



NEWS IN BRIEF

An international conference on China will be held at Montreal Canada from 2nd October to 9th October 1981. The meeting is sponsored by the Canada China Programme of the Canadian Council of Churches. The theme of the conference is "God's Call to a New Beginning". For the first time in the history a joint delegation of Catholics and Protestants from China will participate in the conference. The Chinese delegation consists of eleven people: four (4) Catholics and seven (7) Protestants. The Catholic delegates are: Fu Tieshan, Bishop of diocese of Beijing, Tu Shihua, Bishop of Hanyang, Wang Zi-cheng, Vicar General of Yaoyang, and Lo Wei-do, deputy director of the National Administrative Commission of Catholic Church in China. The Protestant delegation is headed by K. H. Ting, the president of China Christian Council, and Zhao Fusan, deputy director of the Institute for the study of World Religions, Beijing, Chen Ze-ming, Han Wenjao, Jiang Pei-fen, Jiang Wen-han and Shen Yi-fen.

About 150 Christian scholars will participate in this meeting. Previously all conferences on the Church in China were held abroad with no participation by the Chinese delegates. The presence of the Chinese delegates is a significant breakthrough which could be adequately called a "new beginning". The personal encounter with the Chinese delegates will enrich the conference and enhance international Christian relationships in the future.

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In Archdiocese of Singapore Msgr. Gregory Yong, Archbishop of Singapore, has established a Service Centre which hopes to stimulate the interest of all the local Christians, especially Chinese, in the Church of China. The objective of this Service Centre is to foster a mutual exchange of knowledge and concern about the Church in China.

The Archbishop has given a house next to the Cathedral for the establishment of the Service Centre. The famous China expert, Fr. Jean Charbonnier, MEP, has been appointed director. The Centre will publish a newsletter in Chinese entitled "China Catholic Communication" (中聯), a French quarterly "Lettre Circulaire" and a bi-annual English newsletter.

On 7th June the Centre held a forum in Mandarin to discuss the Church in China. On 27th June the Centre decided to form five study groups to study religion, politics, society, culture, education and economics of China. The documentation branch of the Service Centre will also assist researchers by introducing them to scholars in Singapore and directing them to the libraries and research centre.

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As part of the exchange programme between the Chinese Academy of Social Science and the University of California (Berkeley), U.S.A., Fr. Matthias Lu, Chinese scholar and research associate, was invited to Beijing to give a seminar to scholars of the Academy of Social Science. The theme of the seminar was "The Diplomacy of the Vatican".

Based upon his contacts with the Chinese scholars in Beijing, Fr. Lu has the impression that they are very interested in doing research in the field of religion. In his meeting with a small group of seventeen Chinese scholars, Fr. Lu learnt that four scholars had been assigned to study the Vatican more extensively.

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Pope John Paul II has expanded the Pontifical Commission

for the Revision of Canon Law to include 36 new members. The new appointees announced by the Vatican on 1st August, 1981, include 18 Cardinals, 11 Archbishops and 7 Bishops. It is noteworthy that the largest number of appointees to the Commission are from the Third World.

The Commission's task is to revise the general law of the Church, which was done previously in 1917. Formal publication of the new code is expected sometime in 1982 or 1983.

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(Hong Kong) "*Ta Kung Po*" (11 Aug. 1981) gives an account of the planned restoration of the home and tomb of Xu Guangqi in Shanghai. Partially destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, the tomb, ancestral hall and home of the Xu family will become a Memorial site open to the public.

Besides a photo of the home, *Ta Kung Po* gives details of Xu's life. Born in Shanghai in 1562, Xu was a forerunner of modern science in China. From a humble teacher in the southern provinces, he gradually progressed until he became President of the Board of Rites and a member of the Council of State in Ming dynasty.

Throughout his life Xu had a deep regard for natural science, astronomy, mathematics, etc. As a young man he met foreign missionaries from whom he gained an understanding of the Western world. He helped the missionaries translate books of mathematics, astronomy, technology. The geometry textbook used by Chinese students today is based on Xu's translation of "Principles of Geometry." His book on the science of agriculture remains the most complete book on that subject in China.

In 1634, Xu's remains were buried in Xujiahui, near Shanghai. In front of his grave, besides Chinese stone figures, there is also a cross, donated by the Church at that time. Xu Guangqi was one of the first Christians in China. This grave was preserved intact until the time of the Cultural Revolution.

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