiancha bao* Nov. 9, according to [www.csr.mos.gov.cn/content/2015-11/09/content\\_19075.htm](http://www.csr.mos.gov.cn/content/2015-11/09/content_19075.htm) ; [www.chinadigitaltimes.net](http://www.chinadigitaltimes.net) Nov. 11).

**November 11, 2015:**

## Survey: promotion of Chinese NGOs by foreign organizations has declined sharply due to proposed new legislation

A survey of 200 Chinese NGOs, the results of which were presented at Beijing on November 11, 2015, has revealed that the promotion and support of such organizations by foreign NGOs and foundations has declined sharply in the year 2015. For some time now, the work of foreign NGOs in China has been severely hampered by new laws. Among them, in particular, is the Law on National Security (see *China heute* 2015 No. 3, p. 148), a proposed law on cyber security and in particular on the possibility that new regulations for foreign NGOs will be taking effect in the first half of 2016 (on this topic see: *China heute* 2015, No. 2, p. 84; No. 3, pp. 173f.). According to the present draft of this law, foreign NGOs in China will be required to register – in itself a daunting task, given the sheer complexity of the Chinese bureaucratic process. Also provided for in the proposed law is intensive supervision of all foreign NGOs, under which they will be required to obtain government permission for all of their activities and also for all money transfers from abroad into the accounts of Chinese NGOs. Taken together, these measures will be very effective in putting a curb on the possible activities of foreign NGOs in China. Once the law goes into effect, the police and the organs of state security will have very broad powers for monitoring, regulating and controlling the operations of foreign NGOs in China. In anticipation of these provisions foreign NGOs have already sharply reduced their activities in China (*China Development Brief* Nov. 19; *EU-China Newsletter* 2015, No. 5).

Jan Kwee

**November 12, 2015:**

## Amnesty International publishes report on torture in China's criminal justice system

The use of torture to force confessions continues to be widespread among police, even though it is prohibited by both the Criminal Procedure Law and the Police Law. That is the conclusion reached by Amnesty International in its report *No End in Sight. Torture and Forced Confession in China*. Among the causes for these abuses, Amnesty counts above all the lack of independence of the judiciary, excessive powers held by the security authorities, obstructions blocking the work of lawyers and a lack of a legal definition of torture. According to Amnesty, the extraction of confessions through torture remains entrenched in pre-trial detention, in particular in political cases, such as those involving dissidents, ethnic minorities or religious activities.

In recent years the authorities have increasingly used a new form of *incommunicado* detention that was formalized in law in 2013 when revisions to China's Criminal Procedure Law (Article 73) took effect – the “residential surveillance in a designated location” (指定居所监视居住). The law provides for this form of detention for suspects charged with crimes relating to national security, terrorism or serious corruption and bribery. Since prisoners detained in residential surveillance in a designated location have no contact with the outside world, Amnesty says that they are exposed to an increased risk of torture and ill-treatment. According to Amnesty, there are currently 12 lawyers, arrested during the recent crackdown on human rights lawyers that started in July 2015, who are being held in residential surveillance in a designated location ([www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/2730/2015/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/2730/2015/en/); see:

RCTC 2015, Nos. 3-4, pp. 27-28). In addition, according to China Aid, in Zhejiang Province at least 20 Protestant Christians have been subjected to this form of detention due to their resistance to government removal of crosses from church buildings (see entry of End of October 2015).

**November 17–18, 2015:**

## Hong Kong conference on the “Fusion of the Catholic Church and Society in China”

The conference was the fifth in a series of conferences on “The Role and Influence of Christianity in Chinese Society.” It was organized by the state-run Renmin University in Beijing and two Catholic research institutions – the Yuan Dao Study Society (Hong Kong) and the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province). The conference participants were composed of specialists from Mainland universities and academies, scientifically engaged Catholic priests, sisters and lay people as well as several Protestant theologians from the Mainland and from Hong Kong. Also participating were representatives of several official Mainland entities: the United Front Work Department, the journal *Zhongguo zongjiao* of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), etc.

The meeting began with a forum on the topic of religion and international relations. This was followed by a series of presentations on the topics of active integration of the Chinese Catholic Church in society and the potential contribution of Christianity toward building the rule of law in China. Another session was on today’s society and the inculturation of the Church’s evangelization. Participants in the last forum dealt with the topic of consecrated life under the pressure of secularization.

A report in the newspaper *Zhongguo minzu bao* (*China Ethnic News*), which is under the umbrella of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, highlighted the opening speech of Hong Kong’s Bishop, John Cardinal Tong. Tong said the Church has long regarded inculturation as something essential. But he stressed that inculturation must be a natural process, something which emanates from the local Church itself. It must be avoided that external forces should force things on the local Church which do not correspond with the spirit of the Gospel, Cardinal Tong said (*Fides* Nov. 20; www.mzb.com.cn Nov. 24 u.a.). – See also the entry of November 20–21, 2015.

**November 19, 2015:**

## China Aid: Court in Shandong denies appeal hearing of businessman convicted on cult charges

Because he was found in possession of literature distributed by the “Local Church” (Difang jiaohui 地方教会), on December 16, 2014, Christian businessman Yan Shubing was sentenced to four years in prison for “using a cult organization to undermine implementation of the law.” According to China Aid, in early October 2015, his application for appeal to have the sentence overturned was dismissed by a court in Linyi, Shandong Province (www.chinaaid.org Nov. 19).

The “Local Church” movement – so called because it represents a belief that there should be only one Christian church in every place – was initiated in China during the 1920s and 1930s by Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. The movement has been known by different names – the “Little Flock,” among others – and has spread internationally.

November 20–21, 2015:

## International conference in Beijing: “The Way toward the Sinicization of Christianity”

Representatives from politics (the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Party as well as national and local offices of the State Administration for Religious Affairs), from the social sciences and from the Protestant church took part in the conference. The conference was organized by the Institute of World Religions (IWR) and by the Center for the Study of Christianity of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, by the Chinese Association for Religious Studies (connected with the IWR) and by the two official Protestant governing bodies of the city of Beijing.

In his opening speech, IWR Director Zhuo Xinping said that the fusion of Christianity and Chinese culture had already begun back in the Tang period. He stressed that such fusion did not mean self-isolation, but rather the renewal of outstanding elements of other cultures in the Chinese nation and the embodiment of Chinese culture in the lives of China's Christians. Liu Xianchuan, of Beijing's local Bureau for Religious Affairs, explained that the “Sinicization of Christianity” was a theme common to science, politics and the church. He expressed the hope that the conference would serve as a guide for the Chinese Church with regard to its future development and give recommendations for the political decisions of the government. According to Pastor Shan Weixiang of the China Christian Council, the path toward the Sinicization began with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which freed Chinese Christianity from being labeled a foreign teaching. According to conference reports in *Fuyin shibao* (*Gospel Times*) and *Zhongguo minzu bao* (*China Ethnic News*), other presentations dealt with aspects of the Sinicization of Christianity in the fields of spirituality, family ethics, and in the doctrine of salvation ([www.gospeltimes.cn](http://www.gospeltimes.cn) Nov. 22; [www.mzb.com.cn](http://www.mzb.com.cn) Nov. 24).

There have been controversial discussions on the theme of the “Sinicization of Christianity” in China since 2014. On 20 May 2015, Party chief Xi Jinping called for the Sinicization of religious work. For more on this topic, see also the entry of November 17–18, 2015, and *China heute* 2015, No. 3, pp. 162–164 (in German).

November 25, 2015:

## *Xinhua*: Three supporters of the “Lord God Sect” sentenced to imprisonment due to involvement in “cult activities”

Huang Caiqiong was sentenced to four, Li Meiying to three and Nie Qunying to two years imprisonment. According to the judgment of the court in Hezhou (Guangxi), the three had distributed pamphlets for the Lord God Sect and organized meetings. The court also charged that in February of 2014, Huang and Nie had brought a man to the point of dedicating his two daughters (both minors) to the “service of the Lord God.” The missing girls were separately rescued by the police six and eight months later, the judgment said.

The Christian-inspired Lord God Sect (*Zhushenjiao* 主神教) was founded in Anhui in 1993. It has an apocalyptic doctrine of salvation. It preaches the creation of a “divine kingdom” and has charismatic leaders who claim divinity. The group was outlawed in 1998. The sect's founder, Liu Jianguo, was executed for rape in Henan in 1999. At the end of 2012, the Dui Hua Foundation, based in San Francisco, said that it has information on approximately 52 individuals who have been imprisoned in connection with the Lord God Sect, 16 of them had been convicted in the four previous years and were still in prison. In October of 2012 three female followers of the sect were sentenced to prison terms in Teng County (Guizhou) on charges of “organizing/using a cult to undermine implementation of the law”

(AFP Dec. 31, 2001; *Xinhua* Nov. 25; www.duihuaresearch.org Dec. 12, 2012; www.duihuaresearch.org/2014/07/identifying-cult-organizations-in-china.html).

**November 25, 2015:**

## **Matteo Ricci Prize awarded to Fr. Angelo Lazzarotto, PIME**

The prize is awarded by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the Catholic University of Milan (Sacred Heart). At the award ceremony Fr. Lazzarotto delivered a presentation on the topic “The relevance of Matteo Ricci for relations between Rome and Beijing.” The 90-year-old PIME missionary has lived in Hong Kong for many years and is an acknowledged expert on the Catholic Church in China. He dedicated the award to the “Christian people of China, who have worked so hard within the complex context of the situation of the Church to make the dream of Father Ricci a concrete reality.”

Fr. Lazzarotto was born May 14, 1925, in Falzè di Pave (Treviso) and was ordained a priest for the Milan Missionaries (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions – PIME in Italy). In 1957, after encounters with missionaries returning home after their expulsion from China, he began his career in Hong Kong, where he served, among other things, as rector of the Catholic Centre. In 1965 he returned to Italy following his election to the general council of his Institute. Upon his return to Hong Kong in 1979, Fr. Lazzarotto, together with the present Cardinal John Tong, established the diocesan Holy Spirit Study Centre as a center for research on the situation of the Church in China. In 1985 he returned to Italy for good, only to be appointed Rector of the International Mission Seminary at Urbaniana University in Rome. Each year he would return to China for a research trip, until 2011 when he was refused entry into China. Fr. Lazzarotto has published a rich body of works on the Church in China. The International Matteo Ricci Prize was first awarded in 1999 (*Eglises d'Asie* Dec. 2; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Nov. 21; www.unicatt.it).

**November 26, 2015:**

## **Journalist Gao Yu released from prison**

Last April, the 71-year-old woman journalist Gao Yu, who, among others, had also worked for the radio broadcaster *Deutsche Welle*, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment. Now, as the result of an appeal hearing, her sentence has been reduced from seven to five years. Since she is suffering from a serious heart disease, for the time being she will be serving her sentence “outside the prison.” Gao Yu was arrested in 2014 on a charge of “betraying state secrets.” She was accused of having passed on an internal party document to a foreign website in 2013. Foreign governments and human rights organizations have repeatedly criticized her condemnation and sentence as being politically motivated. Hong Kong’s diocesan Justice and Peace Commission is just one organization among many that have taken a stand in demanding her release (www.faz.net Nov. 26; www.spiegel.de Nov. 26; www.zeit.de Nov. 26; see also *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, p. 34).

November 26, 2015:

## ***China Daily*: Chinese NGOs are becoming increasingly involved in foreign countries**

According to data provided by Huang Haoming, deputy head of the Chinese NGO umbrella organization CANGO, as quoted by the *China Daily*, Chinese NGOs have recently been involved in an increasing number of projects abroad. Thus far, nearly 100 leading Chinese NGOs and foundations have completed projects abroad, mainly in Southeast Asia and Africa, but now even in the U.S.A., as well as in European and South American countries. Although in years past Chinese NGOs primarily became involved in disaster relief efforts abroad, now they are also increasingly carrying out regular development projects in other countries. At present, there are currently some 4,600 foundations and approximately 600,000 charitable organizations. The Chinese government will probably soon adopt a new law dealing with such charities, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo cishan fa* 中华人民共和国慈善法, aimed at providing government support for these types of organizations. It is expected that in future many such organizations will also be active abroad. The *Asia Foundation*, a US-based international development NGO, has in the meantime published a handbook offering useful information as a support for those Chinese NGOs which want to carry out projects abroad (*China Daily* Nov. 26; *EU-China Newsletter* 2015 No. 5).

Jan Kwee

November 30, 2015:

## **Zhu Weiqun recalls the identification of the state-appointed Panchen Lama 20 years ago – “The reincarnation of Living Buddhas falls under the sovereignty of China”**



The official 11th Panchen Lama Gyaltsen Norbu, appointed by Beijing 20 years ago, during the Fourth World Buddhist Forum in Wuxi (see the entry of October 24–25, 2015). Photo: bodhi.takungpao.com.

In a commentary published in *Huanqiu shibao* (*Global Times*), a newspaper close to the Party, Party politician Zhu reminded its readers of the day of November 29, 1995, when the 11th (official) Panchen Lama was identified by the drawing of lots from the “Golden Urn” in Lhasa. Zhu said that the event was of great importance not only for Buddhism, but also as an “expression of the sovereignty of the Chinese central government over Tibet as well as of its highest decision making authority regarding the reincarnation of Living Buddhas.” He declared that, “just the way it is with the reincarnation of the Dalai Lamas,” the search for and the identification of the Panchen Lamas is a matter which falls under Chinese sovereignty – as has been the case since the 18th century. Zhu said that at the beginning of 1995, the 14th Dalai Lama “arbitrarily” recognized a child as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. In doing so, he disturbed the search process introduced by the central government and showed his “true face” as a separatist and as a destroyer of Tibetan Buddhist tradition, so Zhu. The

14th Dalai Lama has often said that he alone has the authority to decide on his own reincarnation, Zhu remarked. But in fact, said Zhu, the reincarnation of a Living Buddha is not a purely religious matter but it is “above all an important local political event for Tibet” which gives expression to China’s sovereignty over Tibet (<http://opinion.huanqiu.com/1152/2015-11/8069191.html>).

Zhu Weiqun heads the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the Political Consultative Conference (PCC). Since 2013, the government-appointed Panchen Lama also has an official political role as a member of the PCC Standing Committee. The then six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, recognized by the present Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen Lama, was taken away by the Chinese authorities on May 18, 1995, to an unknown location. See also: *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, pp. 3-4, 16, 21, as well as the entries of October 24–25 and of November 9, 2015.

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## Colloquium “Challenges of Evangelisation – China and Europe”

Raimund Kern

Translated by Jacqueline Mulberghe

### Introduction

The title of the 9th European Catholic China Colloquium ECCC itself – “Challenges of Evangelisation – China and Europe” – aroused high expectations, which the great amount of information and the fruitful encounters alone fulfilled. The title evokes much – not least Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), which is concerned with the “proclamation of the gospel in today’s world.” It would also have been unthinkable without Vatican II and its missionary dynamism, made particularly effective in the Decree



Group photo of the conference participants. In the first row from left to right: Chinese religious sisters with Fr. Antoni Koszorz SVD, Archbishop Savio Hon SDB, Cardinal John Tong and Bishop Jan Piotrowski (Kielce Diocese). Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

A selection of the conference presentations appears, spread over several issues, in English in *Religions & Christianity in Today's China*, in a German translation in *China heute* (for both periodicals see [www.china-zentrum.de](http://www.china-zentrum.de)) as well as a Polish translation in *Chiny Dzisiaj* (Sinicum, Warsaw, [www.sinicum.pl](http://www.sinicum.pl)).

on the Mission Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes* which states, “In the present state of affairs [...] the Church [...] is more urgently called upon to save and renew every creature, that all things may be restored in Christ and all men may constitute one family in Him and one people of God” (AG 1). December 7, 2015 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of this important mission document by Paul VI. It is still relevant. Our present “world state of affairs” has not yet caught up with and certainly not overtaken it.

The 9th European Catholic China Colloquium (ECCC) took place from 10–13 September 2015 in the small city of Konstancin-Jeziorna, situated to the southeast of Warsaw. It was the second time, since 1999, that an ECCC was held in Poland. The venue this time was the Mission and Formation Center of the Pallotines which offered sufficient room for the 125 participants hailing from 17 countries. The languages of the conference were Chinese and English. The simultaneous translation was excellent and thus everyone could understand the talks and contributions. In addition a handbook in which most of the talks had been printed was available. Working groups were arranged according to language, making translation unnecessary. A large number of Chinese who are studying in Europe, as well as many Polish, attended the Colloquium. There were both very young participants and older ones, among whom a few could be called “old China hands” (Jerome Heyndrickx, CICM as well as Jean Charbonnier, MEP). Many already knew each other from their participation in earlier ECCCs. Unfortunately hardly any representatives from German aid agencies attended.

The first such event took place in Verona in December 1992, entitled “European Catholic China Meeting,” on the topic “Prospects of Catholic Cooperation with China in the Present International Context,” the second was in Paris in November 1995 with the theme “Europe – China Theological Exchanges.” Then followed in Krynica Morska (Poland) in September 1999 the “Third European Catholic China Colloquium” with the theme “The Catholic Church in China: Message, Response, and Commitment” and the “Fourth European Catholic China Colloquium” in Louvain (Belgium) in September 2003 entitled “Mutual Confirmation in Faith;” the “Seventh European Catholic China Colloquium” in Triuggio (Milan) in September 2006 had as theme “25 Years of Encounters with the Church in China. An Evaluation, Looking to the Future,” the “8th European Catholic China Colloquium” in Freising in September 2010 took up the topic “Chinese in Europe – Trends and Catholic Perspectives.” Since (due to a misunderstanding in the numbering) there was neither a 5th nor a 6th colloquium of this kind, this year’s colloquium was actually not the 9th but the 7th.

The Colloquium was organised by the China-Zentrum (China Center) and by Sinicum in Warsaw. Finance was provided by Church in Need, Missio Aachen, the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood, the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart and the Archdioceses of Cologne, Munich and Freising as well as Paderborn. On the Polish side financial support came from the Bishop of Opole, the Diocese of Gliwice, the Mission Commission of the Polish Bishops’ Conference, the Polish Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Mission Secretariat of the Franciscans, the Pallotines, the parish of the

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Swarzewo, the Polish Province of the Divine Word Missionaries and the Silesian School of Iconography.

## Colloquium

In the early afternoon of September 10, the Colloquium was opened by Fr. **Antoni Koszorz, SVD**, Director of Sinicum. The “Michał Boym SJ Sinicum Society,” named for a 17th century Polish missionary to China, was founded in 2011. Sinicum’s main task is to further cultural, social and religious exchange between Poland and China and to help the Catholic Church in China. Among other things it offers a course of several weeks on the *vita consecrata*, as well as three-year courses in sacred art for Chinese Sisters. The presence, even though brief, of Cardinal **Kazimierz Nycz**, Archbishop of Warsaw, was a sign of the Polish Bishops’ Conference’s esteem for the Colloquium. The Cardinal also spoke words of greeting. Msgr. **Jerzy Mazur, SVD**, bishop of the diocese of Elk and chairman of the mission commission of the Polish Bishops’ Conference, mentioned a mission initiative of this year, namely the IV National Mission Congress (June 2015). The Director of the China Center, Fr. **Martin Welling, SVD**, welcomed everyone in the name of the Center. He emphasized the great respect shown by German Catholics for their Chinese brothers and sisters in the faith. He said that he himself admired their mission commitment, shown by the loving welcome they give to non-Christians.



From left to right: Cardinal Nycz, Archbishop Hon, Fr. Welling. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

The actual opening talk was given by Archbishop **Savio Hon Tai-Fai, SDB**, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples since 2010. His topic was, “What Does Evangelisation Mean to Us? China and Europe Perspective. Some Inspirations from Cardinal Celso Costantini.” Savio Hon traced a line from the mission mandate of Jesus Christ (Mt 28:16-20) to more recent Church documents such as the Apostolic Exhorta-

tion *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI. Mainly, however, he spoke about a talk of Celso Costantini (1876–1958), Delegate Apostolic for China and later, 1927, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, given at the inauguration of the Catholic Fu Jen University in Peking on the topic of “Know Thyself.” Even if this talk with its praise of patriotism was historically interesting, a number of the Colloquium participants would have welcomed a more intensive connection with current problems. Students’ protests, for instance, were rejected across the board as useless by Costantini. Savio Hon did, however, point strongly to social injustices in materialistic China.

The second presentation of the first day of the Colloquium was close to the present times. The topic addressed by Fr. **Paul Han, SVD** was “The Church in China Urgently



Fr. Paul Han SVD. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

Needs the Attitude and Spirit of Francis.” Han is on the board of directors of Jinde Charities Foundation, a Catholic NGO founded in 1997 with the title “Beifang Jinde Catholic Social Service Center” in Shijiazhuang, the capital city of Hebei Province. This organization concentrates on aid for marginalized groups. After the earthquake in Sichuan in 2008, it acted as a partner of Caritas international. Han began his very critical talk with an appreciation of the commitment of Pope Francis for the poor and especially for China. 400 years after Matteo Ricci’s efforts in China, he said, the Catholic Church was still only a “little flock” among the almost 1.4 billion strong population. Since the beginning of

the somewhat freer 1980s, the Church, according to him, has paid ever more attention to its tasks of pastoral ministry and evangelisation, also using quite modern media as, e.g. microblogging. The overheated development of the economy, the growing gap between poor and rich, corruption, the break-up of family structures, AIDS and increasing criminal rates among the youth present a huge challenge. More difficulties, he stated, came from the division between the open Church and the underground Church, the unsolved diocesan structures, as well as the non-existence of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and China. He mentioned the efforts of Pope Francis to regain contact with the Chinese government. Francis invited us to re-read the letter written in 2007 by Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics in China. It justifiably states that the Church in China ought to unite in reconciliation. Han’s talk clearly showed that he esteems and admires Francis’ modesty, openness and down-to-earth focus. He quoted, not without reason, the following passage from his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (49):

*I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures.*

A serious problem, according to Han, is the antiquated theological thought in the Chinese Church. On the other hand that is positively balanced by an increase of the faithful due to

baptisms of non-believers. The transition to a new way of thinking and a new spirituality is very difficult, said Han, especially since rapid urbanization brings great radical changes, also particularly for younger priests and religious from the countryside. Not a few have left the priesthood. Secularization and materialism contributed to that. At present there is a crisis of vocations. These needs were being met, said Han, on the part of some dioceses and orders through on-going courses in the Faith – also for lay persons. Help with personnel and finances are made available from outside the country. Han recommended that the Church should learn from the vicissitudes of its history (the Rites Controversy and the sufferings of the Cultural Revolution), so that it could finally lose its image as a “foreign religion.” His question, “Is it possible to be a real Chinese and at the same time be a faithful Christian?” was merely rhetorical. In closing Han quoted the China missionary Vincent Lebbe (1877–1940): “China belongs to the Chinese, the Chinese belong to Christ!” [See the text of Paul Han’s talk in the last issue of *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, pp. 45-59.]

## Church and State: Service and Power

The Colloquium as a whole was divided into four sessions with presentations and a closing session. The first session dealt with the topic “Church–State Relations: Service and Power.” It showed how different these relations are, depending on whether the Church wishes or has to live (survive) in a free nation or an authoritarian or dictatorial one.

Msgr. Dr. habil **Józef Kloch**, speaker of the Polish Bishops’ Conference from 2003–2015 and Professor at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw, opened this session with a talk on “Relationships Between the Church and the State: Poland’s Case (1989–2014). The Debate in the Media.” Listening to him speaking of the present, one felt somewhat reminded of a lament. Whereas the Catholic Church played a major role when it supported the trade union *Solidarność* in 1980 and thereafter until the country was freed from Communism in 1989, that changed greatly to the disadvantage of the Church especially during the first decade of this century. Up until the fall of the Socialist system, press and media supported by the Church had eked out ever more freedom. Consequently the Church was greatly respected. In the debates of the late 1990s, the Church was recognized as a serious partner in the debate with the State, searching for the common good. The most significant discussion at that time concerned the new Constitution (1997). Its preamble expresses respect for both believers and non-believers and is, therefore, neutral. The practice of religion, religious instruction in schools, pastoral care in the army and more were established. Kloch stressed that the Polish Constitution could serve as a model for other countries. A concordat had been established between the Polish State and the Vatican that regulates the relationship of the State with the Church in Poland – together with an improvement in the protection of life. In addition in the 1990s moral questions dominated the discussion in the media, including family planning and defense of life in general. During that time as well, many of the public officials were scrutinized with regard to whether they had collaborated with the Communist secret service. At that time the Church was excluded from such scrutiny, for after all Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Warsaw’s Archbishop, was a person of integrity in the resistance. Kloch also mentioned the

reverence of the Polish Pope John Paul II that became very clear once more at his death in 2005. Immediately afterwards, however, the Church went on the defensive. It had been found that Church personnel had also collaborated with the secret service. Kloch accused the media of sensationalism. They had also criticized the Church regarding questions of bio-ethics (in vitro fertilization). The Church had, however, opposed this method with the NaPro-Technology (natural procreative technology). The Church was also criticized over a number of pedophile cases. Kloch formulated his conclusion: “A new trend, unknown before, emerged – intentional anti-Church texts.”

Prof. **Liu Peng**, Founder and Director of the Pushi Institute for Social Sciences (Beijing), gave a talk on “Religion and Rule of Law in China Today.” His Institute regularly



Professor Liu Peng. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

conducts summer courses and conferences on questions of religion and the rule of law. Liu Peng stressed that China needs a law on religion, also to regulate the relationship between State and Church. Regulations pertaining up till now were not satisfactory, he maintained. That applies, for example, to questions of the finances of the religious communities. Problems were arising increasingly also due to new sects and the opposition of official and non-official religions. Added to that, he stated, came ethnic problems in the autonomous regions Tibet (Buddhism) and Xinjiang. In addition many people misuse religion to enrich themselves. There were some very rich temples and even false Buddhist monks, as well. Completely

different difficulties arose from the tearing down of crosses and churches. Yet again, the Catholic Church has problems with state recognition of its bishops appointed by the Pope. The solution to many of these problems failed due to a lack of legal regulations, as well as the lack of a constitutional court in China, thus Liu Peng. Since 1954 the constitution of the People’s Republic of China does mention freedom of religion but the term itself was not defined. The privately owned Pushi Institute presented its own draft for a law on religion in 2013. The authorities for religion, however, were not in favour of a law of that kind, Liu said. Liu Peng emphasized that to achieve a good law, broad citizens’ participation and a public process would be necessary.

**Richard Madsen**, Professor for Sociology at the University of California (San Diego) and Fudan University (Shanghai), spoke on “Church–State Relations in China – Consequences for the Catholic Church.” According to Madsen these relations are a confusing, unstable mixture of Leninist-Stalinist policy and traditional imperial practice, neither of which adequately fits the realities of contemporary Chinese society. The Leninist-Stalinist policy, he said, was originally devised to weaken and control the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union but was then imposed on all Communist countries. In Poland with its strong Catholic Church it only worked in a weakened form. In China the policy did not fit most forms of religion, which were not organized in hierarchies and were embedded in local community life. It was different for the Catholic Church. Unintentionally it



Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

strengthened the social solidarity of the faithful in the Catholic communities. Since the Catholic Church in the countryside “was as much local folk religion as hierarchical world religion,” said Madsen, “the dismantling of the hierarchy could not dislodge Catholic identity.” The low growth rate of the Catholic Church compared to the Protestant can be explained, according to Madsen, by the fact that the clergy could easily be controlled by the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. The evolving over-all approach of the Communists seems to be inspired more by the practices of the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties than by Marxist–Leninism. Under the heading “cultural pluralism” and “intangible cultural heritage” the State today tolerates a broad range of religious expression (practices). But, stated Madsen, this is not out of regard for the right to form a religious association and the separation of Church and State. Rather it is based on the imperial principle that the State is the master and religion the follower. The Chinese emperor combined the “western” roles of king and pope. Even today the State decides whether a religion is considered orthodox or heterodox and thus is to be forbidden. In any case, the indigenous religions such as Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and folk religion are preferred. Due to its global connections, Catholicism is regarded as particularly problematic. The new and to some extent incoherent approaches toward religion/s are, thought Madsen, the consequence of a leadership that is not sure of its nationalistic cause. That could change, however, when China becomes more secure in its global status. The increasing dynamics of the religions could ultimately also lead to positive changes. [See the text of Richard Madsen’s talk in the last issue of *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, pp. 60-68.]

**Dmitry I. Petrovsky**, Representative of the Department for External Church Relations of Moscow Patriarchate, gave a talk on “Perspectives and Experiences of the Russian Orthodox Church Regarding Evangelization in Russia and China.” The speaker made reference to the 330 years’ history of orthodoxy in China, including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. It included both Russian Orthodox Christians who for various reasons had come to China and Chinese who had accepted baptism. He explained that the Orthodox Church is universal but is composed of different national, autonomous churches. In China, however, it is not (yet) recognized at the national level. The Orthodox Church is currently involved in a protracted dialogue with the Chinese State. The aim is that the Chinese Government would recognize a Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church. Only then would it be allowed to obtain the urgently needed training institutions. Today the Orthodox Church in China numbers about 15,000 faithful, of whom the majority are ethnic Russians. In the concept of a “harmonious society” Petrovsky sees an advantage, since religion could promote harmony, including a patriotic attitude. It was informative to hear that Petrovsky stressed the loyalty that the members of his Church show the authorities –

including government authorities. Reciprocal visits by high ranking representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church on the one hand and of the Chinese State Administration for Religious Affairs on the other had variously taken place. One highlight to date was the visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to Beijing in May 2013. Kirill also met with President Xi Jinping. The maintenance or restoration of Church buildings was a positive aspect. In everything the faithful had to concentrate on the “salvific mission of Christ and His Church.” In Russia, on the other hand, the Church had to carry out missionary activity among the Chinese living there. [See the text of Dmitry Petrovsky’s talk in this issue.]

## Experiences of Evangelisation

The second round of talks took up the very concrete theme of “Experiences of Evangelisation.” The first speaker was **John Cardinal Tong Hon**, Bishop of Hong Kong Diocese. He



Cardinal John Tong. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

emphasized with *Ad Gentes* (2), the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, that the pilgrim Church “is missionary by its very nature.” The Catholic community in Hong Kong which began in 1841 – at the time there were a few Irish soldiers in the small fishing village – has in the meantime grown to over 560,000 members today. That made Hong Kong the largest Chinese diocese in the world. The Cardinal cited a few numbers regarding Church personnel (around 300 priests and 500 religious sisters). He also spoke about his own life. The diocese of Hong Kong, said the Cardinal, stood on three “legs” – parishes, schools and social services, and had four main pastoral concerns. The

first is evangelisation. Every year they count around 7,000 baptisms. Half of those are adults. Also important, he said, were initiatives geared to deepening the faith. In September 2016 a Catholic university is due to open. The second concern is the promotion of vocations. Hong Kong urgently needed more priests, sisters and permanent deacons, as well as lay missionaries. There are already some lay missionaries from Hong Kong working in Asia and Africa. The third priority is pastoral work among non-Chinese Catholics. The largest group are the guest workers from the Philippines, mainly domestic employees. The fourth priority is Hong Kong’s task as bridge between the Church in Mainland China and the Universal Church. Cardinal Tong expressed his esteem for the exemplary missionary spirit that he had come to recognize in many Catholics – priests, sisters and lay persons. The personal contact with people is always necessary if we wish to lead them to Christ. He expressed his hope that the Catholics in Mainland would in future be able to enjoy full religious freedom. He closed with a prayer to “Our Lady of Sheshan.” [See the text of Cardinal Tong’s talk in the last issue of *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, pp. 69-75.]

A Chinese priest reported on faith formation and evangelisation work in his diocese. Within China itself it counts as one of the largest dioceses. After years of continual effort in the field of faith formation and evangelisation it could now serve as a model, the priest said. The youth are particularly addressed and are formed in the faith by means of courses and summer camps. Otherwise in the secular environment of the universities they would easily lose their faith. A few years ago a youth center was specifically set up. Those in responsibility are aware that the youth is the future of the Church. Young persons can take training as (certified) youth leaders. They spread the Gospel among non-Christian youth among whom, by the way, the feast of Christmas has a special attraction. Annually a number of students come forward for baptism. Something is also being done for high school students and young workers. The mission mandate (Mt 28:19) applies to every Christian.

Fr. **Bruno Lepeu, MEP** (Hong Kong) spoke on “Evangelisation among young people in China since 2005.” In the mid-2000s a few priests and religious sisters were sent abroad for further studies on youth ministry. One difficulty lies in the increasingly rapid succession of young generations. While high school students can only be reached with difficulty, it is different with university students. They have more time. Their numbers are strongly increasing. In 2014 there were 7.27 million university graduates. Many are willing to work for a better world. However, it is prohibited to promote religion in the universities. In some cities, however, the Church offers a wide range of religious events for students (pilgrimages, larger meetings, formation and prayer). Marriage preparation courses are well visited, even by non-Christians. In all this, personal spiritual accompaniment is important. There are many opportunities to renew the life of the Church with the help of young persons. [See the text of Bruno Lepeu’s talk in this issue.]

Sr. **Teresa Yu**, of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (China), reported experiences of religious sisters in Mainland in their efforts at evangelisation. The experiences had to be seen against the background of socialism, which propagates values such as well-being, harmony and patriotism and dreams of the restoration of the great Chinese Nation. The pursuit of wealth determines the current value system. The Church was recovering again after the time of massive oppression, she said. At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, congregations of sisters shot up like bamboo shoots in spring in the whole country – around 60 in the official and 30 in the unofficial Church. Since the sisters’ congregations are diocesan institutes, they mainly serve the local churches in parish work and health care. To fill the spiritual emptiness of modern times, the sisters also organized retreats, for example, and care of the aged. Their institutional and material dependence is often a hindrance. There is a growing gap between the demands made on them and their possibilities. A number of sisters are suffering a psychological crisis. Therefore it is good to see that more efforts are being made to give the sisters more spiritual and pastoral formation.

Fr. **Anthony Chiu Hung-Jen, SVD** (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei) gave a talk on “Experiences of Evangelisation: Taiwan.” He also touched on the history of the Catholic Church in Taiwan that today comprises seven dioceses. After the overthrow of the Kuomintang in 1949, very many Chinese fled from Mainland to Taiwan. Some of them found a new “home” in the Church. Among the aboriginal population of Taiwan, Chiu said, the

Church had enjoyed a successful mission. Today there are in all around 300,000 Catholics – of whom two-thirds are active – and about twice as many Protestants in a total population of a good 23 million. The Catholic Church works very much in the area of education and social work, including among others for migrant workers. Many “lay apostles” help, according to Chiu. Unfortunately, however, the Church will for a long time still be very dependent on foreign Church personnel (mainly priests and sisters from other Asian countries). For that reason also the inculturation of the Good News is still in its initial phase. A model for mission and evangelisation would need to be developed, taking into account characteristic features of the society and culture/s of Taiwan.

Prof. Dr. **Fredrik Fällmann**, Professor of Sinology at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden), set an ecumenical accent. He spoke on “A Chinese Protestant Perspective on



Prof. Fredrik Fällmann. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

Evangelisation. Reflections from a European Sinologist.” The Protestant Church has grown very rapidly, he said, since the 1980s. In the 1950s the government had prohibited the individual denominations and yet today a strong denominational return can be observed. For China evangelisation in small groups is important, because they can give a feeling of social belonging. Also Bible reading is greatly important for Chinese Protestants – including learning text excerpts by heart. The healing power of prayer and accompanying miracles are

also significant, he stated. Intellectuals are working towards an evangelisation of Chinese culture. They are also open to socio-political commitment. A Chinese woman pastor once said: “We must stir the people up.” She was probably thinking of Paul and Silas of whom the Acts of the Apostles reports (16:20): “These men are causing a disturbance in our city.”

## Inculturation, Media, Art

The third session was devoted to “Inculturation, Media, Art.” Dr. **Giuseppe Jing**, Director of the Matteo Ricci Study Centre (Macerata/Italy), opened it with a quite theory-oriented talk on “The Evangelisation of Culture and Inculturation of Christian Faith in China – The Humanistic-Social Context of Contemporary China: An Opportunity or a Challenge?” Jing examined the connection between evangelisation, culture and inculturation of the faith from early Christian times down to present day China. He pointed out that every Christian ought to regard evangelisation as his/her mission or task. The early Christians had a pronounced sense of that. They had already had to inculturate the faith in diverse societies. The term inculturation found its way into an official Church document of John Paul II in 1979. Cardinal Ratzinger later made use of the concept of interculturality to show clearly that the Good News passed over from the culture of the one proclaiming



Conference participants during one of the lectures. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

it into the culture of the receiver. Although the universal Good News transcends the individual cultures, according to Jing it has to be transmitted into them. The individual cultures have to assimilate it into themselves. Naturally that is also valid for the Chinese culture. The Church is enmeshed in the context of the challenges presented by secularization and globalization. Christians would have to be open to them in society. Since there is no (legitimate) bishops' conference, more would have to be done independently at the diocesan level. In many cases, however, dioceses lack, e.g. a priests' council, professional commissions, structured planning. Helplessness and inadequacy often shape the picture. In addition there is a lack of commitment and social responsibility. Jing partially judged the condition of the local churches very critically. He did, however, make suggestions for the improvement of the situation. The Church in China ought to acquire competence and knowledge in many fields. For that Jing recommended forming, for want of a functioning bishops' conference, a team of committed and dedicated Chinese Catholic intellectuals, who are competent in the fields of philosophy, sociology, religious studies and canon law. Such a team could help Church communities to purposefully take up measures for improvement, to understand the needs in society and to help form the spirit of a "humanistic" society. The aim is to overcome China's "spiritual vacuum." Chinese intellectuals were longing to shape a new culture, said Jing. For that, values such as love, fidelity and justice would be necessary. The social teaching of the Church could help in that, as well as an inculturated and contextualized theology. Jing spoke of an "evangelisation of the (Chinese) culture." In that way "Christ's dream" and "China's dream" could be fulfilled. Catholic intellectual communities and the elite in society would have to cooperate actively here.

Fr. **Li Rongpin**, Director of Faith Press (Shijiazhuang), gave a talk on “The Role and Functions of the Church Media in China.” The media are often regarded as a yardstick to measure the progress and development of a society. *Inter mirifica*, the Vatican II *Decree on the Means of Social Communication*, already described the media as “wonderful technological discoveries” (IM 1). They ought to be used, among other things, for pastoral evangelisation and the promotion of social justice. Church media could contribute an irreplaceable freshness to the partially chaotic secular media landscape. The staff of Faith Press, founded in 1991, endeavor to accomplish that. The main thing is to give reliable information and to show the role of the Church, i.e. the Christians, as “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” – through information, reports and proclamation of the Word of God. It would also mean mobilizing people for good purposes. Printed matter and use of the Internet, including for interaction between those making the media and those using them, would be the means for that. There are (government) restrictions regarding what may be published. In spite of that Faith Press must be developed further and the contact to the Universal Church improved.

**Isabel Hess-Friemann** (Heidelberg, Germany), who lived in China from 2004 to 2012 and is currently chairwoman of the Protestant section of the German Ecumenical China Working Group, gave a talk on “Evangelisation Through Art in China: A Protestant Perspective.” To give the audience an impression of modern Christian art in China she showed a number of Christian works of art in a Power Point Presentation. She emphasized that Christian Chinese express their faith also through the traditional Chinese art forms of calligraphy and paper-cutting, woodcuts and oil painting. For places of worship and also in the home they use signs for, among other things, faith, love and hope. The character for fish, e.g. is a very catchy symbol as the pronunciation of its character *yu* is the same as the character for increase and this character is used on porcelain dishes. On the other hand the cross proves problematic for a culture that is centered on harmony and happiness. One possibility, she stated, was to present the cross as a source of light and life. Then the aspect of suffering would not be so much in the forefront. In the Protestant Church such Christian Chinese artwork has become popular since the 1990s. Hess-Friemann mentioned among others the paper-cutting artist Fan Pu, the woodcut artist Qian Zhusheng, Ying De (oil painting) and Dao Zi, who produced the 2015 abstract hunger cloth for Misereor, “God and Gold – how much is enough?” There is now a tendency towards newer, more complex presentations and techniques. The number of artists as well as the range of their work for the proclamation of the Good News with paintbrush and colour is still expanding. The listeners would have liked to hear much more, e.g. on the altogether rather meagre acceptance of modern art in the churches. Time, however, was much too short. Consequently they had to do without an answer to the question whether alongside pictorial art there was Christian music, literature, sculpture or architecture.

## Formation for Evangelisation

The fourth session comprised the topic “Formation for Evangelisation“. The priest Professor Dr. **Krzysztof Pawlina**, Rector of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Warsaw,



Participants are exchanging their opinions during the Colloquium. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

opened the session with a lecture on “Experiences of the School of Leaders of New Evangelisation.” This “School”, founded in Warsaw in 2011, aims by means of studies and workshops over the course of an entire year (on ten Saturdays) to train mature persons for religious leadership. After the course they ought to be capable of spiritual guidance of (groups of) people. John Paul II first used the expression “New Evangelisation” in 1979. In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) he distinguished three types of redemptive activity in the Church: the mission among non-believers, service to and for Christians and new evangelisation for Christians who had lost their faith. For the purpose of new evangelisation he, Pawlina, had then established the above-mentioned School. Trained as religious leaders are among others, psychologists, management professionals and business people. In the meantime around 300 leaders from 26 of the 41 dioceses of Poland have gone through the formation. Unlike in former times, young people in Poland had first to be introduced to Christ through personal talks and contact. Proclamation (*kerygma*) comes before catechesis which presumes the presence of faith. For its proclamation new evangelisation make use of different methods, among others electronic media, dance and music, as well as drama. Neither priests nor lay persons possess the truth, he maintained, rather they have to discover it together in service with and for one another.

**Jean Luc Moens** (Emmanuel Community, Rome) spoke on “Experiences and Visions Regarding Evangelisation in (Western) Europe.” Moens spoke of not just an economic but a spiritual crisis in Europe, marked by increasing secularization, individualism, materialism and a “dictatorship of relativism” (Benedict XVI). In many cities one can speak of evangelisation *ad gentes* because nowadays people from numerous – also non-European – nations live there, many of them Moslems. The missionary dynamic of the Church began with Pentecost, i.e. with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Moens explained that the Church had time and again overcome crises throughout its history. Again and again God acted in history through saints and through religious orders and communities. For the present

time Moens enumerated among others the Focolare Movement, *Comunione e Liberazione*, the Emmanuel Community, the Neocatechumenate and Sant’Egidio, as well as the Charismatic Renewal. A specific characteristic of these communities is the fact that they include members from all states of life. They respond to today’s challenges, to the decline of faith by offering a genuine experience of faith, to the thirst for spirituality by returning to prayer and liturgy, to sadness and loneliness by fraternity and joy, to individualism with a spirit of community, to materialism through compassion and sharing, to relativism with religious formation. Well trained and motivated members of the new communities become missionaries themselves, Moens said.

Fr. **Jean Charbonnier, MEP** (Paris), who was first in China in 1977, spoke on the topic of “The Priests’ Responsibility in Communicating with Non-Christians.” Charbonnier has a great deal of experience with Chinese priests who studied theology in France. His specific attention went to those who thought they could not find work with an income as a parish priest in China and had therefore given up. They had not been aware that a priest could be a good shepherd for all people. As reasons for this lack of awareness he named growing up in a traditional Catholic village community and a seminary formation which emphasized canonical duties (administering sacraments) and on the other hand placed little value on dialogue with others. In addition some of the priests were sent to study in Europe without having any pastoral experience and had great difficulties with abstract terminology and critical procedures. Thus later on they were not able to discuss their faith with non-Christians. Charbonnier’s question was, whether the French model of priests living and working among non-Christians, whether the Mission de France and whether the worker priests could be a model for China. He named Charles de Foucauld (murdered in 1916) who worked among the Tuareg in the Sahara. Urbanization in China was bringing a new, dynamic Catholic life in the cities. Charbonnier wished that priests would be prepared for this new life and already enabled during their formation to dialogue confidently with non-religious youth or those adhering to other religions. The formation ought also to include reading those Chinese authors who criticized the formalistic characteristics of Confucianism and had opened the way to personal responsibility and social awareness. Inculturation may not be too much concentrated on Confucianism but must also include the Daoist masters and their encouragement towards inner freedom and creativity. Buddhist criticism of ego-centeredness and its care for the suffering could be related to the Christian mystery of salvation. He also recommended that seminarians at Chinese seminaries become acquainted with modern writers such as Lu Xun (1881–1936). Chinese priests, predominantly diocesan priests, ought to meet regularly, their bishops ought to have sufficient authority and cultivate good connections to their priests. It is important, said Charbonnier, that priests make a specific contribution to evangelisation and that they give a witness of humility, service and charity.

Fr. **Norman Jennings, SSCME** (Columban Missionaries, Ireland) spoke on the topic of the “Challenges and Opportunities of Formation Programs for Chinese Students – the Example of Ireland.” Jennings is coordinator of the formation program for Chinese seminarians in his Congregation. After Vatican II there was a demand for a holistic approach to study and integration into the community. From the mid-1980s on, Columbans had again



Sr. Weronika Klebba SSps, one of the main organizers from Sinicum, with Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Papal Nuncio to Poland. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

been able to visit China. They were asked by bishops, priests and sisters to help with the ongoing formation of Church personnel. A decade later they had financed theology studies in Ireland for priests and professed sisters. Since those had been formed in “pre-Vatican II” models, they found it difficult to adjust to critical and participatory study. Moreover, the majority needs intensive English courses. They also find it difficult, according to Jennings, to talk with others about their thoughts and feelings. Yet that is necessary for them to become mature personalities. The Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality (Dublin) offers courses in Spiritual Direction – and also a one-year Master’s degree course. Today Chinese students get to know an Irish Church that has lost a great deal of influence. Perhaps they are surprised that, in spite of that, much is spoken or written in the media about faith, religion and spirituality.

## Summary and Outlook

On 13 September, the final day of the Colloquium, Fr. **Jerom Heyndrickx CICM** (Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, Louvain) moderated the closing session “Summary and Outlook” with the question: “Where should our China concern in Europe be directed to in the future? What is our mission?” Joining him on the rostrum were Archbishop Savio Hon, Dr. Anthony Lam of the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong, Sr. Teresa Yu and Katharina Wenzel-Teuber from the China Center. Hopes and possible tasks were presented by the working groups, as well as from the panel. They are listed here somewhat unsystematically: Formation and ongoing formation of priests, sisters and lay persons; further formation for bishops (including in the field of management and human resources); strategies and methods of evangelisation: propagation of Church social doctrine; social apostolate;

promotion of ecumenism; interreligious dialogue; care of and about children and young persons; celebration – also ecumenical – of the world day of prayer for China (24 May); continuation of financial, personnel and methodological (training) help from without but empowerment of the Church in China; setting up networks in China for the purpose of coordinating personnel resources and joint efforts for evangelisation; expansion of a network of the Chinese Catholic communities in Europe that accompany Chinese Catholics pastorally and at the same time serve as bridges to the local churches as well as to non-Christian Chinese in Europe. It was also emphasized that a European Catholic China Colloquium should take place every four to five years. The next one should be prepared and organized by the China Center. It would be necessary to establish an organizing committee for that. The China Center should also endeavor to provide for more networking and communication among the “centers” in Europe that are concerned with China or with the Church in China.

The goal of the Colloquium was to bring together “representatives of relevant institutions in Europe who are involved in this topic or persons with a special interest in or engagement with China and the Church in China.” That succeeded well. The Colloquium enjoyed great attention from the media. The Director of the China Center Fr. Martin Well-ling, SVD, the Director of Sinicum Fr. Antoni Koszorz, SVD, Fr. Dr. Piotr Adamek, SVD

(Director of the Monumenta Serica Institute in Sankt Augustin) and Dr. Anthony Lam of the Holy Spirit Study Centre answered questions during a press conference with 15 journalists shortly before the Colloquium took place.

Even if not all talks were excellent – as is only to be expected at a meeting of this size – they did in any case offer a great deal of information. Some gave impressive and hopeful testimony of the work in the atelier of evangelisation. Overlapping of topics was unavoidable. To those who know the situation of the Catholic and also of the Protestant Church in China naturally not everything was new. After the presentations good use was often made of the chance to ask questions. The availability of different moderators brought added liveliness to the Colloquium. It was especially gratifying that the Colloquium had a strong ecumenical component – totally in line with Jn 17:11: “ut unum sint.” One could have wished for more reports of experiences from Europe. The celebration of Mass in the Center chapel engendered a good, inspiring, spiritual accent. The Colloquium closed in great gratitude with a Eucharistic celebration presided by Cardinal Tong. It remains to be hoped that the Colloquium will be effective.

## Perspectives and Experiences of the Russian Orthodox Church Regarding Evangelization in Russia and China

*Dmitry I. Petrovsky*



Dmitry I. Petrovsky. Photo: Mariola Krystecka.

China today has entered a peculiar period of development as the destruction of the ideological foundation of atheism and the period of economic and social transition have led to a spiritual vacuum. For the past thirty years the number of Christians in China has increased many times over. Tens of thousands of Catholic and Protestant parishes have opened throughout the country. It is only Orthodoxy that remains a Christian confession whose parishioners and churches have not increased in number as vividly.

In speaking of Chinese Orthodoxy, it is necessary to consider the problems of Orthodoxy in China proper, to which we include with certain reservations Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and Orthodoxy in Chinese communities outside China, primarily in Russia.

Orthodoxy in China has a long history in which a special role belongs to the Russian Orthodox Mission which worked in China for two and a half centuries. Such a long existence of Orthodoxy in China allows us to treat it as an element of traditional Chinese culture. Orthodoxy came to China peacefully in order to take spiritual care of its followers who found themselves in a foreign land. At the same time, it laid the foundation for mutual acquaintance and dialogue between the Russian and Chinese civilizations to become a spiritual and moral pillar for the development of relations between the two countries.

The work of the Mission included the study of the language, culture, history and contemporary life of the Chinese people. Through the efforts of its members it made a considerable contribution to the development of world and Russian sinology. However, all the concerns of the Mission were focused, in the first place, on the preaching of the Good News of Christ, the translation of liturgical texts, as well as the spiritual guidance of the

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Orthodox faithful in China, both Russian and Chinese, who followed Christ according to the dictates of their hearts.

The beginning of the Mission's work is traditionally dated to 1685 when the first Orthodox priest, Maxim Leontyev, began his service in the Chinese capital. It is precisely for this reason that we mark the 330th anniversary of Orthodoxy in China this year [2015]. Formally the Mission was established in 1713, while the intention to set it up was documented in 1700, 1703, 1706 and 1709.

The traditionally loyal attitude of the Orthodox faithful towards the Chinese authorities and their respect for local customs have determined the long life of the faithful in the Chinese environment.

Already in the late 17th century, the Orthodox Church sought to fit into the Chinese public order and to avoid conflicts with the authorities. Priests in China were called to behave carefully to avoid provoking unnecessary friction with the authorities of the neighbouring empire. It should be stressed that the tasks of pastoral care for the Albazinian Cossacks, who lived in Beijing, and the Russian visitors were made a priority.

I want to note that the Mission proper as a Church institution was established only after the consent of the Chinese side. With the blessing of Metropolitan John (Maximovich) of Tobolsk and All Siberia, the first Orthodox mission was formed in late 1712 or early 1713 and arrived in Beijing in 1715.

Initially, the Mission was a Church institution under the Sacred Governing Synod. It was only after the status of the Russian Orthodox Mission in Beijing was approved by the Treaty of Kiakhta, Article 5, on June 14, 1728, that it was placed under the authority of both the Synod and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire – a situation that lasted until 1863. Subsequently the Mission became subordinate only to the Synod and was engaged only in religious work.

The Orthodox Church is universal. This universality, however, is made up of a diversity of national Orthodox Churches. It is precisely in creating a national Chinese Church that the Russian clergy in China saw the meaning of their work.

By the 20th century there had been formed a large Chinese flock with its own national clergy and later the episcopate. The spiritual planting of seed by Russian missionaries and the presence of Russian settlers in China brought forth as a fruit the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church. In the rules of Orthodoxy, the autonomy of the Chinese Church implies full independence in its internal governance. The Chinese Church preserved only spiritual ties with the Church in Russia, from which Orthodoxy had come to China. However, the development of the young Church organism was tragically interrupted under the stress provoked by the Cultural Revolution.

In the 1950s, the first relatively stable decade in the PRC's life, the Chinese Orthodox people did not manage to finish the construction of their own Church and to lay a solid organizational foundation for it. The legal status of the Church was vulnerable as it had failed to set up at that time "an Orthodox patriotic association," as the authorities demanded. It should have been a structure recognized by the state as a body for building Church-state relations. Such patriotic associations were established in the PRC by the Catholics,

Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists and Daoists. As a result, the Church in the PRC failed to complete *de jure* the procedure of state recognition on the national level, remaining a group of separate parishes in various parts of the country. It proved impossible to fulfil the procedure of recognition during the upheavals of the 1960s-70s. The persecution in the period of the Cultural Revolution and the loss of most of the clergy led to the present difficult situation of the Chinese Orthodox Church.

Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church in China is still alive, although there is no state-recognized Chinese Orthodox clergy in China, who could celebrate the liturgy on a regular basis. Meanwhile, there are about 15,000 Orthodox believers in the country, most of them living in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, the north-eastern Province of Heilongjiang as well as in Beijing and Shanghai. To continue living, the Chinese Orthodoxy needs priests and bishops but there are no Orthodox educational institutions in the PRC. Orthodox Chinese have repeatedly appealed to the Russian Orthodox Church to send them a priest for celebrating the liturgy and requested services, such as baptisms, weddings and Church funerals.

The Russian Orthodox Church respects the principles of independence and autonomy of the religious communities in the PRC. It is precisely on this basis that in due course she granted the status of self-governance to the Chinese Orthodox Church. However, we cannot be indifferent with regard to the situation of our faithful in China; the more so that most of them belong to the Russian ethnic minority.

The numerous appeals made by Chinese citizens to the Russian Orthodox Church to provide pastoral care have increased with the policy of reforms and openness. Then the Russian Church had to face a difficult dilemma – to begin responding to the actual needs of the Orthodox flock in China by sending priests even without the knowledge of the Chinese authorities or to remain faithful to the missionary tradition of loyal existence in the Chinese milieu and respectful of the political realities and to begin a long official dialogue for normalizing the status of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church as a whole – which will make it possible to solve particular problems of pastoral care.

The second way of dialogue was chosen. It was Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, now His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, who became the architect of the efforts in the Chinese area.

There is no reason to believe that the problem of the Chinese faithful can “disappear” in the wake of their full immersion into the surrounding secular culture when they are left without pastoral care. The point is not only that the Chinese Orthodox Christians seek to preserve their religious traditions and to hand them down to their descendants. In today’s open world, the size of the Russian diaspora in Beijing and other large cities in China is growing and will inevitably continue growing. Therefore, the need for reviving the Chinese Orthodox Church is felt already now not only by the Albazinians’ successors but also by the ethnic Russian newcomers and their descendants from mixed marriages, as well as the Orthodox citizens of third countries. At the same time, today many Chinese are interested in Orthodoxy, often choosing it as their faith.

The Chinese Orthodox Church did not perish during the years of trials, but her revival needs care and support from the Mother Church. Nowadays China is for the Russian

Orthodox Church a region of pastoral responsibility and will remain as such until the hierarchy of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church will be restored.

At present, Orthodoxy in China has the status of one of the traditional religions of ethnic minorities. This status does not correspond to the universal nature of the Christian Church and already now represents a limiting factor in the normal development of Orthodoxy in China, as was noted in the report of Shi Hengtian, Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), which reported the findings of a field study on the life of Orthodox Chinese in a number of regions of the country at the Russian-Chinese Conference on “Russian Cultural and Historical Traditions and Russia’s Relation to the Asian-Pacific Countries,” which took place in December 2013 in Beijing.

Although the problem of restoring the legal status of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church in the PRC is still unsolved on the state level, the Chinese Orthodox Christians are free from internal disorders. Even in the absence of a centralized Church administrative organization, the Chinese faithful have preserved an enviable internal unity. This enables it to easily restore the legal internal governance structure, making it mutually correspondent with the Chinese socialist society.

At present the officially open Orthodox churches in the PRC have the legal status of places in which it is permitted to celebrate Orthodox divine services. In China today, however, there is not a single Orthodox religious organization. This seriously complicates the task of normalizing Orthodox life, in which the first step lies in the ordination of Chinese priests. The Russian Orthodox Church is exerting every effort to support the Chinese Orthodox Christians’ desire to receive official state recognition on the all-China level.

Beneficial prospects for reviving the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church have been created by the policy proclaimed by the Chinese authorities to create a “harmonious society” called to unite different interests of various social groups for the benefit of developing the whole country and thus also to reveal and develop the positive role of religion in promoting social harmony. The consistent implementation of this policy will help realize the aspirations of the Chinese Orthodox who for the last three centuries have become an integral part of China’s diverse religious culture.

At the same time, the close partnership of the two countries stimulates the interest of the Chinese in Russia and Orthodoxy as an organic part of contemporary Russian religious culture.

Since 2004, the theme of Orthodoxy in China has been featured in high-level talks. The problems began to be discussed during the visits made by Russian President Vladimir Putin to Beijing in October 2004 and in March and June 2006, and during the visit made by the PRC President Hu Jintao to Moscow in July 2005. It is noteworthy that along with the political dialogue on Orthodoxy in September 2010, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, as part of his official visit to China, presented the PRC President Hu Jintao with a book on the history of Orthodoxy in China.

Initially this agenda was limited to particular problems, such as the restoration of the Dormition Church in Beijing. Later, complex problems began to be posed concerning the Russian Orthodox Church’s pastoral care of our compatriots in China at the Olympics in



The Dormition Church on the territory of the Russian embassy in Beijing was restored in 2009.  
Photo: Dmitry I. Petrovsky.

2008, Expo in 2010 and the ROC clergy's service for Orthodox compatriots in surviving Orthodox churches in China.

The continuous dialogue on these questions was reflected in bilateral documents adopted at a high level, such as action plans for implementing the Treaty of Good-neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China for 2005–2008, 2009–2012 and 2013–2016, which envisioned the establishment and development of dialogue and cooperation between the leading religious confessions in Russia and China, as well as the establishment of contacts and the deepening of relations between the Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Organizations and the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs, and between the Interreligious Council in Russia and the Chinese Association for Cultural and Religious Relations. All this led to the establishment of a mechanism for regular contacts on the departmental level – the working group for contacts and cooperation under the Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Organizations and the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs.

In terms of practice, the common efforts succeeded to restore the Dormition Church on the territory of the Russian embassy in Beijing, to come to an agreement concerning the service of priests from Russia for Orthodox participants and guests of the Olympics in 2008 and the Expo in 2010, as well as the celebration of the Easter service by a priest from Russia for compatriots at the Pokrov Church (Protection of the Mother of God) in Harbin in 2010 and 2014.

A possible level of contacts was secured between the Russian Orthodox Church and the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs, as well as a number of official visits of Russian Orthodox Church delegations to China. In July 2006, the head of the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs Mr. Ye Xiaowen made an unofficial visit to Russia. He met with the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations.

In February 2009, a delegation of the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs led by its head Mr. Ye Xiaowen made an official visit on the occasion of the enthronement of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and Mr. Ye Xiaowen had a meeting.

In November 2009, a delegation of the Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Organizations together with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations visited China at the invitation of the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs. They held negotiations concerning the development of the Russian-Chinese cooperation in the religious sphere. As a result of the visit, the two bodies signed memoranda on mutual understanding concerning the cooperation procedure and the training of Chinese students at Russian Orthodox Church theological schools.

The Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Organizations set up a working group for cooperation with the PRC in the religious sphere. On June 8, 2011, the first consultations of the Russian-Chinese working group for contacts and cooperation in the religious sphere were held in Moscow. The second round of consultations took place on June 19, 2012, in China. The third round of consultations, held on July 16, 2014, in Moscow, was attended by the leader of the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs Mr. Wang Zuo'an. The fourth round took place last May in Beijing.

The progressive development of constructive dialogue with the State Administration for Religious Affairs has helped to advance Chinese citizens' knowledge about the history and role of Orthodoxy in their country and to implement beneficial cultural and religious projects. These efforts had as their most important result the historic visit made by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to China in May 2013. It was the first ever visit made to China by a Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

On May 12, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated the Divine Liturgy on the territory of the Russian embassy in Beijing, on May 14 at the Pokrov Church in Harbin and on May 15 in the building of the former Cathedral of Our Lady the Warrantress of the Sinful in Shanghai. In Shanghai, among the concelebrants of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox



On May 14, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Pokrov Church in Harbin. Photo: Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia press service, [www.patriarchia.ru](http://www.patriarchia.ru).

Church, along with the Russian delegation members in holy orders, were the clergy of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church, including Father Michael Wang and Proto-deacon Evangel Lu. The Patriarchal services were attended by a great number of faithful. During his visit to China, His Holiness the Patriarch met with the President of the People's Republic of China Mr. Xi Jinping, Chinese religious leaders, the director of the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs Mr. Wang Zuo'an and the leaders of Heilongjiang Province and Shanghai.

The Patriarch and the PRC President had a talk at the Great Hall of the People. Reports about his meetings with the head of the Chinese State and other state officials were on the news of the Chinese central TV networks and became the topic of *Renmin ribao's* editorial. Only a few years before that, the Chinese media did not cover any event of religious life and a visit of the head of a Church from a foreign state, institutionally unregistered in China, was unimaginable. The meeting between Patriarch Kirill and President Xi Jinping was the first ever meeting between the leader of the People's Republic of China and the head of a Christian Church.

Among the important tasks of the visit was to coordinate with the PRC political leaders a vision of the ways for normalizing the status of the Chinese Orthodox Church, replenishing its clergy and restoring regular services in surviving Orthodox churches in China.

During his meetings with both the supreme political leaders of the country and the state officials in charge of the PRC's religious policy in the country as a whole and in particular provinces and cities, His Holiness the Patriarch consistently explained the above-mentioned approaches of the Russian Orthodox Church towards the normalization of the status of the Orthodox Church in China and the positive impact resulting from contacts in the religious sphere on relations between our two countries as follows:

- Russian missionaries brought Orthodoxy to China over 300 years ago. Now it is formed as the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Chinese state, but it cannot be indifferent regarding the situation of our faithful in China;
- The creation of favourable conditions for normalizing the religious life of the Orthodox Christians in China will give an impetus to the development of humanitarian contacts and strengthen the cultural and religious components of our cooperation;
- The Russian Church regards it important that the Chinese civilization may be seen by the Russian people not as an interesting though alien culture but, on the contrary, as a spiritually close culture. In this connection, the Chinese Orthodox Christians represent a part of the Chinese people that can play a special role in the development of our relations;
- The restoration of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church will contribute to the strengthening of the PRC's relations not only with the Russian Orthodox Church, but also with the countries of the Russian Orthodox Church's canonical space including Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the countries of Central Asia.

This approach of the Russian Orthodox Church to the problems of Orthodoxy in China was appreciated and supported by the Chinese side.

In response to Patriarch Kirill's invitation to continue talks, on May 8, 2015, a meeting



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with President Xi Jinping on May 8, 2015, in Moscow. Photo: Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia press service, [www.patriarchia.ru](http://www.patriarchia.ru).

took place in Moscow between His Holiness and President Xi Jinping. They continued discussing the significance of a value approach to policy, state development and consolidation of society and the role of religion in promoting social harmony and fostering patriotism. They continued considering the problems of Orthodoxy in China. The PRC President gave a high value to the patriotic role that the Russian Orthodox Church played during the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) and to her contribution to the struggle against German fascism and Japanese militarism.

The high-level meetings have given an impetus to the work in all areas.

As far as it concerns the implementation of the agreements reached about the training of Chinese students in Russia, the Chinese side nominated two Orthodox citizens of the PRC from Harbin. In October 2012, they arrived in Russia and began their studies. In September 2014, the student who was trained in St. Petersburg was ordained deacon. During the fourth round of consultations in May 2015 in Beijing, an agreement was reached that he be ordained as a priest and an intention was expressed to send new candidates for training. Thus, the immediate future will see the first priest of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church to appear in China after the Cultural Revolution.

After their studies and ordination, the Chinese students will serve their own people, taking pastoral care of the Chinese faithful and the Russian compatriots living in China, who are seen by the Russian Orthodox Church canonically as the flock of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church.

Once they begin their service in China, the Church life of the Orthodox communities, in which they will work, will take a normal course. I believe that following the appearance of the clergy, these communities can be legally recognized as local religious organizations, which will eventually form an all-China Orthodox religious organization – the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church which will have regained state recognition after it had to stop its work for historical reasons in the 1950s.

With an increased number of clergy, the Orthodox communities will need to regulate their governance. In the Orthodox tradition, this concern for the parishes is the duty



The Chinese side nominated two Orthodox citizens of the PRC to study in Russia. In September 2014, the student who was trained in St. Petersburg was ordained deacon. Soon he will become the first ordained priest of the Chinese Church after the Cultural Revolution. Photo: Saint Petersburg theological academy, [www.spbda.ru](http://www.spbda.ru).

of a bishop. I hope that the Chinese Orthodox bishop, who will be elected by the Chinese faithful and approved by the PRC state authorities as head of the Chinese Orthodox Church, will govern their work, cooperate with the authorities and maintain contacts with other religious communities, including developing relations with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church is the only Local Church involved in preaching Orthodoxy in China. By virtue of legal succession, it is the Russian Orthodox Church that is responsible for the fate of Orthodoxy in China. However, for instance, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has made attempts to challenge both the legal succession and the principles of canonical life of the Church in China laid by the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople does not recognize the factual existence in China of her own national Orthodox Church and in 2008 included the territory of China in the metropolitanate of Hong Kong. This metropolitanate also includes the Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar. The Russian Church immediately made a public statement about the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of the Chinese Church. We stood out in defense of the rights of the faithful of the Chinese Orthodox Church and stated that the decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople was illegal. Of course, it would have been better if such a statement had been made by the Chinese Orthodox Church herself, but in China there is no Orthodox bishop of her own as yet, who would represent the Chinese Orthodox Christians at the international level and defend their interests.

At present, the process of preservation and restoration of Orthodox churches in China is underway. Thus, during the Patriarch's visit to China, a question was posed about the need to preserve the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Wuhan, the oldest Orthodox building in China today. The church was to be demolished in view of the construction of a tunnel under the Yangzi River, but the efforts to preserve it were a success. With the help of Russian specialists, it was restored and recently opened, though only as a cultural center so far. The Chinese authorities also restored the cathedral in Shanghai and re-equipped it as

an exhibition hall. During his visit to China, Patriarch Kirill celebrated in it, and negotiations are underway to be able to celebrate Easter services in it.

In China, there are Orthodox citizens of her own nationality (we differ from the PRC authorities in statistical estimates because of the complexity of counting, primarily due to the unorganized Church structure, but we are talking about thousands). The dialogue with the Chinese state institutions and its positive fruits points to the PRC leadership's desire to normalize the situation of the Orthodox faithful in the country as part of the efforts to build a harmonious society. The removal of obstacles for the natural development of Orthodox Church life will contribute to the strengthening of mutual understanding, cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between the Russian and Chinese nations.

Having considered the common approaches, I would like to dwell on the pastoral care of our compatriots and citizens of the third countries, who live or reside in China. It is easier to organize their religious life than to solve all the problems of Orthodoxy in China.

Therefore, pastoral work with the foreigners of Orthodox confession can and must become an active part of the effort to preserve Orthodoxy in China. Without focusing on legal regulations and actual law enforcement of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens Within the Territory of the People's Republic of China, I would like to speak about some important approaches to Church mission among them.

Speaking of the peculiar features of mission among Orthodox foreigners in China, I would like to repeat that China, in a strict sense, is not a mission area but represents the territory of a national autonomous Orthodox Church. Therefore, Orthodox foreigners in the Church comprise a flock of the Chinese Church. And the common task for all the Orthodox faithful in China is to help normalize the situation of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church as Mother Church is responsible for preserving the integrity of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church; she does not create in China any structures distinct from the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church; she seeks to prevent canonical conflicts in China or claims by other Local Churches. To organize mission among foreigners in China, other Local Churches are invited to help as much as they can with normalizing the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church, provided that they share the above-mentioned principles. This activity of Orthodox Churches cannot be used for any interference in China's internal affairs and is carried out with respect for the established historical realities including all possible consideration for China's political realities and for the need to build the canonical architecture.

In taking care of Orthodox foreigners in China with the above-mentioned understanding, it is possible to educate Christians to integrate into the Chinese reality around them with the clearly articulated Christian message. The clarity of the message free from political or social implications and focused on the saving mission of Christ and His Church is extremely important. I believe that the pure Christian message has an essential advantage over the preaching that mimics the Chinese cultural phenomena.

Along with a well-considered Church understanding and vision of the future of the Church in China, the organization of communities for foreigners should be accompanied by special pastoral and missionary responsibility.

There is a revived Parish of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul functioning in Hong Kong. Through its efforts a broad translation and publishing work is carried out. Among the parish clergy is Anatoly Gong, a citizen of Hong Kong, who recently started to provide pastoral support to the international community in Hong Kong.

In Shanghai, there is an international and a Chinese Orthodox community working in close cooperation. With the consent of the authorities, a priest from Russia conducts regular services in the surviving St. Nicholas Church in which Russians and Chinese worship together. When Father Michael Wang Quansheng, the oldest priest in the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church, died, the funeral service for him was conducted by a Russian priest and a Chinese deacon from Harbin.

There is growing cooperation between the Chinese Orthodox community in Beijing and the clergy and parishioners of the Dormition Church on the territory of the Russian embassy. On August 28, 2015, the rector of the Dormition Church on the territory of the Russian embassy in Beijing, Father Sergiy Voronin, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in one of the Catholic churches in Beijing for the Orthodox citizens of the PRC.

The request to conduct a festive service on the Dormition Day was made to the authorities by the Orthodox Chinese, descendents of the Russian Cossacks who brought the seeds of Orthodox faith to China 330 years ago. There are several hundreds of their descendents who have preserved the faith of Christ through centuries and who live to this day in Beijing, Shanghai, Harbin and other cities of the Celestial Empire.

The exact day when the Cossack prisoners of war and Father Maxim Leontyev came to Beijing from the Albazinian fort is not known. For this reason, the festivities were timed to the patronal feast of the first Orthodox church in Beijing, which was consecrated by Father Maxim in 1696 and dedicated to St. Sophia the Wisdom of God. In 1732, this church was consecrated again by the head of the Second Russian Orthodox Mission in China, Archimandrite Anthony (Platkovsky), and dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God. Due to the fact that the Dormition Church in Zhengwumiao Street, which was the cathedral church of the first primate of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church and a descendent of the Yakovlev Cossacks, Bishop Basil (Yao Fu'an), who died in 1962, was closed during the Cultural Revolution, the Catholics in Beijing were so kind as to offer to the Orthodox one of their churches in Beijing for the festive service.

The liturgy was attended by over 80 people. Most of them went to confession and partook of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. Among the worshippers were Albazinian Chinese, young citizens of the PRC who have chosen Orthodoxy as their faith and Orthodox compatriots.

Through the efforts of Russian believers a temporary procedure for sending Russian Orthodox Church priests to Harbin has been developed for them to come for special Church occasions with the consent of the authorities. In May 2015, a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church came to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the church in Ergun city, Inner Mongolia (see photos next page).

The Russian side has consistently posed a wide range of questions concerning the organization of the pastoral care for our compatriots and the normalization of the situation of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church.



Photos: Dmitry I. Petrovsky.



I dwelt in detail on the work in China since in the Chinese Orthodoxy outside of China, especially in the Chinese Orthodox communities in Russia, the attitude towards particular developments in China is of great importance. As the Chinese diaspora is very closely linked with the current political, economic, social, cultural and religious reality in Mainland China, positive shifts in the situation of Orthodoxy in China proper contribute to a more calm and interested attitude towards Orthodoxy among the Chinese in the diaspora.

Speaking about the direct work among the Chinese in Russia, I want to stress that we are not restricted by anything here. For this reason, the Chinese diaspora in Russia, the PRC citizens who live or reside in the Russian Federation, are an object of the missionary interest of the Russian Orthodox Church. We can and must carry out mission among the Chinese in Russia. To organize mission in the Chinese milieu with its specificity it is necessary to take into account the attitude towards Orthodoxy in China itself. For this reason,

among the important stages of this mission should be the introduction of Chinese citizens to the history and today's status of Orthodoxy in China and its long historical journey that allows speaking of Orthodoxy as traditional for China. It is especially important to draw attention to the above-mentioned approaches of the Russian Church to the problem of normalizing the situation of Orthodoxy in China at the present stage. These approaches are as follows: non-interference in the internal affairs, respect for the established historical realities including as flexible as possible consideration for China's political realities and the building of a canonical structure.

To organize this work, a Chinese Patriarchal Representation has recently been established in Moscow. Its establishment was initiated by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill who took the most active part in its restoration in Moscow. He expects that the Representation will become a mediation center called to develop and carry out a work program with the Chinese diaspora in Russia.

I believe that after the full launching of its work, the experience of the Representation can be extended to frontier dioceses, in which there should appear churches oriented for work with the Chinese faithful. At present, the appearance of such churches is restricted by an objective shortage of personnel in the Far East, as well as a lack of understanding and experience in organizing the work in the Chinese area.

I would like to make a special mention of the work carried out in Chinese Internet communities. The creation of Orthodox Weibo, the Chinese analogue of Twitter, as one of the most operative forms, appears to be very effective for such a widely Internet-covered country as China. If political assessments are avoided, such blogs can quite successfully exist even in a situation of state control. And there are very successful examples of it.

I believe that the work carried out in China, Hong Kong, Russia and other countries helps to preserve the Orthodox presence in China and helps Chinese people to meet Christ as He is known in the Orthodox Church – the Christ, the knowledge of whom was spread by the workers of the Russian Orthodox Mission in the Celestial Empire more than 300 years ago.

## Evangelisation among Young People in China since 2005

*Bruno Lepeu, MEP*

Working with China for the last 20 years, I have often been overwhelmed by the Church's difficulties (internal and external). But dealing with youth ministry in China for the past 10 years has been a very encouraging, yet challenging, experience. Through my own experience and some sharing from youth ministers inside China, I will share with you some insights on evangelisation among young people in China.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1990s, pastoral ministry among the youth was centred on catechism classes, mostly during summer or winter camps. Young people from an early age to early twenties were gathered to listen to basic catechism training (10 commandments, questions & answers catechism), given by religious women and seminarians. One of the main purposes was to prepare young Catholics to receive the sacraments. I remember when going to seminaries, the seminarians would ask me what to do during these camps, as they were not equipped to take care of the young people. In the early years of 2000, when I was visiting local communities, one of their biggest concerns was youth activities.

As I was very involved in youth ministry in Hong Kong, they would expect miracle recipes from me to help the youth to keep in touch with the Church and to grow in faith. To answer their eagerness to learn about youth ministry, I would share some formation programs prepared for teenagers. But many times, I would be surprised to see the local so-called "youth group" formed with adults in their 30's or 40's. After decades of lay leaders coming from the elderly, the local pastors usually regarded those middle aged lay leaders as young leaders! I learnt to ask the age of the youth beforehand ... At the same time, some basic courses on proper youth ministry started to be provided for the clergy in some dioceses. In the mid-2000s, some young priests and religious sisters were sent abroad for further studies in youth ministry. At the same time, programs for university students started all around China. This has grown very rapidly over the past 10 years. Therefore, I consider that proper youth ministry started in China around the year 2005.

The challenges for youth ministry depend on age, generation, geographical and political background, etc. ... I will list a few of them.

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The following text is the contribution of Rev. Bruno Lepeu, MEP (Hong Kong) to the 9th European Catholic China Colloquium "Challenges of Evangelisation – China and Europe," Konstancin/Warsaw, September 10–13, 2015.

1 The Summer 2015 issue of *Tripod*, No. 177, is focusing on this matter; the issue No. 174 on "The Encounter Between Public Education and the Faith" is also enlightening for understanding today's youth.

The gaps between generations are speeding up. After the post-80s, the post-90s, a new generation comes with new characteristics after only 5 years: post-95s, post-2000s. It is important to understand their characteristics to answer their specific needs.<sup>2</sup>

Youth in high school are very difficult to reach: they spend most of their time at school, busy with academic achievements. Parishes, even in rural areas, need to find new solutions to attract kids and teenagers to the Church. A mixture of tutorial classes and faith formation is usually successful. I know one priest who is inviting foreign youth to help with English tutorial classes and successfully attracts teenagers, even non-Catholics, to the parish summer activities. In rural areas, young people are very hard to reach after primary school. When staying in boarding schools, going to university or working in industrial areas, they lose contact with their parish and hardly find new friendship.

University students are the easiest and most important target for youth ministry in China. They are an increasing group of people (7.27 M students graduated from university in 2014, compared to less than 1M in 2002). They have more time, more holidays and less homework than secondary school students. They are full of hope and generosity. Many of them are willing to commit themselves and they dream of changing the world. They are in search of truth and the meaning of life, yet very much influenced by the atheist and scientific culture of their studies. As Catholics, they are usually struggling to keep up the family faith in a hostile environment. When they arrive at university, their faith is neither mature nor strong: it can easily wither away quickly. They face the many challenges of entering the world of the grown-ups. They are attracted by worldly concerns which challenge their spiritual quest. They do not know how to live as Catholics in this quickly changing age. For example, they are disturbed by the officials who are lobbying them to join the Communist Party. Their strong need, specific to the youth, to belong to a peer group, is deepened by the loneliness of joining a university, usually far from their hometown.

For all these reasons, the university period is the best time and the most important time for the Church to reach young people. Yet the Church is not free to evangelize on campuses, not even through young people. For the past two years, the government has been stricter in keeping religions off the campus. Open publicity for religious activities is not possible. Invitations from peers are the best way to attract the newcomers to the place outside the campus where the university students gather to nurture their faith. For example, little stickers with the following advertisement: “Looking for Mary and Joseph? Please call this number,” are one of the little tricks used by Catholic students to reach the new Catholic students.

All around China, without a major difference between official and unofficial communities, many beautiful experiences of youth ministry have developed since 2005. In some cities, the local Church provides very extensive programs for university students, including fellowship, large activities, pilgrimages, with formation, service, prayer ... Many non-

2 See the interesting study published by Churchchina.org in the November 2014 issue: “Women de nianqing ren zai xiang shenme? – Qiantan ruhe xiang 80 hou, 90 hou, 95 hou zhuan fuyin 我们的年轻人在想什么? —浅谈如何向80后、90后、95后传福音 (What Are Our Young People Thinking: How to Witness to Youth of the Post 1980s, 1990s and 1995s),” written by Lu Zun'en 陆尊恩, www.churchchina.org/no141106 – English translation by ChinaSource – Chinese Church Voices, www.chinasource.org/resource-library/series-index/what-are-chinese-young-people-thinking.

Catholic students do follow their Catholic friends in joining such youth groups and become very devout. I remember a university student, who was baptized in a youth group run by some seminarians. After a few years of commitment in the group, he finally joined the seminary and is now preparing to be ordained. He is one of the many examples of young people, coming from non-Catholic urban families, mostly only children, who entered consecrated life, and are progressively changing the face of the clergy (who currently come mostly from a rural, traditionally Catholic and less educated background).

Some small settings allow young people to experiment with community and prayer life, which is very helpful to nurture their vocation. Many young people are also ready to dedicate some years of their life to serve the Church and other young people,<sup>3</sup> even if it is hard to make one's living serving the Church as a lay person. Some will be challenged by their families who expected them to take up a successful career after graduating from university, especially when they get married. This does not help them to reflect on their life, on their relationship with God and what they can do for God and for others. Personal spiritual guidance is very much needed to help those young people on their path to sanctity. Many young Catholics are very brave and ready to suffer for their faith.<sup>4</sup>

Support groups through Weixin & WeChat (the Chinese Twitter & Facebook) or QQ are very useful means of support to young people. Some rural dioceses, which provide winter and summer youth programs, will keep in touch all through the year with those young people studying all over China. It is mostly youth leaders who nurture those connections. But some priests or religious sisters will be very involved, sometimes even going around visiting the young people in the cities where they are studying. Some youth groups are also offering a follow-up for graduated students, including connections with their new working place, pre/post-marriage counselling, etc. ... Some more mature groups are providing support to other youth groups around China. Youth ministry networking is growing, but youth workers need materials, support and training.

After experiencing international youth gatherings (like the World Youth Day, Taizé gathering, Asian Youth Day, etc. ...), some places are now organizing locally large youth gatherings. Some dioceses now have a proper Youth Commission and/or a youth centre. A few dioceses are also offering intensive programs for the youth, like 100 days of full-time training (including personal growth, leadership training, faith deepening, etc. ...) to equip young Catholics to enter the adult world. Some groups are focusing more on prayer life.

One specific group is targeting the young professionals arriving in its city, providing them with extended support including housing, work application, couple matching, etc. ... A special concern for youth ministry is family life: how to equip young Catholics to live a happy and stable family life in the fast changing society? As many young people, including a lot of non-Christian couples, turn to the Church for their weddings, marriage counselling and celebration of weddings are important occasions for evangelisation.

In many places, the local Church is not well equipped to face these specific challenges. Young migrants working in the cities are also a specific target for evangelisation, yet mostly

3 See the examples mentioned in *Tripod*, No. 177, especially the one of Jin Yan, pp. 84-87.

4 In summer 2014, 60 young Catholics from China did not hesitate to brave the government's ban and join the Asian Youth Day in Korea, ready to face any kind of retaliation after their return.

forgotten by the local Church. Young students studying abroad in a free environment are very open to new ideas, including religion. But most of the time, only evangelical groups are caring for the needs of those young Chinese students abroad.

In conclusion, holistic Youth Ministry is a crucial pastoral focus for the Church in China, to answer the needs of the youth and to renew the life of the Church. Vocations to consecrated life, to married life, to the service of the Church ... will be nurtured through this beautiful and challenging ministry.

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