

STATEMENT FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Made at a Press Conference in Nanking

on Saturday, January 9th, 1982

I have been moved by the warmth of my welcome to Nanking from both Church and Civic leaders.

One of the highlights of my visit has been a meeting with students of the Nanking Union Theological Seminary. The Choir sang 'Danny Boy' with the kind of tuneful enthusiasm, I have not previously experienced. The students were lively and uninhibited in their questions. It was a good place in which to test the vigour of the Three Self Movement and to meet some of the future leaders of the Chinese Church. After a painful and difficult period during the Cultural Revolution it is good to see the Chinese Christian Churches working together so effectively to give the Christian faith an authentic Chinese face.

My host Bishop Ding and his colleagues in the China Christian Council have been very modest about their considerable achievements. They have been anxious to point out that a united Church structure is still in a process of evolution in China. They ask for sympathy and understanding from their friends abroad rather than hasty judgments either way with some condemning and some wholly endorsing a Chinese experiment which is far from being completed.

I have had many hours of conversation with Bishop Ding and am proud now to be able to call him a friend. I leave feeling that he deserves the trust of Christians outside China. I hope that nobody will do anything to disrupt the work the Three Self Movement is doing to ensure that Christianity will have a constructive part to play in the efforts being made by the Chinese people to build a better future.

I look forward to receiving Bishop Ding and other members of the China Christian Council in England later this year and I also hope that I shall be able to make another and this time longer visit to China in the near future.