

The LWF Marxism And China Study Program

by Arne Søvik

The Lutheran World Federation began its study program on the People's Republic of China in the early '70s. The stimulus came from two sources. The mission agencies and societies in our member churches were disturbed at the loss of contact with Christianity in China and asked that LWF study China against that background. At about the same time groups who were interested in the relationship of Christianity to the Marxist world asked that a dialogue be attempted with Marxists. The LWF Department of Studies therefore tries to see China both in the context of the socialist system and in the context of modern church relations.

We began in 1972 to publish our Information Letter three or four times a year, combining material dealing with China with information and articles dealing with more general Marxist/Christian relationships.

Our first (perhaps only) major project was the Ecumenical colloquium on China held in Louvain (Belgium) in 1974, for which Pro Mundi Vita and we have shared both praise and opprobrium. Whatever its shortcomings that event set off a great deal of discussion and dispute about China and Christianity. A series of smaller meetings has followed, most limited to our Lutheran constituency. But some of the most useful have been the periodical Ecumenical Liaison Group meetings, which have maintained the PMV/LWF cooperation in China studies.

Original research is not our strength. (Since 1975 we have had only part-time staff.) We try, through speaking, writing, correspondence and in any other way that occurs, to give structure and interpretation to the information and thinking that comes to us from many sources, and to publicize that material. We also, in a limited way in recent years, have tried to develop contacts with the church in China and to serve it by helping our constituency to understand better what has gone on before and what is happening now, and why Christians outside China must pray for China but often restrain themselves from trying to be "helpful." As time goes on we hope increasingly to be able to show how the life of the Christian church in China has something to say to us all about what Christianity

is and how Christian witness is carried out.

Our program is now undergoing a review. It is to be expected that in 1984 a considerable change will take place, one reason being that the present "responsible person" will step aside this year.



Christ Is Risen



「你們爲什麼在死人中找活人呢？」(路：24：5)

