

# FROM THE EDITOR

'Tripod has finally discovered the Bible!' The accusation is only partially true. While past editions have had a generous sprinkling of biblical material it has, we confess, taken us an inordinant amount of time getting around to devoting an entire issue to this Book of books. But to make up for previous neglect, we offer our readers not one but two consecutive issues with the Bible as our special topic.

Our present issue opens with Mark Fang's "How the Chinese Read the Bible" - an alluring title if there ever was one. Father Fang, who heads the School of Theology at Fujen University in Taiwan, offers here not only some cogent insights on how the Chinese classical tradition can colour and enhance Bible reading, but he also serves up a brief and valuable analysis of current biblical criticism.

We have heard Das Kapital referred to at times as holy scripture, but the Bible according to Marx? Now there's a subject to set eyebrows raising, minds spinning, and perhaps, in certain places, fists swinging as well. Robert Michiels and Herman Hendrickx tell you what its all about in "The Materialist Reading of the Bible". Father Hendrickx is best known in these parts for his work with the East Asian Pastoral Centre and the Hong Kong Diocesan Renewal Programme, where his biblical scholarship, ready wit and avid enthusiasm are much appreciated.

To show you just how much mileage a dedicated biblical-theologian can get out of one short text of the gospel,

we draw your attention to Lanfranco Fedrigotti's "Unless A Grain of Wheat Dies", our third and final article in this edition. It is Father Fedrigotti's contention that the spread of Christianity in recent times throughout the continents of Africa and Asia are only the latest expression of the fecundity of the grain that dies in order to bear much fruit.

Matteo Ricci's The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven has been translated into English for the first time. This Chinese classic is a seminal work in the study of Chinese-Christian beginnings, and an important contribution to East-West relations. Patrick Taveirne gives us his review of this English edition, which was translated from the original Chinese by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen.

And now before you leave us, Tripod's globetrotter Elmer Wurth invites you take a quick peek at Sancian Island. If you can pick Elmer out in the group pictures, you may win a prize.

### CALLING ALL AUTHORS!

If you would like to contribute a manuscript to TRIPOD, the following guidelines may be of use:

1. TRIPOD'S focus is Christianity and China. Articles relating to this field are most welcome. Our more specific emphasis is on religion and morality, Church history - events and personalities, philosophical and theological approaches to the East - West dialogue, and the exchange of research materials among China study groups.

2. We encourage a wide variety of literary forms: dissertations, China travel reports, critical reviews of books and the arts, pictorial essays and personal comment.

3. The ideal length of an article is about two to three thousand words. If in English, please type and double space. If in Chinese, please use Chinese manuscript paper.

4. Submitted manuscripts will be returned at the request of the author.

5. Also upon the authors request, the final English and Chinese versions will be returned for comment and correction before publication.

6. The authors of published material will receive, in addition to five complimentary copies of the issue in which the work appears, a one year free subscription to TRIPOD.

7. Please submit all manuscripts to: The Editor, TRIPOD, Holy Spirit Study Centre, 6, Welfare Road, Aberdeen, HONG KONG.