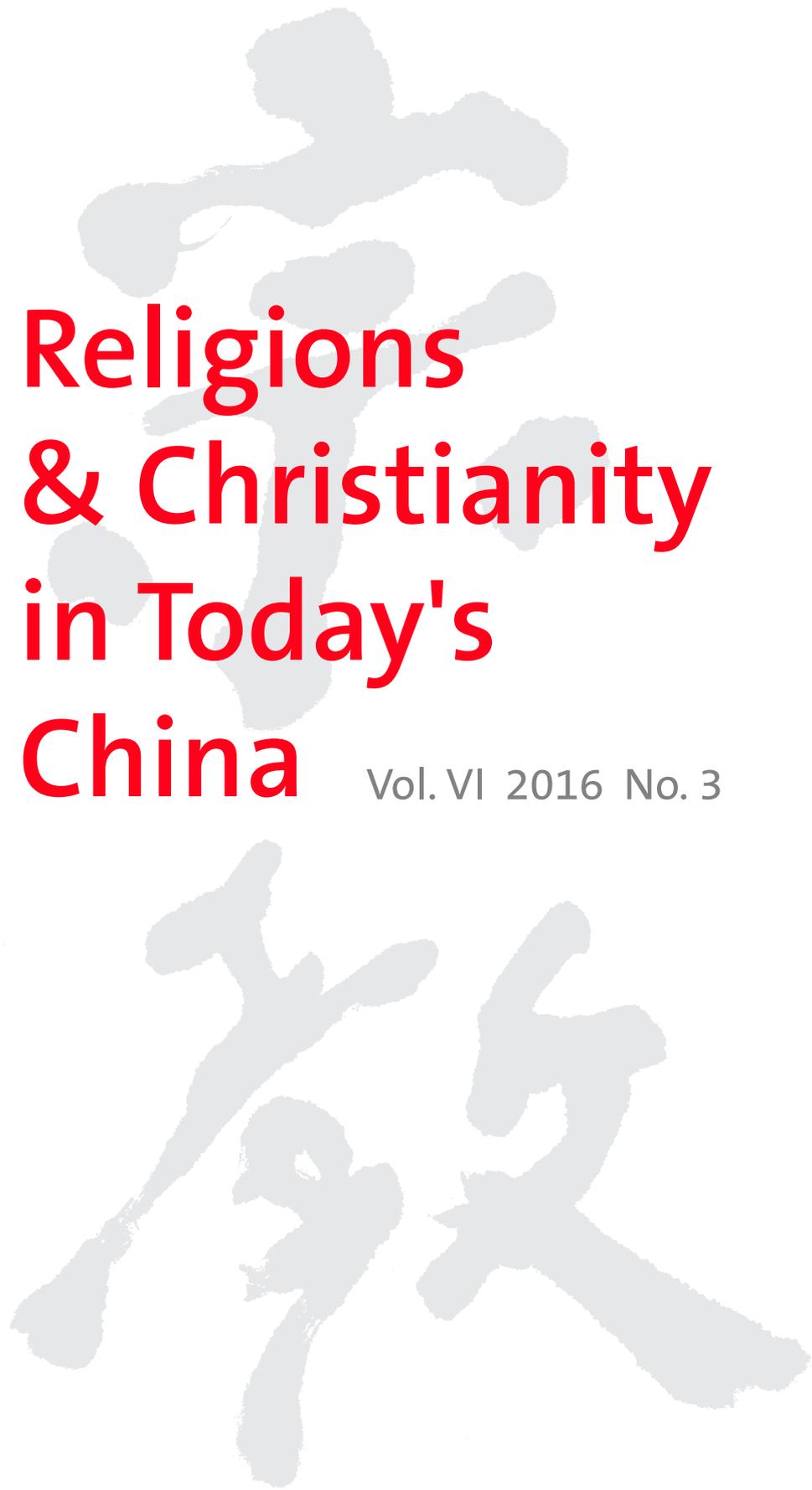


Religions
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in Today's
China

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中國宗教評論



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Editorial

Dear Readers,

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

This number as in previous issues includes the regular series of News Updates on recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

We continue further with the publication of the proceedings of the 9th European Catholic China Colloquium on “Challenges of Evangelisation – China and Europe,” from 10–13 September 2015 in Konstancin/Warsaw, Poland.

Dr. Jing Baolu (Director of the Matteo Ricci Study Centre, Macerata, Italy) explores “The Evangelization of Culture and the Inculturation of the Faith in the Context of a Humanistic Society in Contemporary China: An Opportunity or a Challenge?” Isabel Hess-Friemann (Chairwoman of the German Ecumenical China Working Group) gives a vivid picture of “Evangelization through Art in China” from a Protestant perspective with various pieces of Chinese Christian art. – In the coming issue of *RCTC* we will continue with the publication of further contributions to the Colloquium.

Religions & Christianity in Today's China is freely available on the website of the China-Zentrum, 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, August 2016

The Editors

News Update on Religion and Church in China March 23 – June 28, 2016

*Compiled by Katharina Wenzel-Teuber
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). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2016, No. 2, pp. 3-19) covered the period November 10, 2015 – March 24, 2016.

March 23, 2016:

90 year old bishop of Wenzhou steps back from active leadership, but may not resign

Bishop Vincent Zhu Weifang, who belongs to the official part of the Diocese of Wenzhou, has declared to his priests that he is stepping back from front line leadership due to his advanced age, and has instead named Fr. Ma Xianshi administrator of the diocese. As *UCAN* has explained, Bishop Zhu cannot resign outright from his post as bishop, since his coadjutor bishop with the right of succession, Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin, who heads the “underground” section of the Diocese of Wenzhou (around two-thirds of the 120,000 faithful), is not recognized by the government. *UCAN* reports that the government, before officially recognizing any bishop of the underground Church, demands that they first concelebrate a Mass with an illicit bishop who was ordained without papal mandate and also join the Catholic Patriotic Association (*UCAN* April 11).

March 26, 2016:

Catholic baptisms during 2016 Easter liturgies: 3,200 newly baptized in Hong Kong – 19,615 newly baptized in Mainland China

UCAN has reported that at this year’s Easter Vigil 3,200 adults were to be baptized in Hong Kong, several hundred less than in the previous two years. Interesting to know, despite the fact that temperatures in the lower 50s° F (11–14° C) were predicted for subtropical Hong Kong, many of the catechumens chose to be baptized by immersion. Regarding baptism reasons *UCAN* was told that there are also many who “join the church for pragmatic reasons such as for a child’s schooling.” In Hong Kong enrollment in primary school runs on “a point system, and an applicant receives five points if their religion is the same as the school’s sponsoring body,” explained *UCAN*.



Baptism by immersion at the St. John the Baptist Mass Centre in Hong Kong.

Photo: John the Baptist Mass Centre/UCAN.

For the 9th time now, the Catholic weekly newspaper *Xinde* has published the statistics of the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies on the numbers of newly baptized Catholics in the different dioceses of China at Easter of this year. The statistics, created in cooperation with the Chinese Catholic Research Centre, are incomplete, since some dioceses have not provided complete figures. According to these statistics a total of 19,615 persons were baptized this past Easter. This number represents a slight increase in the number of newly baptized Catholics from the number reported at Easter of 2015. The majority of the newly baptized this past Easter are still from Hebei Province (4,063 persons). This Easter there were 2,514 newly baptized in the direct-controlled municipalities. *Xinde* gave special emphasis to the fact that there were five times as many people baptized in Jilin in 2016 as in the previous year (775 newly baptized).

UCAN also reported that in order to cope with the great numbers of those wishing to take part in the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday Masses at the South Church in Beijing, large screens were set up in front of the church for the benefit of those who could not manage to find a place in the church. Beginning at 6:30 a.m., the three successive Easter Sunday Masses were also transmitted on the outdoor screens. In Beijing's East Church in the Wangfujing Street, up to 700 persons attended each of the six Easter Sunday Masses. (*UCAN* March 24, 28; *Xinde* April 21).

Eveline Warode

March 31, 2016:

Zhejiang: Former chairman of the Christian Council, Gu Yuese, released

Gu Yuese, pastor of the Chongyi Church in Hangzhou and chairman of the Zhejiang Province Christian Council, was relieved of his offices in January of 2016 and officially arrested on charges of embezzlement on February 6, 2016. But Christians in Zhejiang suspect that the action against Gu was actually due to his opposition to the government campaign to remove crosses from church buildings. China Aid said that on March 31 Gu was released on bail and placed under "residential surveillance" at his home. The lawyer Zhang Kai, who had provided legal advice to Christian communities in Zhejiang during the cross removal campaign, was arrested on August 25, 2015, and charged with, among other things, the leaking of state secrets. On March 23, 2016, he was released and sent back to his home in Inner Mongolia. According to China Aid president Bob Fu, the release of both men occurred in connection with President Xi's trip to the United States for the nuclear security summit. He thanked all those who had spoken out on behalf of the two men (www.chinaaid.org April 1, 7; *UCAN* April 6, 8).

April 2, 2016:

Death of Bishop Thomas Zeng Jingmu of Yujiang (Jiangxi Province)

Mons. Thomas Zeng Jingmu, bishop emeritus of the “underground” Diocese of Yujiang, was born in 1920 in Zengjiacun in Jiangxi Province and ordained a priest in March 1949. He spent 30 years in prison, partly because of his refusal to join the Catholic Patriotic Association. He was secretly ordained as bishop of Yujiang in 1990 and joined the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) in 2000. In 2014, Bishop John Peng Weizhao succeeded him as bishop of Yujiang (*AsiaNews* April 4; *Fides* April 22; *UCAN* April 6). – See the article on Bishop Zeng in *China heute* 2016, No. 2, pp. 74-75 (in German).

Katharina Feith

April 2 and 15, 2016:

Five “underground” priests taken away in two dioceses of Hebei Province

Citing local sources, *UCAN* reported that Fr. Yang Jianwei (Diocese of Baoding) disappeared on April 15 from a facility for driving tests in Dingxing County, where he and 6 other Catholics were taking driving tests. Fr. Yang Jianwei is the parish priest of Anzhuang, the largest parish of Baoding Diocese with 3,000 faithful. The diocese has nearly 1 million Catholics according to *UCAN*, many of whom belong to the underground Church.

On April 2, four priests of the Xuanhua Diocese were “taken away” by the authorities. Shortly thereafter, two of them, Frs. Joseph Hu and Paul Yu, were set free again. The two others, Frs. Simon Zhang and Joseph Wang were still unaccounted for as of April 18. According to *UCAN*, both Hu and Wang had earlier rejected the demands of the authorities that they concelebrate with priests of the official Church and had also refused to sign the six conditions for the registration of clerics with the government, among which conditions are the principle of independent and autonomous Church management, the rejection of Vatican “interference” in the appointments of bishops and the willingness to join the Catholic Patriotic Association (*china.ucanews.com* April 18; *UCAN* April 18).

April 6, 2016:

Dui Hua: Fewer court proceedings for “endangering state security” in 2015, more for “cults” and “terrorism”

The San Francisco-based organization Dui Hua has analyzed the data published in the Chinese Supreme Court’s 2015 annual work report. They conclude that there was a 50% decrease in the number of trials concluded by Chinese courts involving charges of endangering state security, down from 1,000 cases in the year 2014 to 500 in the year 2015; and in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region the decrease was from 300 to 100. However, the figures in the “cult” and “terrorism” categories rose by 35.5% and 25% respectively during the same period. Dui Hua expressed the assumption that many of the 2015 “cult” and “terrorism” cases would have been classified earlier as falling under the category of “endangering state security” (*duihuahrjournal.org* April 6).

April 7, 2016:

Taiwan honors departing Vatican Chargé d'affaires in Taipei with “Order of the Brilliant Star”

Foreign Minister David Lin presented outgoing Chargé d'affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature in Taipei, Mons. Paul Russell, with one of Taiwan's highest civilian honors, the Order of the Brilliant Star with Grand Cordon. In his address, Minister Lin highlighted the numerous merits of the Vatican diplomat since 2008 in the field of education, culture and humanitarian help and in consolidating relations between the two states. Of particular note was an agreement between Taiwan and the Vatican, which permits the Faculty of Theology and the Catholic Fu-Jen University in Hsinchuang, New Taipei City, to provide for the formation of clergy from Mainland China. Russell had also made the arrangements for President Ma Ying-jeou to be present at the Mass of installation of Pope Francis in Rome in 2013. Archbishop designate Russell will in future represent the interests of the Holy See as Apostolic Nuncio in Turkey. Mons. Sladan Cosic, who comes from Bosnia and Herzegovina, has already taken up the position of Vatican Chargé d'affaires in Taipei.

Willi Boehi

April 18, 2016:

Global Times: Regulations governing *halal* food have been stricken from list of legislation proposed for 2016



On March 23, the *Global Times*, a Chinese newspaper with close ties to the Party, reported that the Legal Affairs Office of the State Council would be re-examining the draft of a law on standards governing *halal* foods after the State Council had directed the Commission for Ethnic Affairs of the National People's Congress to come up with a proposal for such a bill in 2002. On April 18, however, the newspaper wrote that the bill had not been included in the official list of legislation proposed for 2016. It said that many scientists, including Xi Wuyi, Marxism researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, opposed the bill on the grounds that such a law would be contrary to the principle of the separation of State and religion. Wei

Dedong of Renmin University suggested in *Global Times* that it should be the religious authorities and not the secular government to come up with uniform standards for dealing with this uniquely Islamic question. Conversely, according to *UCAN*, Li Haiyang, who supported the law and is himself a Muslim from Henan, argued that the government is actually discriminating against Muslims due to its lack of appropriate legislation in this field.

Again and again, there have been reports of protests by Muslims over violations of the Islamic food laws. Lack of compliance with Islamic *halal* regulations also creates an obstacle to China's efforts to export food to Islamic countries, even though provincial and local authorities in China have already introduced some laws regarding *halal* foods (*Bloomberg View* May 19; *Global Times* March 23; April 18; June 1; *UCAN* March 23).

April 22–23, 2016:

Xi Jinping delivers keynote speech at National Conference on Religious Work

At the long-awaited conference on religious work of the central leadership of China – the first in 15 years – President Xi Jinping presented his detailed perspective on the question of religion for the first time. State-run media sources published a summary of his address (see a German translation in *China heute* 2016, No. 2, pp. 83-86). Xi stressed the great political importance of the question of religion and insisted that the leadership of the party must maintain its autonomy of action with regard to religion. He confirmed previous guidelines of the party's policy on religion – in particular the policy of freedom of religious belief, management of religions according to the law, the principle of autonomy and self-administration of the religions and their adaptation to socialist society (a term coined by Jiang Zemin), as well as adhering to the Marxist view of religion. Xi confirmed the roles of the political actors in the religious policy, with the United Front Department of the party in a position of leadership, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) in the management of religions and the role of religious organizations as a “bridge” between the party-state and religious adherents. He reaffirmed the concept of the “Sinicization” of religions, introduced by him as a principle of religious policy at a party meeting on United Front work on May 20, 2015, connecting it with the principle of the adaptation of religions to socialist society so that both appear as two sides of one coin. Xi applied these concepts explicitly also to the teachings of the religions as he stated: “We need to make demands on religious rules and doctrines, which correspond to the progress of the development of contemporary China, and interpret those rules and doctrines according to the excellent traditional culture of China.” He reiterated that party members “may by no means rely on religion for their values and beliefs.” Other current catch-words in his speech are the “defense against foreign infiltration through use of religion” and “the problem of religion on the Internet.”

The “spirit” of Xi's speech has since then been carefully studied by religious officials and by religious leaders at all levels; see the entry of May/June 2016.

April 28, 2016:

Adoption of a law regulating foreign NGOs' activities in China

The “Law on the Management of Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations' Activities within Mainland China” (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo jingwai feizhengfu zuzhi jingnei huodong guanli fa* 中华人民共和国境外非政府组织境内活动管理法) was adopted at the 20th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress. Foreign not-for-profit organizations with activities in China, including many charities, will be affected by this law when it takes effect on January 1, 2017.

In particular, the law will have a major impact on those domestic NGOs that have thus far depended heavily in their work on financial support from foreign partners, since in future domestic NGOs will no longer be permitted to accept funding, to carry out foreign NGOs' activities in mainland China, from foreign NGOs which are not legally registered in China (Art. 32). The necessary registration process and the numerous related new bureaucratic requirements in applying for and implementing projects, will greatly complicate the work of foreign social charities in China. The text of the law with English translation can be found at: <http://chinalawtranslate.com/bilingual-fngo-law/?lang=en>; see also: *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, p. 20, and *China heute* No. 3, pp. 170-174 (in German).

Jan Kwee

April 28, 2016:

***The Times of Israel* prints report of reprisals against the Jewish community in Kaifeng**

Last April, reports emerged from Kaifeng of government reprisals against the Jewish community there: the Jewish center was shuttered, the educational program of the Sino-Judaic Institute was suspended, foreign Jewish tour groups have been denied admission to the city, while members of Kaifeng's Jewish community are being closely monitored by security forces. As Anson Laytner of the Sino-Judaic Institute wrote in *The Times of Israel*, even signs commemorating the presence of the historic Jewish community are said to have been removed. The following were cited as possible reasons for this crackdown by the authorities: the naturalization of five young women from Kaifeng in Israel in March of this year, an event which received a great deal of media attention, and the related fears of the State authorities in China that this example could strengthen the Jewish identity of Jews in Kaifeng. In addition, there was also the application for political asylum, on grounds of religious persecution, filed by a Kaifeng Jewish woman in an American court. This last event in particular might have prompted the authorities in China to replace their tolerance towards Jewish life in Kaifeng, which was often in evidence since the 1980s, with a new, hard line (*The Times of Israel* April 28). See also Laytner's article: "The Changing Status of the Kaifeng Jews" in *Points East* 29 (2014) 3, pp. 1, 4-10; German translation in *China heute* 2015, No. 2, pp. 107-116.

Barbara Hoster

End of April 2016:

New round of talks between China and the Vatican

Since mid-2014 talks between Beijing and the Vatican have been resumed, bringing together representatives of both sides to three rounds of negotiations: on June 27–28, 2014, October 11–16, 2015, and January 25–26, 2016. A new round of talks at a lower level took place in Beijing at the end of April 2016, according to *UCAN*. A Church source told *UCAN* that the Vatican did not wish to be pressured into reaching an agreement and instead proposed the formation of a working group to discuss the issues at stake. One of the pending questions, according to the source, is whether the Vatican could pardon some of the eight illicit bishops first. An unnamed Chinese researcher anticipated that the Vatican might more likely want to pardon Bishops Ma Yinglin and Guo Jincai, since these two hold leading positions in the official Bishops' Conference, *UCAN* wrote (*America Magazine* May 23–30; *UCAN* May 13).

May/June 2016:

State Administration for Religious Affairs invites religions to attend study sessions on the spirit of the National Conference on Religious Work

As is often the case following statements by the party and State leadership regarded as important, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) has invited representatives of the national religious organizations and other leaders of the five recognized religions (with 110–160 participants each) to attend a series of study sessions in Beijing. The Muslims attended a session from May 9–16; the Daoists and Buddhists had a joint session from May 23–27; the Protestants' study session was held from May 31 to June 6; and the Catholics' session from June 19–24.

According to reports on the SARA website, at each session the participants expressed their willingness to promote the objectives formulated at the National Conference on Religious Work. The conference demonstrates that the Communist Party has attained a new pinnacle in its understanding of the religion question, Daoist and Buddhist participants said in their feedback. The chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA), Xuecheng, expressed the expectation that the Sinicization of Buddhism will reach a new level. The Living Buddha Zhukang, chairman of the Tibet branch of the CBA, promised a reinforcement of the management of the monasteries, as well as a preservation of harmony and stability in Tibetan Buddhism. Topics discussed at the study session for the Muslims included holding fast to the Sinicization of Islam as well as to the fight against extremism.

The study session for the Catholics was the only one co-organized by the United Front Department of the Communist Party of China, which in the field of religious policy has a position of ideological leadership. According to SARA, five participants came from every province, including 30 bishops, directors of diocesan offices as well as “bishop candidates.” Holders of management positions in the patriotic associations were also present. The keynote speakers were Guo Wei, who is the SARA official responsible for Catholic affairs, and Wang Zhigang from the United Front Department. According to *UCAN*, Bishop Ma Yinglin (not recognized by Rome), chairman of the official Bishops’ Conference, said in his speech that for the Catholic Church in China, “inculturation” and “Sinicization” mean the same. He said the Church [leadership] in Beijing will vigorously promote “Sinicization” and lead the Church across the country to cultivate a deeper theological understanding of it (www.sara.gov.cn May 17, 18; June 7, 28; *UCAN* June 21; July 1).

May 1, 2016:

First Chinese Orthodox priest ordained in 60 years celebrates the “Divine Liturgy” at Easter in Harbin

This past Easter, the Priest Alexander Yu Shi conducted the Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Protection of the Mother of God in Harbin, which has been without a priest for the last 15 years. He celebrated the liturgy in both Old Church Slavonic and Mandarin. Yu, a former bank clerk, became acquainted with the Orthodox faith during study periods in Moscow and later studied theology in St. Petersburg. Following government approval, he was ordained a priest in 2015, being the first Orthodox Chinese priest to be ordained in 60 years. The Orthodox Church is only recognized locally in some places in China and numbers about 15,000 believers (*AFP/The China Post* May 2; *Global Times* July 1, 2015).

On the situation of Orthodox Christianity in China, see the article of Dmitry I. Petrovsky in *RCTC* 2016, No. 1, pp. 34-46.

May 2, 2016:

Tallest Catholic church in Mainland China inaugurated in the Diocese of Suzhou (Jiangsu Province)

The church, located in Xiaohengtang in Kunshan City, was consecrated by the local ordinary Bishop Joseph Xu Honggen. The modern building, which can hold 2,000 people, has the shape of a ship with three spires, symbolizing the Trinity; the highest spire is 75 m (246 ft) high, making it the tallest Catholic worship venue in China. “The boat-shaped design represents the church sailing in this world to spread the Gospel of Christ. We have to do better at being witnesses,” Bishop Xu told the news agency *UCAN*. The church honors Our Lady Help of Christians as its patron (Feast day – May 24).



Lower part of the altarpiece of the church in Xiaohengtang: to the left of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope St. John Paul II. (canonized in 2014); among the saints, several Chinese martyrs and St. Andrew Kim (with hat) can be seen. The photo was taken during the consecration Mass. Photo: Blog.

The very large altarpiece (25 x 15 m; 82 ft x 49 ft) by the artist Zhang Qikai, of the S. Luca Art Studio (Beijing), depicts the Heavenly Banquet on a gold background, flanked by a traditional Chinese landscape:



Altarpiece in Xiaohengtang, detail. Photo: Blog.

above, there is Christ, and in the middle part of the painting the 12 Apostles are depicted; below, there is an interesting mix of saints. Next to well-known European saints there is a row of Chinese Martyrs (Anna Wang, Lucia Wang, Peter Wu Guosheng, Philipp Zhang Zhihe, among others) as well as the Korean Martyr St. Andrew Kim. The most astonishing part of the composition is in the center, where Pope St. John Paul II and St. John the Baptist stand to the left and right of the Blessed Virgin Mary and point upwards to Christ with similar gestures. This is possibly the first church in Mainland China, where Pope St. John Paul II, who was declared a saint in 2014, and who in turn had canonized 120 Chinese martyrs in 2000 in the face of sharp protests by the Chinese Government – appears on an altarpiece. (www.china.ucanews.com May 5; *UCAN* May 5; http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_c40200090102woa4.html [Blog of the S. Luca Art Studio]).

May 4, 2016:

Provincial education authorities in Gansu reaffirm prohibition of religion in educational institutions after debate over kindergarten child reciting Koranic verses

As the state-run *Global Times* has reported, a video clip showing a five year old girl wearing a headscarf while reciting Koranic verses at a kindergarten in the Autonomous District of Linxia of the Hui (Gansu Province) has triggered numerous critical comments among Chinese users. The video clip, which went

viral, had been posted on Sina Weibo on April 30. According to the *Global Times*, on May 4 the education bureau of Gansu Province issued a statement denouncing such activities as detrimental to the well-being of China's youth. The statement went on to stress that religious activities and religious education are forbidden in all schools (with the exception of State-approved institutes for religious education) and must be stopped by the local education authorities. The education bureau also stressed that no religious groups may be formed in schools, that no textbooks with religious content may be used, and that teachers, especially foreigners, are not allowed to evangelize – reported the *Global Times*.

A comment on the US-based website ChinaChange.org asked why the video, which was originally posted on YouTube in 2014, re-appeared so suddenly in the social media networks. ChinaChange.org quoted a Hui blogger from Shandong, who wrote of increasing sentiment against Hui Muslims in the social networks. According to *UCAN*, Catholics in China are concerned that the statement by the education bureau of Gansu Province could be an indication that in future the government wants to more strictly enforce its long-standing ban on religious activities in educational institutions.

On June 1, the *Global Times* reported that a textbook, published in 2006 and used in 40% of all Beijing middle schools, has triggered public outrage for spreading Western, non-secular content because it includes – in addition to traditional Chinese myths – excerpts from the book of Genesis (ChinaChange.org May 13; *Global Times* May 6; June 1; *UCAN* May 11).

May 8, 2016:

Death of Bishop Zhang Huaixin of Anyang

Bishop Thomas Zhang Huaixin of Anyang (Henan Province) was 90 years old. He had accepted recognition on the part of the government on the sole condition that he not be required to join the Catholic Patriotic Association. His 45 year old coadjutor bishop, Joseph Zhang Yinlin, automatically succeeds him. Bishop Zhang Yinlin was consecrated coadjutor in 2015 with the consent of both the Vatican and the Chinese government. Bishop Zhang Huaixin was born on May 23, 1925 and was ordained a priest in 1950. He spent many years in prison. The year following his “rehabilitation,” in 1980, he was ordained secretly as bishop of Anyang. It was only in 2004 that he was officially installed as bishop. On May 14 his remains were buried in the Cathedral of Anyang. Today, the Diocese of Anyang numbers 30 priests, 129 sisters and 50,000 Catholics (*UCAN* May 9, 2016; see also *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, p. 34).

Katharina Feith

May 8–11, 2016:

German-Chinese interreligious consultation in Hamburg and Berlin

A 21-member delegation from the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) which also included Chinese Protestant, Catholic and Muslim representatives, came to a German-Chinese interreligious consultation in Germany titled “The peaceful coexistence of religions and their common contribution to civil society.” The consultation was conducted by the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW, Hamburg) and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD, Hannover), in cooperation with the Protestant organizations Mission One World (Neuendettelsau), China Infodesk (Hamburg), Zentrum für Mission und Ökumene – Nordkirche weltweit (Hamburg), as well as the Catholic China Center (Sankt Augustin). The Chinese delegation included SARA Vice-Director Jiang Jianyong and 5 other SARA representatives. The Protestants were represented by a five-member group which included the secretary general of the National Three-Self Patriotic Movement, Pastor Xu

Xiaohong, as well as the secretary general of the Amity Foundation, Qiu Zhonghui. The three-member Catholic group was made up of Bishop Guo Jincai (not recognized by Rome), secretary general of the official Chinese Bishops' Conference, and two priests. The 5-member Islamic delegation was headed by Guo Chengzhen, secretary general of the Chinese Islamic Association. Two scholars for religious studies, Zhuo Xinping of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Xu Yihua of Fudan University, were also part of the Chinese delegation. In addition to German church representatives, the Chinese guests also met Ayatollah Reza Ramezani of the Islamic Centre of Hamburg, as well as representatives of the Hamburg Senate, of the German Ministry of the Interior, the heads of the Protestant and the Catholic liaison offices to the Federal Government as well as members of the German Bundestag.

Following the consultation, Jiang Jianyong traveled on to Austria (May 11–14), where he, assisted by representatives of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Chinese scholars and Daoist masters, engaged in a dialogue with Austrian politicians and scholars on various political-philosophical aspects of the *Daodejing*, Daoism's central text (bmeia.gv.at; emw-d.de May 17; sara.gov.cn May 13, among others).

May 16, 2016:

50 years ago today: Beginning of the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”



1966 – Red Guards destroy sacred objects and Bibles in front of Xikai Cathedral in Tianjin. In the foreground, smoldering piles of ash and debris, which a young man is stirring with a hoe. Mao's portraits hang over the central portal. The hanging banners carry slogans such as: “Beat the old ideas, fire on the black teaching.”

Photo: Anthony E. Clark Private Collection, Whitworth University.

On May 16, 1966 the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party issued a circular letter, in which it declared war on the “representatives of the bourgeoisie.” That document is considered the ideological basis and the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, which Mao Zedong unleashed and which only ended with his death in 1976. According to the *South China Morning Post*, at least 1.72 million people lost their lives in the upheaval. At first, the Cultural Revolution targeted universities and schools. During

August of 1966, Red Guards began to attack the “Four Olds” (old customs, old habits, old culture and old thinking). Their attacks were also directed against the religions: religious clergy, monks and nuns were subjected to show trials, paraded for public shaming and thrown in jail or labor camps, where many were killed. Temples, churches, mosques were seized and some were completely destroyed; religious objects and books were burned. It was only with the policy of opening and reform that public religious life was gradually restored during the 1980s.

Only the next day, on May 17, 2016, the party newspaper *Renmin ribao* and the *Global Times* (which is under the auspices of *Renmin ribao*) finally published comments on the anniversary. Both stressed that there will never be another Cultural Revolution. The party had already authoritatively evaluated it with its “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China” (1981), *Renmin ribao* wrote. “Disturbances from the ‘left’ and the right” over the topic must be met with determined opposition, the paper said (*AsiaNews* May 16, 17; *Global Times* May 17; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* June 25; *Renmin ribao* May 17; *South China Morning Post* May 16; *UCAN* May 20; June 18).

May 18, 2016:

China Aid releases its “2015 Annual Report of Religious and Human Rights Persecution in China”

The US-based organization China Aid, which pays particular attention to the situation of Protestant house churches, has noted a further deterioration of the situation in 2015.

According to their report, by the close of 2015 the authorities had forcibly dismantled about 1,300 church crosses in Zhejiang Province, demolished more than 20 churches, more than 500 Christians had been taken into police custody (at least temporarily), more than 130 Christians physically injured, more than 60 Christians administratively or criminally detained and at least 28 pastors and believers brought before the courts on criminal charges.

According to China Aid the authorities proceeded massively against non-registered urban house churches, which are continuing to spread in China’s major cities. In Guangdong Province alone, according to the report, during 2015 at least 60 Protestant house churches were closed, including the Guangfu House Church in Guangzhou on May 22, 2015. China Aid reports that the authorities struck out also against house churches in rural areas, partly with accusations of cult involvement. Of the incidents described in the report, six occurred in Xinjiang Autonomous Region. Taken all together, during 2015 China Aid counted 634 cases of persecution with 19,426 persons affected, 3,178 people arrested or summoned for questioning, 232 sentenced to prison, 463 verbally, mentally or physically abused and 85 churches either destroyed or closed (see the China Aid report at: www.chinaaid.org/2016/05/china-aid-releases-2015-annual-report.html).

May 18–22, 2016:

Yoga Conference in Kunming – enthusiasm for yoga is growing in China

The Chinese news agency *Xinhua* reported that on May 18, more than 1,000 Chinese Yogis came together for a Yoga demonstration on the occasion of the opening of the “China – India Yoga Conference,” which was sponsored by the Kunming municipal government. Among the organizers of the conference were the Office of Foreign Affairs and the Office for the Affairs of Overseas Chinese both under the municipal government, as well as the China-India Yoga College which had been designated

in November of 2015 as China's first "Yoga College," affiliated with Yunnan Nationalities University in Kunming, Southwest China. The founding of the college had been agreed during the state visit to China of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May of 2015 (www.en.people.cn November 15, 2015; *Xinhua* May 18).

Eveline Warode

May 20, 2016:

Taiwan's first woman President sworn in

President Tsai Ing-wen, whose Democratic Progressive Party advocates an independent Taiwan, and her independent Vice-President, Chen Chien-jen, a Catholic, have now taken the oath of office. The ceremony was attended by guests from all over the world – including Archbishop Savio Hon, secretary general of the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, as well as six Taiwanese bishops and the Vatican's new Chargé d'affaires in Taiwan, Mons. Sladan Cosic. The Vatican is the only state in Europe with which the Republic of China on Taiwan maintains diplomatic relations. Tensions between Beijing and Taipei have increased since Tsai took office. Beijing demands that Taiwan recognize the so-called "1992 consensus," i.e. the formula which states that there is only one China, while leaving each side to interpret for itself exactly what that formula means (*CNA* May 20; *UCAN* May 20).

May 22 / 24, 2016:

Pope Francis reminds Catholics of the global day of prayer for the Church in China, emphasizes mercy and reconciliation

After the Angelus prayer on May 22 in Saint Peter's square, the Pope said: "On Tuesday, May 24, we shall spiritually join the faithful of China, who on this day celebrate with particular devotion the memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians, who is venerated at the Shrine of Sheshan in Shanghai. Let us ask Mary to give to her sons and daughters in China the capacity to discern in every situation the signs of the loving presence of God, who always welcomes and always forgives. In this Holy Year of Mercy, may Chinese Catholics, together with those who follow other noble religious traditions, become concrete signs of charity and reconciliation. In this way, they will promote an authentic culture of encounter and the harmony of the whole of society. This harmony that the Chinese spirit so loves." Pope Francis ended his remarks with a special greeting for Rome's Chinese Catholic community (w2.vatican.va May 22).

May 24, 2016:

Bishop Ma Yinglin of Kunming, who is not recognized by Rome, ordains nine priests

The nine newly ordained priests belong to the dioceses of Dali and Kunming (Yunnan Province). One is ethnic Tibetan, five belong to the Miao people, two belong to the Yi, and one is of Jingpo nationality. Bishop Ma Yinglin is the chairman of the official Chinese Bishops' Conference, which like him is not recognized by Rome (*AsiaNews* May 25; *UCAN* May 27).

May 27 to June 6, 2016:

Desecration of a tabernacle in Handan – police blocks diocesan “day of repentance”

UCAN reported that after Catholics in the village of Xiaodiba (Diocese of Handan, Hebei Province, China) discovered on May 27, that the tabernacle from their church containing the consecrated hosts had been thrown onto the ground outside the church walls, on June 2, the diocese called on its 160,000 faithful to begin a prayer novena in each parish and to join a special day of repentance at the Catholic Church in the village of Xiaodiba on June 6. The religious affairs authorities of the City of Handan declared the scheduled prayer gathering at Xiaodiba illegal and issued a ban against any inter-district religious activities. The authorities temporarily took three priests into custody for interrogation, including the parish priest of Xiaodiba, and on June 5, the day before it was to take place, forced Handan’s Bishop Yang Xiangtai to cancel the day of repentance. According to one Church source, 3,500 police officers were deployed to surround a number of Catholic parishes in the diocese in order to prevent the gathering. On various social network sites, photos were posted of Catholics praying as they knelt in the middle of roads blocked by police. A few days after the desecration of the tabernacle, police had arrested a 19 year-old as the perpetrator and spoke of theft; the motives behind his action, according to UCAN, remain unclear (*AsiaNews* June 6; *UCAN* June 7).

June 2016:

Zhejiang: Reports on hoisting of national flag at religious venues – demands made that cadres be stationed and Church donations be handed over



“To realize the spirit of the Conference on Religious Work” and to strengthen the patriotic education of the religious circles, the United Front Department of the City of Lanxi (Zhejiang) ordered that by June 13, 2016, the Chinese national flag was to be hoisted at each of the 69 religious sites in the city’s area. The June 15 report on this action on the website of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission Zhejiang Province also notes that in future, on major holidays, at each site there is to be a flag raising ceremony, accompanied by the singing of the Chinese national anthem.

UCAN learned from the “underground” part of Wenzhou Diocese that in mid-June the parish of Rui’an and the sub-parishes of Meitou and Anyang had received letters from

After the United Front Department’s action in Lanxi (Zhejiang): temples fly the Chinese flag; a Protestant Church with the flag in the chancel. Photos: zjsmzw.gov.cn (website of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission Zhejiang Province).

local authorities with the demand to register, to set up notice boards for the dissemination of government information, to hoist the national flag and to accept the deployment of cadres in each church. Also in the Diocese of Ningbo, parishes have been informed that they must install flags and notice boards. China Aid also reported on July 1 that the government in Zhejiang has established office spaces within churches and assigned officials to closely oversee the congregations. In addition, according to China Aid, in the County of Pingyang (Wenzhou) regulations have been published to the effect that each church must surrender any donations made to it and that the authorities must give prior approval for any but small expenditures.

There have been earlier reports of the national flag being flown at religious buildings in other regions. For example, all 30 religious sites in the City of Huangshi (Hubei) hoisted the national flag on May 1, 2015, as reported by the religious authority of the province. According to a 2012 report on the local party website, the County of Uqturpan (Chinese: Wushi) in Aksu Prefecture in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region even issued provisions for the raising of flags on religious buildings; in September of that year, 22% of the 422 mosques of the county had hoisted flags. In April 2015, the party chief of the Autonomous Region of Tibet, Chen Quanguo, declared that all temples in Tibet should display the Chinese national flag (aks.xjkunlun.cn September 29, 2012; chinaaid.org July 1; china.ucanews.com June 17; *Global Times* April 9, 2015; sara.gov.cn May 8, 2015; *UCAN* June 17; zjsmzw.gov.cn June 15).

June 2, 2016:

Information Office of State Council publishes White Paper on freedom of religious belief in Xinjiang

Based on the multi-religious history of the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, where Buddhism dominated during the 1st millennium A.D. alongside Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Nestorianism and where, from the 10th century onwards, there came the spread of Islam (Chapter 1), the White Paper notes that there were many religious conflicts and wars in Xinjiang before 1949, in which people lost their freedom of choice in matters of religion. Today, there is greater freedom of religious belief in Xinjiang than ever before in history, the White Paper states. Chapter 2 describes how the law protects “normal religious activities” such as religious services, fasts, veneration of the Buddha and extreme unction (!). According to the White Paper, the government provides organizational support for pilgrimages to Mecca and makes sure that religious activities during the month of Ramadan are properly run. During Ramadan, “whether to close or open *halal* (Muslim food) restaurants is completely determined by the owners themselves without interference.” The document says that there is no discrimination on grounds of religious belief.

According to Chapter 3, the needs of the Muslim faithful in Xinjiang are being met at 24,400 mosques with religious staff of 29,000. There are 59 Buddhist temples (staff of 280), one Daoist temple (staff of 1), 227 Protestant churches and meeting places (staff of 26), 26 Catholic churches or meeting places (staff of 27), 3 Orthodox churches or meeting places (staff of 1). Chapter 4 of the White Paper describes the mechanisms for the State administration of religion and stresses that “no Xinjiang citizen has been punished because of his or her rightful religious belief.” Chapter 6 depicts the struggle against “religious extremism,” which “is not religion, but tries to make use of religion” and which is an ideological foundation for terrorism and “the common enemy of all humanity.” The White Paper blames international influences for religious extremism in Xinjiang and describes the policy of “de-extremization” in Xinjiang. Nevertheless, according to the White Paper, Xinjiang “as the core region of the Silk Road Economic Belt,” will continue to promote international exchange.

The text of the White Paper “Freedom of Religious Belief in Xinjiang” can be found at: <http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/06/02/4161s929681.htm>. On the topic of Tibetans and Uighurs in China see also the article by Björn Alpermann in *China heute* 2016, No. 2, pp. 87-97 (in German).

June 4, 2016:

Hong Kong: student associations boycott candle-light vigil for victims of Tian'anmen Square massacre

According to the organizers, some 125,000 people participated in the traditional annual vigil in Hong Kong's Victoria Park for the victims of the events of June 4, 1989; police estimated the number of participants at 21,800.

Prior to the anniversary, leaders of student associations had criticized the vigil as being too formalistic and they had demanded that it be abolished. Some 2,500 people participated in alternative events, organized by 11 student associations at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and at Hong Kong University. According to the *South China Morning Post* there is a growing sentiment of detachment from politics on the Mainland among Hong Kong's young people. Instead, they advocate "localism" and the protection of Hong Kong's identity. Among those who called on the students to participate in the candle vigil was Hong Kong's retired Catholic bishop, Joseph Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun, SDB. He and Hong Kong's Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing, OFM, conducted two memorial services.

The victims of the 1989 crackdown on the democracy movement were also commemorated in Taiwan. In Mainland China, several dissidents were temporarily put under house arrest (*AP* June 3; *Ming Bao* May 30 according to *BBC*; *Radio Free Asia* June 1; *South China Morning Post* May 30; June 5; *UCAN* May 25; June 6).

June 6, 2016:

Beginning of Ramadan

On June 6, the official *Xinhua* News Agency reported the beginning of Ramadan among China's Muslims. However, the Hong Kong *Oriental Daily* spoke of a tense security situation in Xinjiang at the beginning of Ramadan; it reported that at least 17 people, who had been calling on Muslims to fast, were arrested. The police were checking the identity documents of visitors to the mosques. Some local authorities in Xinjiang, such as in the City of Korla, gave orders on their websites that party members, civil servants, students and minors were forbidden to fast and that restaurants were to remain open during Ramadan, according to the *South China Morning Post*. The newspaper also reported that in the Autonomous Prefecture of Yili (Xinjiang), shortly before the start of Ramadan, it was announced that local citizens, when applying for passports and travel permits to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, would be required to submit three-dimensional pictures and DNA samples in addition to fingerprints and voice prints (*Oriental Daily* June 6 according to *BBC*; *South China Morning Post* June 7; *UCAN* June 27; *Xinhua* June 6).

June 6, 2016:

Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) criticizes State Administration for Religious Affairs for lack of supervision of national religious organizations

According to a report published on June 8 on its website, the CCDI, the highest anti-corruption watchdog of the Chinese Communist Party, carried out an inspection of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) from February 27 to April 27 and delivered the results of its investigation to SARA officials at a meeting on June 6. Inspection team leader Hu Xinyuan said that SARA's principal

problems were a lack of core leadership on the part of the party leadership group [within SARA], insufficient implementation of the party's religious policies and the fact that too little attention was being paid to the country's national religious organizations. Also, according to Hu, the inspection team uncovered irregular use of funds and nepotism in the hiring of staff; the inspection team also found problems with certain SARA leaders and they have reported those cases to the competent authorities. According to the report on the CCDI website, Hu Xinyuan made 5 "proposals" for correcting the problems. Proposal 2 was: "Effectively strengthen the monitoring and management of the national religious organizations; support religious organizations in their self-construction and in the training of personnel; build up and perfect a mechanism for the selection, use, and management of cadres which corresponds to the special characteristics of the respective religious organizations."

Commentators were of the opinion that the real focus of the CCDI report was not about corruption as such, but rather on developing more effective control over the religions through the national, government-sanctioned religious mass organizations. In the 1950s, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, a "mass organization" was founded for each of the five officially recognized religions. They were created to serve the State-led institutionalization of the five religions (ccdi.gov.cn June 8; *UCAN* June 10, 20).

June 8, 2016:

Xinhua*: 746,000 unregistered persons receive a *hukou

According to a report by *Xinhua*, the Ministry of Public Security has announced that from January to May of this year, 746,000 unregistered persons have received a *hukou* (household registration certificate) from the Chinese police. Once in possession of a *hukou*, these persons will have access to social services such as health services and basic education. The Ministry also reported that during the same period more than 1.09 million out of an estimated total 13 million non-registered persons have been confirmed. According to *Xinhua*, among those who must request a *hukou* are orphans, children illegally born (after the one child allowed) and the homeless, as well as anyone who has for some reason to apply for a *hukou*. "The ministry also revealed that police across the country have confiscated three million duplicated *hukou* and more than 1.7 million IDs that have duplicated numbers," *Xinhua* reported (*Xinhua* June 8; see: *RCTC* 2016, No. 2, pp. 6-8).

Eveline Warode

June 12, 2016:

Mons. Thaddeus Ma Daqin, the Shanghai bishop under house arrest, openly expresses remorse about his departure from the Patriotic Association

On his personal blog, which he has been able to continue despite being under house arrest since 2012, Bishop Ma published five articles to mark the 100th birthday of the late Shanghai Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, who died in 2013. In the fifth of the articles, he recommended Bishop Jin's "Love the country and the Church" as a model for the younger generation to follow and extensively praised the indispensable role of the Catholic Patriotic Association for the Church in Shanghai. Then he wrote: "For a period of time, I was also tricked by outside elements and made errors of words and deeds against the Patriotic Association. On reflection, I find this was an extremely unwise move, and my conscience was not at peace because I had hurt those who had so long and so selflessly looked after me and helped me, and because I had destroyed the good development of the Catholic Church in Shanghai, which Bishop

Jin had spent so long building up. Such errors should not have happened in the Catholic Church in Shanghai with its long tradition of love for the country and the Church. [...] I hope that I can make up for these mistakes through concrete actions.”

This astonishing about-face by Bishop Ma triggered “shockwaves” in the Catholic Church throughout China, *UCAN* reported. *AsiaNews* cited different reactions: Some doubted that the text really is from the hand of Bishop Ma. Others, who had seen Bishop Ma’s attitude since 2012 as a courageous witness to the Church’s principles, were dismayed. It was even suggested by some that the Vatican could have pressed Bishop Ma to make such a statement, something which the official Vatican spokesman, Fr. Federico Lombardi, denied on June 23 (see below). According to *UCAN*, many Catholics see Bishop Ma’s statement as his attempt to appease the authorities so that they would free him from house arrest and allow him to assume the leadership of the Diocese of Shanghai.

Bishop Ma had publicly announced his departure from the Patriotic Association at the end of the Mass during which he had been consecrated a bishop in July of 2012. Following that declaration, he was placed under house arrest, which was eventually somewhat relaxed, and stripped of his status as a bishop. Since then, the life of the Church in the Diocese of Shanghai has been most severely affected (*AsiaNews* June 17; *UCAN* May 3; June 14; July 1; Bishop Ma’s blog article can be found at: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5392f6070102w3x1.html; an English translation can be found at: www.asianews.it/news-en/Mgr-Ma-Daquin:-the-text-of-his-“confession”-37799.html).

June 22, 2016:

Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) announces inspection of the Communist Party’s United Front Work Department

A total of 32 party and government authorities are to be scrutinized in a new round of inspections by the CCDI. These include, according to *UCAN*, the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party, which is responsible on the part of the party for religious work, as well as the “610 Office,” which had been inaugurated in 1999 to coordinate action against the Falungong (*UCAN* June 29).

June 23, 2016:

Statement by Vatican spokesman, Fr. Federico Lombardi, SJ, about the “confession” of Shanghai’s Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin

“In response to requests for information from various journalists, I am able to say the following: 1) With regard to the recent declarations attributed to Msgr. Taddeo Ma Daqin, auxiliary bishop of Shanghai, these have come to the attention of the Holy See through his blog and via press agencies. No direct information is currently available. 2) Any speculation with regard to a presumed role of the Holy See is inappropriate. 3) The personal and ecclesial life of Msgr. Ma Daqin, like that of all Chinese Catholics, is followed with particular care and concern by the Holy Father, who remembers them daily in prayer” (*Vatican Information Service* June 23).

June 28, 2016:

Conference in Shanghai remembers Bishop Jin Luxian, who died in 2013 – Bishop Ma Daqin appears in video-clip



Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin of Shanghai speaks in a video interview shot at the Sheshan Seminary in Shanghai. The video was presented at the seminar to commemorate the 100th birthday of late Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian.

Photo supplied to *UCAN*.

The one-day conference, originally scheduled to be held on June 20, Bishop Jin's 100th birthday, was organized by the Diocese of Shanghai in cooperation with the Shanghai Patriotic Association, the Shanghai Commission for Church Affairs and the Shanghai Catholic Intelligentsia Association. According to *UCAN*, there were ten bishops present among the more than 300 participants. Shanghai's Bishop Ma Daqin did not participate (something about which there had been speculation in advance). According to an eyewitness quoted by *UCAN*, he did appear however in a 10-second video interview, in which he connected Bishop Jin's contribution to educating seminarians with his love for country and Church; in the subtitles, Ma was identified as "Ma Daqin" of the "Catholic Diocese of Shanghai" with no reference to his title as bishop. The video-clip of his "appearance" seems to have been part of a film about Bishop Jin's life, titled "A loyal heart: love for the country and for the Church," which, according to a detailed conference report on the website of Shanghai Diocese, was screened during the conference.

According to this report, the secretary general of the diocese, Shen Baozhi, opened the one-day meeting. Wang Zhigang of the Central United Front Department of the Communist Party called Bishop Jin a "close friend of the Communist Party." Guo Wei of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) also offered a word of greeting. There were also a number of Church-related speakers, among whom were Bishop Fang Xingyao, chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, Bishop Shen Bin of Haimen and Bishop Xu Hong of Suzhou who spoke on Bishop Jin's contribution to the inculturation of the Church. Additional speakers were Fr. Chen Ruiqi, director of Shanghai's Guangqi Press, Fr. Zhang Shijiang, of the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (Shijiazhuang), Fr. Gao Chaopeng, director of the diocesan Social Service Center, and Qu Meizhen, chairwoman of the Shanghai Patriotic Association. Ms. Ren Hua, head of the Commission for Ethnic and Religious Affairs of Shanghai City, said that Bishop Jin represents the correct direction of development of the Catholic Church, and that "to study Bishop Jin's spirit" is a concrete implementation of the "spirit of the National Conference on Religious Work" (catholicsh.org July 8; *UCAN* July 1).

With contributions by Willi Boehi, Katharina Feith, Barbara Hoster, Jan Kwee and Eveline Warode

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The Evangelization of Culture and the Inculturation of the Faith in the Context of a Humanistic Society in Contemporary China: An Opportunity or a Challenge?¹

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1. The Gospel, Evangelization, Culture and the Inculturation of the Faith

1.1 Evangelization and the Inculturation of the Faith

Evangelization is a mission that every Christian should carry out, and is rooted in the very nature of our Christian identity. The early Christians had a very clear and strong sense of evangelization as their own mission. This happened when Christians, bearing this noble mission in their hearts, began to spread the Gospel out of the Jewish world and made their first contact with the Greco-Roman world. The first issue they came across was a problem of heterogeneous cultures, namely of Greek and Roman ones, and the challenges accompanying the encounters with them. Thereafter, the question of how Christianity can take root in non-Jewish cultures has been an issue faced and studied by the Catholic Church continually, even up to the present day. That is the problem of the inculturation of the faith. Right from the beginning of the Church, the question of faith was never merely a pure, isolated and abstract one. Rather, it always appeared as a living way of life and became immersed in people's cultures and blood, making them closely integrated with one another.

In other words, when an evangelizer speaks about the content of the faith he/she professes, the faith is always to be understood, narrated, recorded, inherited and lived through culture, and it will further be re-understood, re-interpreted, re-articulated, and so on, through the culture of the listener. The Gospel and culture will constantly be mutually interwoven. This process of cyclical progression in theological development in various

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1 In this article, the term "culture" especially points to "language" and "scholarship"; but at the same time, it has a broader meaning, referring to people's lives, their way of thinking, and all the elements contained in them.

phases of Church history and in the transformation of an individual or a community's spiritual life is documented very clearly.

Pope John Paul II emphasized: "A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out."² From the Second Vatican Council's rethinking of the issue of "inculturation" to Pope John Paul II's first use of the concept of "inculturation" in an official Church document,³ and from the repeated narration and examination of the concept in subsequent official Church documents to the universal Church's continued deep reflection and practice, all point to the contemporary Church's investigation into evangelization and the new evangelization. They show the persistence and dedication of the Church to its mission of evangelization.

1.2 The Question of Interculturality in Evangelization

When the Gospel of Christ spreads from one culture to the realm of the other, it is not so much a collision of the Gospel and the local culture at the onset, but rather of a coursing in the veins of the missionaries, consisting of a proclamation of the Gospel from a foreign culture to a local culture, in which they "mutually examine" each other and "exchange greetings," too. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger brought up the question of "inter-culturality" at a conference in Hong Kong in 1993. He supplemented the concept of "inculturation," by saying that Christianity and the Gospel, not something abstract or isolated, are transmitted from one culture to the other. The message of the Gospel in fact exists in the evangelizer's culture; and in the process of the evangelization, the Gospel reaches two cultures: the evangelizer's culture and the listener's culture.⁴ Therefore, the Gospel of Christ always exists in the evangelizer's culture (the first culture); and through the listener's culture (the second culture), it is understood and accepted by the listener. Obviously, in this process, the two cultures will inevitably meet, collide and fuse. This integration process must be taken seriously. Otherwise, the course of evangelization will be impeded, leaving the Gospel to hover on the edge of both society and culture.

1.3 The Question of Contextualization in Evangelization

In the process of evangelization, besides culture, we have to consider the question of contextualization in an age of humanistic societies. On the one hand, we advisedly use an approach that people of the time can comprehend so that we can convey Christ's message to those who are influenced by the epoch and to those who are influencing the epoch. On the other hand, we must note that the Gospel is never an abstract theory devoid of life. The Church's theological reflection of the Gospel will be helpful to a humanistic society of the epoch to help it to solve problems in their context; to provide the culture of the times with

2 This is a citation from Pope John Paul II's *Letter to Cardinal Agostino Casaroli establishing the Pontifical Council of Culture*, 20 May 1982; *ORE*, 28 June 1982, p. 7, and gives emphasis to the importance of the inculturation of the faith.

3 This is a quotation from Pope John Paul II's speech delivered to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, titled *Inculturation of Faith in the Light of Scripture*, on April 29, 1979.

4 Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, "Non esiste Fede che non sia Cultura," in: *Mondo e Missione* 1993, No. 10, pp. 657-665.

love and fidelity, and with the Gospel's spirit and core values. This will help people to take a more positive approach when faced with the challenges of nihilism. It is the cause of the emergence of contextual theology in contemporary times. However, the understanding and correct reading of the times still belong to the realm of culture in a humanistic society. To a certain extent, we can place contextual theology under the scope of an inculturation encompassing a spatial-temporal meaning to analyze the question.

1.4 Inculturation of the Faith in the West

Without a doubt, people living in any epoch will come across problems different from other times; people shaped by a specific culture may meet challenges uncommon to other cultural systems. People of different epochs, cultures or cultural regions will be looking at problems from different perspectives, or adopting different models to cope with the same challenge. From the perspective of theology, the Catholic tradition is the revelation of Christ in the historical development of Western human societies. Such a theological system is based on Western cultural resources, the Westerners' individual or societal experiences in history, and the life experience of God-human encounters. Its outcome shows that theology not only provides Christians living in a specific spatial-temporal epoch with concrete and appropriate guidance for a spiritual life (therefore, theology and spiritual studies were created and developed), but it also gives clear, firm and powerful responses to the challenges facing the Church from the spirit and ideology of those living in humanistic societies in specific spatial-temporal times (therefore, apologetics emerged and developed). In short, it can be said that the emergence and development of the Church's traditional theological thinking was, first, a result occasioned by the Western Christians' reflections on their own individual or community life experiences and their specific practice of the faith.

1.5 The Question of Interculturality in Evangelization Work in China

Regarding the Church's inculturation of the faith, what kinds of problems will appear if theological thoughts and faith traditions, tinged with Western cultural colors, meet with the Chinese culture and its traditional thinking? Or, how should we prepare for this sense of awareness of the problem? In fact, what is implied in the interaction is the same as the question of the inculturation of the faith, and of "interculturality" in the process of evangelization. Not only does it involve a relationship between faith and culture, but it also involves a collision and dialogue between the two cultural traditions. On the first question, the faith in theory and by nature has qualities beyond culture, but in the actual practice of evangelization, faith and culture are inseparable. If evangelization enters from a cultural aspect, the Gospel always seems easier to be understood, accepted and lived. Likewise, the Pontifical Biblical Commission says in its document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993):

Inculturation of the Bible has been carried out from the first centuries, both in the Christian East and in the Christian West, and it has proved very fruitful. However, one can never consider it a task achieved. It must be taken up again and

*again, in relationship to the way in which cultures continue to evolve. In countries of more recent evangelization, the problem arises in somewhat different terms. Missionaries, in fact, cannot help but bring the word of God in the form in which it has been inculturated in their country of origin. New local churches have to make every effort to convert this foreign form of biblical inculturation into another form more closely corresponding to the culture of their own land.*⁵

The Commission's analysis manifests the problem of interculturality in the process of the transmission of Christ's Gospel. In the case of China, we do understand that it is important for Chinese Christians to understand, examine, comprehend and precisely take into account the Chinese culture. Any neglect of a dialogue between a local culture and a foreign culture, which is immersed in the Bible and directed at preaching, will only result in "sowing seeds among thorns," or of obtaining only half the result, but using twice the effort.

The relationship between the Gospel, evangelization and culture can be summarized as: the process of evangelization is actually a process of inculturation of the faith and a contextualization of the faith; and the process of inculturation of the faith is indeed a process of absorbing a local culture, targeting people of that culture and fostering the Gospel to take root and grow in the process of "the evangelization of that culture." If the dimension of culture is ignored in the process, the depth and breadth of the evangelization work, at both the personal and social level, will be hindered, and the Word of Christ will find it hard to live as flesh and blood, or become "incarnate" and "grow" in the context of the local humanistic society.⁶

2. The Evangelization of Culture or the Culture of Evangelization

On the question of the evangelization of culture, Pope John Paul II made an insightful analysis:

*Cultural context permeates the living of Christian faith, which contributes in turn little by little to shaping that context. To every culture Christians bring the unchanging truth of God, which he reveals in the history and culture of a people ... This in no way creates division, because the community of the baptized is marked by a universality which can embrace every culture and help to foster whatever is implicit in them to the point where it will be fully explicit in the light of truth.*⁷

The significance of the cultural dimension of the evangelization work is vivid. Faith and culture are mutually influenced. The culture enables the Gospel to be "incarnated" in the lives of the people in a certain locality, and it adopts a flesh-and-blood approach to deeply penetrate into the veins of the local people. The evangelization of culture means the constant proclamation of the message of Christ to the local people through their culture.⁸ In

5 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 1993.

6 Cf. Jing Baolu, "Catholicism and Chinese Culture: A Rethinking of the Catholic Theology of Inculturation," in: *Catholic Thought and Culture* 1 (2012), pp. 21-60.

7 Pope John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, 1988, No. 71.

8 *Hebrews*, 1:1-2.

the process of the Gospel proclamation, individual conversions are certainly important (because the individual experience of Christ is the premise and foundation of the theology of inculturation), but the entire process of the inculturation of the faith is even more critical. This is because the Gospel, through its continuous penetration into the culture, enters into the very blood of the nation. With its self-initiated, widely-used, profound and enduring approaches, the Gospel will affect all the peoples of the place. Pope John Paul II said the process of bringing the faith into a culture is to have the Gospel truly be accepted, lived and experienced by the local people.⁹

The importance of the evangelization of culture is vividly manifest. Its ultimate goals are to be beneficial to all mankind, to go beyond all cultures and to bring about the salvation of Christ upon each person. However, the immediate goal of evangelization is, after all, to nourish a “culture of evangelization,” that is, to attain a competence in evangelizing. It is a kind of inspiration that flows in the blood of individuals and society, spontaneously spreading love, and influencing society to build a culture of love. In short, the evangelization of culture is the revelation of the Gospel through the love of Christ, and through fostering a culture of love, honesty and harmony. This “culture of evangelization” constantly emanates the positive energy of love, and can create an effect of evangelization on its own.

Then, we will see how the Church in China, in the context of a specific humanistic society, evangelizes in the Chinese culture and enables the Gospel to become truly “incarnated” in the minds and souls of the Chinese people and in their spiritual world. This “incarnated” way of life can adapt to the context of a specific humanistic society as the Chinese people’s spiritual guidance and approach to evangelization is affected. In other words, an inculturated theology develops.

3. Challenges faced by the Church in China in the Process of Evangelization

Before discussing evangelization work in China, let us first examine a series of challenges faced by the present-day Church in China, its responses and how it accomplishes the mission of evangelization. The problems of the Church in China can be discussed from both internal and external aspects.

3.1 The external problems can be identified as: the impact brought about by globalization and secularization; the challenge proposed to the Church by the context of today’s humanistic society in China; a demand for dialogue by Chinese intellectuals; and a “new cultural shaping” taking place in contemporary China, and so on. These problems are faced by all Chinese, and are most certainly shared by the Christians. Noting that the mission of evangelization is part of the very nature of the Church, Christians must possess a spirit of openness and commitment, a drive to go out of the churches, to venture into

⁹ Cf. Pope John Paul II’s letter to the Pontifical Council for Culture on its inauguration, May 20, 1982, which stresses the importance of an inculturation of the faith.

society, to build and serve society with love. (This spirit of commitment is like Christ on the Cross, who sacrificed Himself for the whole world).

Now, the question is: does the Church in China have the capacity to know, comprehend and cope with such external challenges? If yes, then it has to map out concrete strategies and proposals for evangelization. If it cannot function like the model of a “bishops’ conference” in the Western Church, and initiate a unified operation, it can at least use the model of a diocese, like the relatively successful Hong Kong Diocese. Currently in China, only a few dioceses are equipped with the capacity to implement forward-looking, concrete plans. The Church in China has to cultivate and empower itself by studying more (both spiritual and intellectual knowledge, but not just one alone). Whatever improvement is to be made, a sense of awareness of the problems must come first. If the Chinese people in China cannot recognize the severity of the problems, the gravity of the problems just might destroy them.

3.2 The internal problems: First of all, the Church’s own structure is imperfect. Since the Church organizations are not sound, its evangelization work can hardly be systematically launched or carried out in a normal way. Let us study the situation closely. How many dioceses in China have established their own “curia” or “council of priests,” in accord with normal procedures? This is not even to mention a “liturgy commission,” a “pastoral council,” a “procurator” (and/or finance committee) or a “marriage and family committee.” However, if dioceses do not have such structures, it does not mean that they have no problems in those fields. Actually, those positions should preferably be filled by professionals who know precisely how to tackle problems, and how to formulate plans for evangelization. Many dioceses in China are now in a relatively chaotic state. Positions of leadership are taken by non-professionals, or professionals on a temporary basis, or even by someone acting impromptu. This is a major reason why the internal affairs of some dioceses are in a mess. A phenomenon of helplessness and inadequacy to make progress results from the difficulties experienced in the past history of the Church in China, a poorly managed structure of the present-day Church and the challenges caused by external problems in the context of specific humanistic societies in China.

Meanwhile, the above-mentioned problems can be examined from the following aspects:

- i. A lack of awareness of the problems: the Church in China lives in the midst of its problems without having a sense of awareness of the problems and without a sense of urgency to tackle them.
- ii. The Church leadership is faced with numerous problems, but cannot always find a way out; and even when facing a question of faith, it still treats such matters with an attitude of psychological speculation.¹⁰
- iii. Faced with the future of the Church, Church leadership finds it hard to make a macro future directed, structural plan, implying that it has a weak, or no “sense of the future.”

10 Cf. “In Cina è il tempo di scelte chiare” (l’intervista di Gianni Cardinale con l’arcivescovo Savio Hon), *Avvenire*, April 1, 2011, p. 19.

- iv. Being insensitive to the need of the Church to be integrated into society, the Church lacks a sense of commitment and social responsibility (which is related to the spirit and mission of evangelization), leading to a narrow understanding of the Christians' mission to evangelize.
- v. The formation system for Church clergy in China may have imperfections, and the direction of formation is not in focus. A cause of this ambiguity lies in the lack of a precise understanding of the spirit of the times in the specific situation of a humanistic society, and the absence of a clear knowledge of the future mission of the Church.

4. The Response the Church in China Should Have

I do not intend to respond to all the questions mentioned above, but rather to aptly propose several suggestions from a macro perspective and from several fundamental aspects.

4.1 Facing the World

The Church in China should be clearly conscious of itself as a part of the world. All kinds of things happening in the contemporary world, big or small, and any trend of thought will draw the Church of China into it through globalization. The concepts of secularization, modernization and post-modernism are no longer mere abstract concepts for us, but rather, are real and concrete ways affecting the life events of all individuals and communities. Today, we can no longer behave as in the past, thinking things happening in the Western world and in the universal Church are very far away from us. In the near future, even today or tomorrow, in this age of the Internet and of the rapid development of science and technology, their problems will become the ones we, too, must face.

Therefore, the Church in China must be equipped with the competence and the knowledge of the humanistic and social thinking of the world. In this respect, the growth of the Church in Poland, with its rich experience, is worth our special study. In 2002, I attended a gathering of mainland Chinese Catholic students in Europe held in Poland. In a dialogue with an official of the Polish Bishops' Conference (most likely the secretary-general), we asked: "Why did the number of Christian churchgoers in Poland decline sharply after 1989?" I recall the official's reply, which was: "After 1989, all trends of thought from Western Europe swarmed into Poland. The Church in Poland had little time to reflect upon them, and offer effective measures to cope with them. Then the challenges faced by the Church in Western Europe soon became ours (Poland's) too." Today, 13 years after that conversation, the pace of globalization is increasing more swiftly, as one would expect in the Internet age. Faced with the overwhelmingly influential trends of globalization, secularization, pure-rationalism, positivism and absolute relativism in Western thought, we have seen that the Church in China faces the same problems and challenges faced by the Church in the West. Actively or passively, the Church in China must face and respond to all those problems! Under these conditions, all human beings have the obligation to make good use of their God-given rationality! Seeing Church communities in China be-

ing trapped and stifled by these problems, makes them feel helpless and unresponsive. Such should not be the attitude of a person of faith.

How should the Church in China cope with this situation? Among the many needs of the Church in China is the need to establish and to train a team of Christians who are equipped with a professional knowledge of philosophy, sociology, religious studies and canon law. This team would then help Church communities and their responsible persons to reflect profoundly on current issues, and to make suggestions on timely and effective measures to deal with them. This could be one of the most important means to solve present-day problems.

4.2 Facing Chinese Society

Since the late Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China in 1911, the consciousness among Chinese intellectuals of a crisis in traditional Chinese culture has grown. After the Cultural Revolution's (1966–1976) looting of traditional culture and values, this crisis emerged in concrete aspects of people's social life and deeply affected their bodies, minds and souls. This gave rise to different kinds of "social ills," which appeared in the national society as a moral crisis. Professor Zhang Xianglong, in his article "The Crisis in China's Traditional Culture," noted: "The Yellow River flushes away the Chinese people's life blood, whereas the trends of the modern age cleansed our spirit and blood vessels of our nationalism." This description shows that the Chinese traditional culture and the spirit of a humanistic society are in a severe crisis. This is not an alarmist report,¹¹ but is indeed a clear living picture of Chinese culture of today.

In my view, the above-mentioned crisis of the culture and the spirit of humanistic society has caused a most fundamental "crisis of humanity": a poverty of humanity (non-ontological meaning) and a spiritual vacuum. This is the root of all social crises and social ills. The decadence of traditional spiritual beliefs causes a lack of metaphysical stability and of a force of constraint. The system of traditional moral values was unfortunately looted, and a new system of spiritual values has not yet been formed. What can people depend on to live their spiritual lives? If the whole of society, from top to bottom, has lost the moral principles to which everyone should adhere, and which are the bases for transcendental values of external and internal forces of constraints, then what foundations of moral obligation can be upheld? This explains why social ills in China, like the shrewdness of corruption, are said to be smart, violence and fraud are considered virtuous, and unscrupulous means can even earn someone a name. Meanwhile the basic necessities of life – food, clothing, housing and transportation – are all fake. This social phenomenon is like Thomas Hobbes' description, "man is a wolf to man." The assumption of this saying seems to be coming true,¹² and it will shake the basis of the entire moral system of a humanistic society.

11 Zhang Xianglong 张祥龙, "Zhongguo chuantong wenhua de weiji 中国传统文化的危机 (The Crisis in China's Traditional Culture)," in: *Guoxue luntan wencui* 国学论坛文萃 2004, No. 2.

12 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil*, Book 1, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1957, Chapter 13.

Faced with this series of problems, Chinese intellectuals and people of insight are yearning to “shape a new culture” or “transform the traditional culture into a modern culture”. This would enable people to inject a new spirit and new blood into Chinese society in order to shape a new culture, which would be more dynamic and adaptable to the times. Then, what is the relationship between this call for shaping a new culture and the mission of evangelization of the Catholic Church? The Catholic Church is definitely not an abstract religion, nor as a religion does it merely talk about abstractions, neglecting people’s lives in society. Faced with a series of grievous social problems, especially a crisis of the spiritual life, the Church in China must respond to this phenomenon. The social teachings of the Church, expressed at the Second Vatican Council, can be applied here. Each local Church community has to act according to the needs of its local humanistic society and offer people in society constructive guidance on how to lead a spiritual life.

From the perspective of the inculturation of the Christian faith, an inculturated theology not only should contain the essence of traditional cultural values, but also a consciousness of problems in contemporary times (social, humanistic, economic and political) and an accurate reading of and response to these. Also, a living experience of faith in a specific time and space can be expressed in a way understood by the epoch. In other words, an inculturated theology must involve an investigation into contemporary people’s consciousness of problems, with a response to the people’s physical, mental and spiritual needs in a present-day specific “temporal-spatial” context.

At a symposium entitled “Religion and the construction of a moral system in Chinese society” at Zhejiang University on June 4, 2011, Professor Zhuo Xinping, in his paper “A Dialogue between Religion and Civilization,” said that while urging people to “eliminate poverty” in an economic sense, one has to adopt a “de-sensitized” attitude toward religion at a spiritual level. Chinese society, in a state of chaotic transformation, needs to establish a feasible moral system, with an inner pledge and a discipline of constraint. This moral system requires a firm and solid spiritual foundation, and needs a “dimension of sacredness” or a “dimension of ultimateness” to construct a system of spirit and values, with a powerful inner force of discipline and constraint. This has to seek help from religion. Professor Zhuo’s call hit the key issue of the present-day social problems in China. In this realm, the Catholic Church, with 2,000 years of religious experience, has a relatively complete system of moral values. Therefore, it can serve as a reference point for present-day Chinese society. In response to the pervasive materialistic culture and the withering spiritual culture in contemporary China, the poverty of humanity and the creation of a spiritual vacuum, the content of the rich eschatological dimension of the Catholic faith and its spiritual life can make a great contribution. It can help Chinese society to overcome the embarrassment of its present-day poverty of humanity, and can help to define and position culture in society. Also, Christian values can shape a healthy culture of love and fidelity in China, and provide a basis for morality to build upon. This can work because it is based on the very attributes of life of the Christian faith.

From the perspective of culture, the process of participating in the construction of a humanistic society with spiritual values coincides, at the same time, with efforts of evangelization and the inculturation of the faith. This is because the pursuit of the inculturation

of the faith allows the truth of the Christian faith, which is above and beyond all cultural systems, to enter into the culture, to be “incarnated” in the culture, to become sublime in the culture, and to transform the culture into a spiritual force helping the nation to be more humane in life and in development. It manifests to the people a culture of hope for the future. At the same time, the inculturation of the Christian faith will help shape a new culture in China, providing new blood for the spirit, and reinforcing and strengthening the source of spiritual beliefs in Chinese society.¹³

Now the problem is: does the Church in China have such a consciousness of the problems around her and a sense of commitment to society? Furthermore, does the Church in China have the capacity for participating in and shaping a culture for the age? This may require the elders or the higher leadership of the Church to respond and to determine whether this demand is a “sign” of the “direction of where the breezes of the Holy Spirit” are blowing, and whether it is a mission for Chinese Christians to undertake.

4.3 Facing the Internal State of the Church in China

To a certain extent, the Church in China is at a point of facing challenges from all sides and at different levels, as well as being in a helpless and “chaotic” state. What is the origin of the “chaos?” What share of this “chaos” in an epoch of the special historical development of the Church should be attributed to unavoidable “historically-inevitable” factors? Which of these factors can be improved if the necessary remedial work could have been done?

a. A model of Church management (or service model): The Church in China is an entity living in the Chinese cultural tradition and in the spiritual context of a humanistic society in China. Nowadays, the question of China’s economic and political reforms is frequently discussed. In my opinion, Christians have to really think about “a political reform inside the Church.” Currently, all the clergy of the Church in China are Chinese, who naturally accept the influence of the Chinese traditional culture. Therefore, the Chinese “model of management” or “model of service” is naturally “a model with Chinese characteristics.” Over the past 2,000 years of the universal Church’s evangelization work, a “model with Catholic Church characteristics” has been developed, as she found her way to carry out her mission of evangelization, bearing in mind the spirit of the Gospel, while facing cultural traditions. How did she strike a balance between the two? This is a problem which bishops and priests must now face. Sometimes we hear a clergyman in China say to his fellow clergymen: “Do not tell me what the law of the Church is. My word is the law.” Does that sound familiar?

13 In fact, any kind of culture cannot be perfect. China’s traditional culture is no exception. As the famous contemporary neo-Confucian scholars Mou Tsung-san, Fu Weixun and Liu Shuxian believed, not only are the external elements of the entire Chinese culture essential, but Chinese culture itself should also be open to Christianity in order to bring about a creative transformation of the traditional Confucian culture. See Mou Tsung-san 牟宗三, *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道与治道 (Political Road and Governance), Changchun: Jilin Publishing Group Ltd., 2010, p. 8; and Lai Pan-chiu 赖品超, *Chuancheng yu zhuanhua: jidujiao shenxue yu zhu wenhua chuantong* 傳承與轉化: 基督教神學與諸文化傳統 (Transmission and Transformation: Christian Theology and Cultural Traditions), Hong Kong: Christian Literature Publishing House 2006, p. 157.

In addition, in the Church in China, the transformation from the practices or systems left by foreign missionaries, or the “Western management model,” into a “Chinese-clergy management model” has not been very successful. At the same time, the transformation from a “pre-Vatican II model” to a “post-Vatican II model” seems to have been even less successful. Due to various constraints, the Chinese Church’s knowledge and practice of the Vatican II spirit may still be at a preliminary stage. The “situation of periodization” (division of generations) among the Chinese clergy after the Cultural Revolution further hindered a smooth transition from old to new traditions in the Church in China. The appearance of “chaos” in the Church in China is indeed somewhat “natural.” A community, like the Church, not mature in a tradition, but growing in the face of a dazzling array of modernity and post-modern issues, coupled with living in a political, economic and humanistic society with fast-changing scenarios, one might say, ironically, that it would be abnormal not to experience chaos!

b. From the perspective of knowledge and culture: Concerning the Church’s relationship with culture and tradition, the Church in China or its leadership does not have an accurate reading of the culture, the spirit of a humanistic society and the trends of development in the country. Even on the level of knowledge of the Church, the generation gap among Chinese clergy gives rise to differences in their understanding and acceptance of Church tradition, Church doctrine and the spirit of Canon Law. Cultural differences are the cause of this problem. Along with these two deficiencies, how can the two spirits or the two service models become regulated? These two deficiencies may lead to a result, such as the fact that both Eastern and Western forms of spiritual formation or models of spirituality have not yet begun to be thoroughly understood from the root and origin of their cultures. Moreover, a lack of knowledge of the faith, originally indispensable, for guiding Christian lives – Church theology, philosophy, liturgy, Canon Law and spirituality and the like – and an insufficient ability to overcome various challenges to the faith and to the spirit are present. So, in what ways can the clergy in China guide or serve the Church communities, in accord with a traditional Chinese mode of acting (for instance, the “patriarchal,” or “resourcefulness theory,” in China’s literature, e.g., in the “Romance of the Three Kingdoms”) or in accordance with the traditional mode of the Church (like Church doctrine, Canon Law and teachings)? Nor may neither method have been followed, but rather a cleverness of reasoning or some superficial thought?

c. Formation of teams of Church intellectuals: Faced with all the problems and challenges of the times, how should the Church in China deal with them? Originally, the Church leadership and intellectual elites should have been able to work with one another. The Church organization that could have enabled them to sit down and develop ideas for the Church could have been “The Bishops’ Conference of the Catholic Church in China.” Unfortunately, this entity is still in a state of lacking a mandate, and therefore, it is difficult for them to do anything substantial. Thus, the leadership of the Church in China can only use an independent or isolated way of dealing with the problems they face. These are beyond any one individual’s capacity to deal with. Faced with a situation where it is difficult

at the moment to change the status quo, I think, first of all, the Church in China should be aware of the need to train its own team of Chinese Catholic intellectuals. Such persons must have a sense of commitment and a sacrificial spirit, like Jesus on the Cross, in order to serve society and the Church. They must help the Church to understand the needs of society, to encourage the Church to reach out to society, and to play a constructive role in shaping the spirit of a humanistic society in China.

Since the 1990s, as the number of priests, nuns and laypeople who have studied abroad has increased, more and more Christians at the grassroots level are aware of the importance of the dimension of culture in Church evangelization. This means that among Chinese Christians an awareness of a revival of an “evangelization of culture” has taken place. For both the Church in China and for the universal Church, this is a phenomenon worthy of encouragement and support.

In addition, since the 1980s, the Church in China, after 30 years of effort, has become equipped with the “hardware” (churches, dioceses, parish offices and equipment), basically sufficient to meet the needs of the faithful. Then, for the subsequent work of evangelization, Church communities and individuals should shift the attention to the nature of the Church’s mission, and encourage clergy and Christians to have a more direct relationship with its “software”: doctrine, Canon Law and the spirit of the entire Church tradition. This requires a deeper understanding of evangelization, and a strengthening of our sense of mission. It also requires a division of labor, institutions of evangelization, a sound mode of management, an inculturated theology of evangelization and an example of spirituality. Who will undertake such a mission? Personally, I think that communities of Catholic intellectuals, under the leadership of the bishops, can help the Church’s upper echelons, through the God-given light of reason, to carry out this work. They can make a huge and indispensable contribution. But if the leadership of the Church (both in China and on the universal level) lacks this awareness, and fails to promote and support the development of such a team, we can only work in a mode of “curing a sore on the foot and an ache in the head, one at a time.” This would cause the Church in China to continue to be a “problem community.” It will exhaust the energy which should be put into the mission of evangelization and continue to burden it with the problems.

4.4 Faced with the Nature of the Church’s Mission: Evangelization

At the present time, the dimensions of evangelization in the Church in China still involve two major aspects: dealing with the Church and dealing with society. Compared to Church groups before 1949, today’s Church communities are mostly engaged in the first aspect of evangelizing activities, and evangelization work dealing with society is not yet in full swing.

The internal dimension of Church evangelization work in China was treated above. Now, we will talk about evangelization activities aimed at society. By nature, the mission of the Church is well defined and is open to the public. In the process of reaching out “to the whole world,” the Church, through her social services and a sense of responsibility and commitment, fulfills its mission. However, this requires the Church community to have a relatively clear understanding of the spirit of contemporary, humanistic society. The

Church can express its own constructive ideas on the problems and challenges Chinese society has to face. At the same time, the Church has to correctly understand the spirit of its own faith, values and ideas, and be self-confident enough to have the ability to express its values and ideas clearly to society.

Some people think that the Church should solve its own internal problems, and strengthen the quality of its spiritual formation first, and then discuss the question of social commitment. Personally, I think that this kind of ordering of the Church's evangelization work unfortunately results from an ignorance of Church history and from a lack of experience. In our Church's history, many of the problems with Church individuals and communities were related to "the nature of the mission" – evangelization – and the Church's commitment to it. But the fire of evangelization burns the problems off, and dispels them. While believing that "the saints enlightened evangelization," we should not forget that "the evangelization work also produced sainthood" – the mission of evangelization has the capacity to make saints and makes possible the reception of grace. The early Church community, led by the Twelve Apostles, is a good example for us. After receiving the mission of evangelization at Pentecost, they did not sit down first to discuss about it in the community. Rather they immediately went out and preached the Gospel.

Today, we have received this mission, no less than the Apostles. But what is missing is a sense of mission, and a sense of commitment to mission. Also missing are an openness of oneself, a sense of self-realization and fulfillment of oneself. These are missing from the community as well. However, for Christian individuals and communities, a closing up of oneself means the death of the Christian spirit! In this regard, many experiences from the history, reality and context of the Western Church are worthy of our attention and study.

Conclusion

Finally, I want to stress that the Church is a community. The Church in China should also, in the name of a Church community, and in a spirit of collaboration and communion, devise its own evangelization plan, train qualified preachers and develop its own theology of evangelization, in order to reflect and create a spiritual guide suitable for the Chinese people. All these demand that the Church has a team of its own, to work with professionals to promote and spread the message. They do this, finally, in order to have a Christianity "incarnate" in the "flesh and blood" and in the daily life and culture of the Chinese people. The "culture of evangelization" is then "incarnated" and "grows" in this process, and becomes a culture with a sense of commitment to society, a culture of promoting love and peace in society, and of fostering integrity, justice, harmony and freedom. Along with these, it should provide a spiritual life and faith for the Chinese people, and a culture of fulfilling the "Dream of Christ" and the "Dream of China!" In this process, the Catholic intellectual communities have to work actively with the intellectual elites of society to build a new culture in China, to reconstruct a system of social and moral values. This is the sacred mission of the Church in China, and all Christians should commit themselves to it. Through this mission of commitment, the nature of the Christian identity will be revealed, and it becomes a "witness" of light and hope in society.

To achieve this goal requires the joint effort of all the faithful in the Church in China, as well as the strong support and encouragement of the universal Church, and of all those who love and care for the mission of evangelization of the Church in China!

Evangelization through Art in China: A Protestant Perspective

Isabel Hess-Friemann

Chinese Christian artists regard their work as a medium to spread the Gospel. Their purpose is to bring the good news of God closer to their own people who often still look at Christianity as a foreign religion. I would like to show you some examples of contemporary Christian art and, rather than giving too many explanations, let the pieces of art themselves speak to you.



“Visitation 玛利亚访问伊丽莎白,” Oil painting, He Qi 何琦, before 1995. Foto: www.heqiart.com.

The first picture shows two Chinese women in a traditional Chinese village. It is a decorative, naive painting with some typical elements of folk art, placing Mary and Elisabeth in their own cultural background. And yet it is different, shiny, modern and mysterious. It is an example of inculturation, easily recognizable as a work of art made by one of the most well-known Chinese Christian artists, He Qi.

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“Mary 玛利亚,” Woodprint, Qian Zhusheng 钱筑生 (1951–2006), 1999.

A woman in peaceful contemplation. She sits upright in a building which could be her home or a church, her arms mirroring the arms of the angels. She opens up her body and soul, becomes filled with the Holy Spirit and radiates from within.



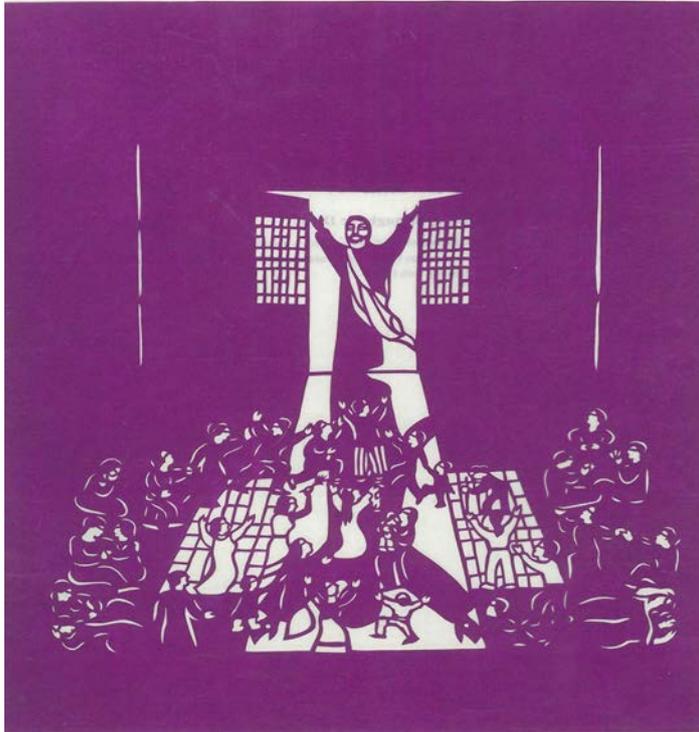
“Holy Wall 圣城,” Installation – Photography, He Xuming 何虚鸣, 2009.

The Great Wall – monument of China’s magnificence and permanence – fading in the background against the luminous power of the Gospel, running through the country like a red banner, held together by Bibles which symbolize its watchtowers.



“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. 我就是道路, 真理, 生命,” John 14, 6, Papercut, Fan Pu 范朴, 2010.

The colour red stands for life and happiness, a circle is an expression of harmony, the form resembles a seal, underlining the validity of the message. The scandal of the cross, bulky and inappropriate to the Chinese culture and values, is turned into a purely positive symbol, interpretable as God’s invitation through Christ.



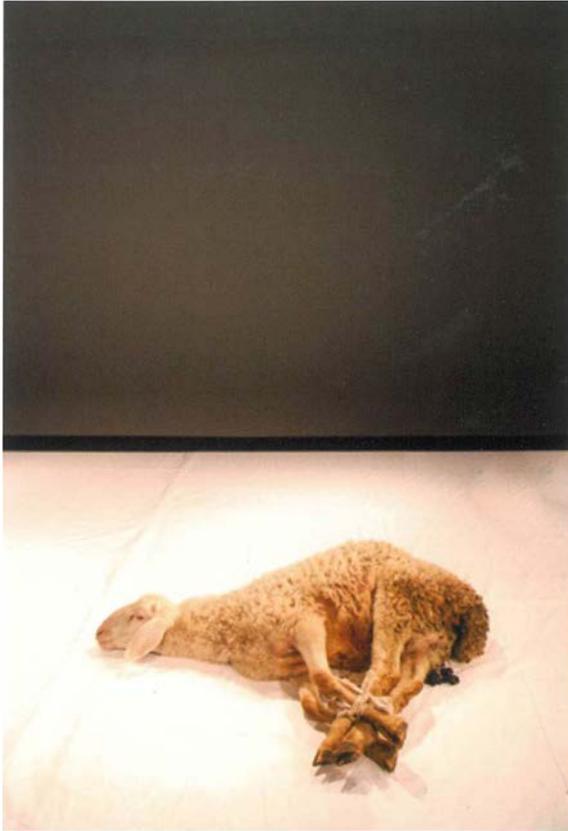
“Entering through the door 进入,”
Papercut, Fan Pu 范朴, 2002.

Another translation of the cross, this time explicitly into the Chinese context as shown by the traditional wooden windows. The resurrected Jesus and his bright shadow on earth are opening up the closed society, calling its people to rise, to leave their darkness behind and to follow him into life.



“Righteousness 義,” Oil and acrylic painting,
Wei Lin 卫林, 2009.

This kind of sacred vessel is normally seen in Buddhist or Daoist temples with incense offerings placed in it. The inscription on the vessel reads “God loves the people of the earth”; the character for earth displays the three crosses standing at Golgotha. Here it represents China, receiving the grace of the Lamb’s sacrifice from above, filled to overflowing and spreading it all over the world.



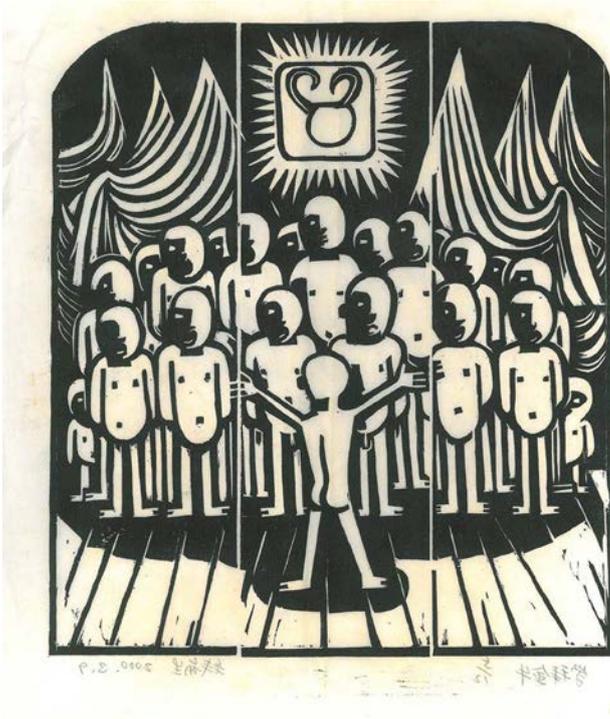
“Lost lamb 迷途的羔羊,” Installation, Zhu Jiuyang 朱久洋, 2010.

Another aspect of the lamb as a symbol for Jesus Christ is illustrated in this installation. The lamb is exposed, vulnerable, frightened and devout. The observer can almost experience the feelings of the lamb itself from his close and direct witness.



“Holy Nails 圣钉,” Ink on paper, Dao Zi 岛子, 2008.

These three nails are both abstract and grippingly realistic at the same time; they remind us of Jesus’ suffering. The materials and techniques used are traditionally Chinese, almost resembling an old calligraphy, but the content only reveals itself to a person with a basic understanding of Christianity.



“Worship of the Golden Calf 崇拜金牛,”
Woodprint, Qian Zhusheng 钱筑生, 2000.

Flags are draped around the emblem in the background; a naked crowd without hands is standing in a military order, singing the song of their conductor. The woodprint is a sharp, ironic criticism of the prevailing attitude in the artist’s society and its political atheism.



“The Truth shall make you free 得自由,”
Colored papercut, Fan Pu 范朴, 2005.

Fishes in a fish bowl are set next to fish swimming in a river. The Chinese Christians who assemble in registered churches are compared to those who gather in house churches.



“The church of Dawangji village and its preachers 大王集村教堂和她的传教人,” Colored photographs, Cao Yuanming 曹原铭, 2008.

Dawangji is a village in Jiangsu, near the city of Xuzhou. These lay preachers give personal testimony. They stand for their church, which has been demolished, and their eagerness to evangelize goes on.



“Thankfulness 感恩,” Oil painting, (Wu) Yingde (吴) 英德, 2012.

The church in China is the bride of Jesus Christ. She is dressed in pure white, standing in a stony, inhospitable environment. She is receiving the dove of the Holy Spirit with open arms.



“God and gold 上帝与黄金,” Water color on paper, Dao Zi 岛子, 2014.

Dao Zi is a professor for western art history at Qinghua University, a high profile personality in Chinese society. Traditional paper, colors and techniques form the background of his artwork, capturing the grey monotony of the old Chinese society and the ongoing flow of everyday life. God’s presence is breaking through to the observer in a new dimension. The color gold is introduced as a completely different aspect of reality, as God, who is unknown to the old China. The picture is an invitation to discover Him and His Holiness, a challenge for mankind of the unpredictable and uncomfortable kind.

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