



## From the Editor

Our opening article for this issue, *"Some Reflections on the Historical Significance of Matteo Ricci in China"* is written by Dr. John D. Young, a lecturer of Chinese Studies at the University of Hong Kong. Dr. Young discusses what lessons might be learned from Matteo Ricci in light of China's modernization policy. He also challenges attitudes expressed by some Hong Kong Christians regarding the 1997 problem. As a non-Christian expert on the history of Matteo Ricci in China, Dr. Young hopes that his article would further the dialogue between Christians and non-Christians.

The first of a two part article *"Asian Theology Begins to Raise Questions"* is written by Fr. Luis Gutheinz S.J., a professor of theology at Fu Jen University in Taiwan. The first part, deals with the author's different experiences while participating in three major Asian Theological Conferences. The second part, which will appear in our next issue, discusses some important currents in contemporary Asian theology and the urgent questions they give rise to.

In his usual lively and personal writing style, Fr. Elmer Wurth M.M. points out that *"Reconciliation in China is a Holy and Urgent Task"*. He underlines his appeal with a moving travel-life story from his experience in Taiwan.

Our fourth article is an interview with Mr. Deng Zhaoming, the editor of the new magazine *"Bridge"*. Mr. Deng explains for us the nature, objectives and stance of this new addition to Church in China literature. In this issue we also include a report on the second year of our Holy Spirit Study Centre.

Dr. Arne Sjøvik introduces *"The LWF Marxism and China Study Program"* to our readers. In the early 1970's, Dr. Sjøvik along with Pro Mundi Vita, founded the Ecumenical Liaison Group, which has done so much to arouse the concern of foreign Churches for the Christian Churches of China. For the past ten years, from the time of the Bस्ताad and Louvain Conferences to the present, Dr. Sjøvik has been a leading figure at China related Church assemblies. Dr. Sjøvik is going to retire in June of this year. We at the Centre would like to take this occasion to express our appreciation for the great contributions he has made to the field of Church and China studies.

This issue includes two book reviews which might prove of interest to you. *"A New Beginning"* reviewed by Fr. Peter Barry, M.M. is a collection of papers given at the Montreal Conference in 1981 and published by the Canada China Programme of the Canadian Council of Church. Fr. Pierre Jeanne, M.E.P. reviews *"An Outline History of China,"* edited by Bai Shouyi, the noted Chinese historian, and recently translated into English by Beijing Foreign Languages Press.

Our final article is a report by Miss Lucia Lee on her *trip to Xian*.

We have recently received an excellent English translation of an interesting article which appeared in Studies on World Religions (Number 3, 1981, pages 78-87). Studies is the journal of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The essay entitled "*Patterns of Cyclical Change in the History of the Struggle Between Atheism and Theism in China*" is authored by Wang Yousan, a member of the Philosophy Department of Nanjing University, Chairman of the Program for the Study and Research of Chinese Philosophy, and General-Secretary of the Chinese Society for the Study of Atheism. Due to limitations of space, we are not able to print the article in full but merely offer a summary of its content along with an offer to send a copy of the translation to any of our interested subscribers upon written request.

Doctor Wang traces the historical development of Chinese atheism from the Shang-Zhou period up to the time of the Ming and Ching dynasties. He investigates the complex struggle between atheism and theism through four climactic periods of Chinese history. It is the authour's contention that atheism and theism have built-in contradictions that lock them in a mutual struggle. They are in constant contact and inter-penetrate each other, and both have continued to develop through the very process of their mutual rejection. Doctor Wang finds patterns of cyclical change emerging from the high and low periods of such development. We offer Doctor Wang's concluding paragraph:

To summarize what is written above, we can see in the course of the struggle between theism and atheism that theism experienced various kinds of change and transformation, at each time of change trying to patch up the holes in previous theories, assimilating some doctrines of atheism, misrepresenting others, and utilizing limitations to foster its own development and to refute atheism. As for atheism, in its struggle with and its critique of theism, and in the course of its own development, later theorists overcame inner contradictions and limitations of earlier atheistic theories leading to continual progress. But this progress was not on a straight line; there were both progress and short-term regression, both high and low tides. Atheism and theism constitute two opposites in contradiction, and the struggle between them is governed by patterns of cyclical change. In the course of these periods of cyclical change, atheism refuted erroneous views throughout its zig-zag yet continuous development, leading to a recognition of the errors in theism and the correctness of atheism.

(Address requests for the full English translation of this article to: The Editors, Tripod, Holy Spirit Study Centre, 6 Welfare Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong. Copies will be delivered by surface mail.)