

China Church and News Update: 1994 A Review

The following is a digest of *China Church and News Update* for 1994. Additional details on many of the items below will be found in of the news reports in *Tripod*.

Church Related Statistics

(All figures given below are estimates for the Government approved church. It is impossible to obtain accurate figures for the underground church.)

Number of Catholics:	
Government estimate	4,000,000
Non-Government estimate	10,000,000
Number of Converts (est)	60,000
Number of Churches/Chapels	4,500
Number of Major Seminaries	24
National Seminary	1
Regional Seminaries	6
Provincial Seminaries	7
Diocesan Seminaries	10
Number of Dioceses	135
Number of Bishop	69
Number of Priests	1,300
Number ordained since 1988	650
Number ordained in 1994	80
Number of Seminarians (est)	1,450
Number of Sisters and women in formation	2,500
Number professed since 1986 (est)	1,300
Number of novitiates	40

Update on Church and Church Personnel

Deaths of Bishops

Bishop Francis Zhang Fengzao, 79, of Wuhu, Anhui Province, died on May 6, 1994.

Bishop John Li Xuesong, 90, of Jilin Province, died on May 20, 1994.

Bishop Joseph Hou Jinde, 76, of Xingtai, Hebei Province, died on May 20, 1994.

Bishop Joseph Lin Tianzhu, 59, of Chiayi, Taiwan, and first

native-born Taiwanese bishop, died on March 4, 1994.

Episcopal Ordination

Francis Tong Hui, 60, elected auxiliary bishop of Yulin, Jingbian county, Shaanxi on August 22, 1992, was consecrated as auxiliary to China-appointed Joseph Wang Zhenye of Yulin, on March 19, 1994.

Bishop Peter Liu Chen-Chung, native-born Taiwanese, was ordained bishop of Chiayi, Taiwan, on September 28, 1994. The ceremony was presided over by Cardinal Jozef Tomko, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Update on Detentions/Arrests/Releases

Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding of Hebei was arrested in January 1994, and placed under administrative detention. In May, he was confined to a hostel in Jinzhou county to "study". He was released on August 6, 1994.

Bishop Joannes Han Dingxiang of Handan was arrested on November 18, 1993 and placed under administrative detention. He was released after a few days.

Bishop Su Zhiming of Baoding was detained during the visit of the US Secretary of the Treasury, Lloyd Bentsen. He was released a few days later.

Underground **Bishop John Baptist Liang Xisheng** of Kaifeng in Henan Province was also placed under house arrest for one day on March 15, 1994. The 73 year old bishop was perhaps apprehended for having met with a non-Chinese Catholic visitor. The bishop was detained again from March 20 - April 15, 1994.

Underground **Bishop Peter Li Hongye**, of Luoyang, Henan, detained since July 25, 1994, had already spent 30 years in prison. There is so far no news of his release.

Underground **Bishop Zeng Jingmu** of Fuzhou and Father **Liao Haiqing**, Jiangxi province, were arrested just prior to the feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1994. As of November, there is still no word of their release.

Restrictions have also tightened on **Bishop Stephen Li Side**, the Bishop of Tianjin, now confined to his own church in a mountainous district of Tianjin. (SCMP Jan. 24, 1994; (H.K. Standard, Jan. 28, 1994).

Father Xu Guoxin of Langfang, Hebei, was arrested in December 1991 and given a three-year sentence. He was freed in April 1994, eight months before his scheduled release.

Father Wei Jingyi, secretary general of the Underground Bishops' Conference, detained in January, was allowed to return to Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province, June 3, 1994.

Father Wang Xincheng, the young rector of an underground seminary in Baoding, Hebei, was arrested on March 30 and released on April 16, 1994.

On May 17, 1994, **Father Placidus Pei Ronggui**, parish priest of Youtong, Zhengding diocese, was confined to a hostel "for study". Father Pei has been detained twice since his release on parole in March 1993. He was again arrested and released with Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo on August 6, 1994.

Fathers Miao and Guo Xijing, three Sisters and four seminarians from the underground church were also arrested on December 16 after Mass at a church in Fu'an City, Mindong Diocese, Fujian province. They were all released before Lunar New Year.

Fathers Chu Tai and Zhang Li, both of Hebei, were arrested in November 1993 after celebrating Mass. Both were released in May 1994.

Father Qin Guoliang of Xining, Gansu Province, arrested on April 22 with another priest surnamed Li and a lay person, was released in July. There is no word of Fr. Li's or the lay person's release.

Gao Feng, a Chinese Christian detained in Beijing in early June 1994, was released on June 30, 1994.

Father Gu Zheng, who has already spent many years in a camp in Qinghai, was placed in police detention in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The minor seminary where he taught was disbanded by authorities in late October, 1994.

Father Xue Qixiu of Urumqi was briefly detained in September after receiving foreign visitors.

Trappist Father Yang Maqi, 83, has been restricted to his home and put under surveillance since November 15, 1994

A Sister of Charity of Tianjin, attending Mass in Beijing, was detained by police on November 17, 1994 and not allowed to leave Beijing. There has been no further word on her case.

Group Arrests of Catholics and Protestants

In Sichuan Province

On April 19, 1994, in Sichuan, Public Security officers wrongly identified some Catholics as members of the "Mentuhui" (disciple church) of Fengjie county. The Catholics were handcuffed, detained, beaten and fined 200-300 yuan each (US \$24-36) the equivalent of one month's pay for peasants. All the Catholics belonged to the government-approved Wanxian diocese (*UCAN* No. 766/A May 9-11, 1994).

In Henan Province

Seven Protestants, that included two Indonesian Chinese, two Hong Kong Chinese, and one American Chinese led by Rev. Dennis Balcombe, an American and pastor of the Hong Kong Revival Christian Church, were arrested on February 10 in a village near Fangcheng, Henan Province, for conducting prayer services in a house church. They were freed on February 15, and flew from Beijing to Hong Kong the same day. One of the HK Chinese was beaten during the arrest. Three Chinese Christians were reported detained. These were the first arrests since the new religious regulations went into effect on January 31. Officials maintained that Articles 3,4 and 8 of Regulations #144 had been violated (*UCAN* Feb. 18, pp. 8-9; *CNCR*, 2286, 2288).

In Hunan Province

According to the March 11, 1994 issue of *China News and Church Report*, a reliable Hong Kong source reported that a young believer of an unregistered house church in southwestern Hunan Province was beaten to death by officials of the Public Security Bureau in early January. About 20 Christians were detained. All, except Zheng, were released after paying a fine of 150 yuan (approximately \$18.00). According to the report, Zheng died after torture. (*CNCR* 2291, March 11, 1994).

In Guangdong Province

Five Christians were detained in their house church for more than four hours by police in Zengcheng City in Guangdong. Bibles and religious material were confiscated. This is the latest incidence of harassment of Christians who refuse to register with the official Three-Self Patriotic Movement in the province. (*SCMP* Aug.

17, 1994).

In Beijing

Li Dequan, head of the church committee of Beijing's largest Protestant Church, the Gangwashi, was detained for questioning by Beijing police following a government-church dispute over property. Mr. Li has headed the effort to reclaim a small piece of property taken away from the parish during the Cultural Revolution. Mr. Li was later released but many of the parishioners are still being kept under surveillance. (*SCMP* Sept. 13, 1994).

In Liaoning Province

In another development, Bishop Ding Guangxun, the leading Protestant bishop in China, has failed to secure the release of **Gao Liangyi**, a pastor of the Dongguan Protestant Church in Shenyang. Pastor Gao has been jailed though he has not been convicted of any crime. Sources maintain that the 38-year old pastor was being held in Shenyang No 2 Detention Centre with murderers and robbers. According to a Dongguan Church worker, Gao Liangyi and another pastor, the **Rev. Gao Peiman**, of the Dongguan Protestant Church, were arrested last April after two senior clergymen, Lu Zhibin and Gu Yaozu, claimed the pair were trying to "seize power" and "create chaos" (*SCMP*, Sept. 7, 1994).

In Jiangxi Province

In a bloody raid conducted on hundreds of Catholics gathered to honor Our Lady on Assumption Day, August 15, 1994, police injured over one hundred people and detained ten.

In Other Provinces

According to reports, at least three bishops in Hebei, Henan and Heilongjiang provinces were "invited to have conversations with officials" of the Religious Affairs Bureau. These "invitations" were, in fact, house arrests for two or three months in government hostels. The bishops have been warned to register their Church personnel, communities and venues for religious activities within the coming winter and spring or be labeled "illegal" and face police raids and crackdowns.

Other Significant Church News, 1994

Cardinal Wu Invited to Lead Delegation to China

His Eminence John Baptist Cardinal Wu headed a seven-member delegation to Beijing, Wuhan and Xi'an, from November 10 to 17. The visit was at the invitation of Director Zhang Shen Zuo of the Religious Affairs Bureau under the State Council of the Chinese Government.

The purpose of the visit was to promote friendship and dialogue with the Chinese in order to facilitate future cooperation and promote better understanding of the situation of the Church in China today.

The Cardinal's delegation included: Fr. John B. Tsang, spokesperson for the group, and a Hong Kong affairs adviser to the Chinese government; Fr. John Tong, a Hong Kong vicar-general; Fr. Lawrence Yiu, rector of Holy Spirit Seminary; Sr. Maria Goretti Lau, dean of the Holy Spirit Seminary College theology division; Lo Kong-kai, assistant to the episcopal delegate for education, and Angela Lo, vice-president of the Hong Kong Central Council of Catholic Laity.

This was Cardinal Wu's third visit to China as head of the Hong Kong diocese, but his first since being named Cardinal in 1988. In 1985 Bishop Wu visited Beijing and Shanghai and in 1986 he visited Guangzhou and his birthplace, Meizhou, where he was reunited with his mother and other members of his family, after forty years.

The following is the press conference report of November 17, 1994, held by the Cardinal and the delegation on their return from China:

Cardinal John B. Wu returned to Hong Kong today after leading a seven-member delegation to China at the invitation of Mr. Zhang Shengzuo, Director of the Religious Affairs Bureau under the State Council of the Chinese Government. During the weeklong trip they visited Beijing, Wuhan, and Xi'an, and met with leaders of the Religious Affairs Bureau, the United Front Department and the National and Provincial Political Consultative Conferences. They also visited seminaries and convents.

The atmosphere was friendly and open in our meetings with the officials of the various Government Departments and we can say that our dialogue has enhanced our mutual understanding. During our contacts with them, we not only reflected the wishes and anxieties of Catholics in Hong Kong about religious freedom after 1997, but also expressed the concerns and worries of ordinary citizens. They reaffirmed that the Chinese Government will abide by the stipulations of the Basic Law regarding religious freedom and will implement them accordingly. They made it clear to us that they, too, wishes to see a smooth transition for Hong Kong in the run-up to 1997, as well as the maintenance of its

stability and prosperity. In particular, the officials of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office reiterated that they will certainly implement the "One Country, Two Systems" policy.

We especially brought up the question of the commitment of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong to the development of pastoral ministry, missionary activity, education and social service after 1997. The leaders of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office stressed that we can continue our services in these areas in the future.

With regard to seminaries and convents, both the Chinese Government and the local Church leaders stated that they are giving special attention to them. They care very much about the formation of the next generation of priests and young sisters, and are making every effort to improve the quality of the teaching staff. The Catholic Church of Hong Kong will continue, to the best of our ability, to show our concern and give them support in the area of religious formation and education.

In meeting with seminarians and sisters, Cardinal Wu encouraged them to imitate Christ in his spirit of self-sacrifice and service to others.

Chinese Priests from the PRC Attend Study Sessions in Leuven

On April 28, 1994, fifteen Chinese priests from the PRC arrived at the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) for study sessions on Seminary Education. The sessions were held at St. Andrew Benedictine Monastery at Zevenkerke, from April 29 to May 19.

The priests came from seven different major seminaries in China: Beijing Diocesan Seminary - 4, Beijing National Seminary - 3, Shanghai Regional Sheshan Seminary - 2, Shenyang Seminary - 2, Wuhan Regional Seminary - 2, Xi'an Regional Seminary - 1, Chengdu Seminary - 1.

The study sessions were organized by the Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation in cooperation with Prof. L. De Fleurquin, Dean of the Faculty of Canon Law of the Catholic University of Leuven and directed by Fr. Jerom Heyndrickx, CICM.

Twenty-Four Priests Attend Second Liturgical Course in Shanghai

A second course in liturgy, offered at Sheshan Seminary on the outskirts of Shanghai, from February 21 to March 6, 1994, provided an opportunity for 24 priests from different provinces to share their experience and difficulties in implementing the Chinese liturgy.

The aim was to deepen the liturgical renewal in China by helping priests to internalize the liturgical spirit.

The training course was conducted by Father Yao Shun of the National Seminary in Beijing and two Hong Kong Priests: Fathers Thomas Law Kwok-fai, director of the Hong Kong Diocese Liturgy Commission and Salesian Lanfranco Fedrigotti, a lecturer at the Holy Spirit Seminary College, Hong Kong.

Special Course in Homiletics and New Catechism Given in Shanghai

More than 50 priests took part in an intensive course in homiletics and the *New Catholic Catechism* from July 1-20 at Sheshan Regional Seminary in Shanghai. The course comprising spiritual experience sharing, seminars, meditation and prayer was guided by Father Joseph Zen, SDB, of Hong Kong and Joseph Li Zhexiu of Taiwan.

Young Priests and Seminarians Studying Abroad

In addition to these programs, more than fifty young men have been selected to do part of their studies for the priesthood abroad in the United States, Europe and the Philippines--over forty are presently studying in the United States alone.

Underground Bishops' Conference Seeks to Join FABC

The bishops' conference set up by the underground Catholics in China (CBCM), has asked to join the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) and attend the FABC plenary assembly next January, 10-19, 1995 in Manila.

The request was made through a letter written in Chinese, dated January 29, 1994, and addressed to Bishop Stephen Fumio Hamao of Yokohama, Japan, chairman of the FABC Office of Human Development.

Underground Church Ordains 71 Seminarians

According to reliable sources, the non-government approved Catholic Church has ordained 71 seminarians during the first seven months of 1994. The men, aged 28-45 will serve the church in various locations and especially in the mountain areas of northern China. The ordinations took place in several provinces (*UCAN*, No.781/A).

Hong Kong Priest Named as Adviser to China

John Baptist Tsang, the pastor of Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Hong Kong, and former vicar-general of the diocese was named by the Chinese government as an adviser to China on Hong Kong affairs in April, 1994. There are presently approximately 150 such advisers. Advisers are appointed to two-year terms by the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office under China's State Council and the New China News Agency. Informed sources consider this nomination as an important step towards better relations between the Catholic community and the Chinese government. Father Tsang states that he would keep the government informed of the concerns of Catholics and religious communities in Hong Kong and will not hesitate to resign if he is not given the opportunity to voice these needs freely.

Priest Ordained after Forty Years

Fr. Zhu Lide, S.J., a distant relative of the late Vincent Zhu, was ordained a priest in Taipei on January 9, more than forty years after entering the Jesuits. Father Zhu, who had three brothers, also Jesuits, entered the Society of Jesus in 1953. He was arrested in 1955, in Shanghai and spent a total of 28 years in custody. His 93 year old mother attended his ordination.

Young Priests and Sisters Singled Out for Achievements and Education

Three young priests have been elected vice-chairmen of the Beijing Catholic Patriotic Association and eighteen young Sisters have also been named as leaders in religious affairs.

Seminarians Leave Seminary in Protest

In April, 1994 forty of the fifty-four seminarians at the regional seminary in Chengdu, Sichuan province, left the seminary and returned home in protest. They objected to the Religious Affairs Bureau's nomination of a Communist, non-Catholic cadre as vice-rector. The cadre chosen replaced government approved Bishop Joseph Xu Zhixuan, auxiliary bishop of Wanxian. Bishop Xu was away from Chengdu at the time.

Before leaving the seminary the protesting seminarians set down certain conditions for their return: seminary formation must be founded on spirituality inspired by Christ's teachings; seminarians are to be directed by a bishop and not by the Religious Affairs Bureau or the Catholic Patriotic Association; government agencies must stop

interfering in the seminary's administration; spiritual directors are to be priests and all teachers must recognize the authority of the bishop.

Negotiations so far have failed to resolve the problem to everyone's complete satisfaction. The graduating class, however, returned to the seminary on November 20. These students will graduate on January 20, 1995. The seminary will then be closed and re-located in Changchun, Jilin province.

CCPA Vice Chairman and Secretary General Dies in Beijing

Paul Zhu Shichang, 63, vice chairman and secretary general of the CCPA, died in Beijing, January 12 of cancer. Zhu joined the Patriotic Association in the 1950s. In recent years he was instrumental in helping to restore church property, and in 1993 he was elected to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. He had been the CCPA secretary general since 1987, and vice chairman since 1992. Bp. Zong Huaide, head of the Bishops' Conference of the government approved Catholic Church in China, officiated at the funeral on January 17 (*UCAN* Feb. 1, 1994 p. 9).

Congresses Honor Famous China Missionaries

More than 30 Chinese scholars met at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, from April 5-9, 1994, to study the contribution made by Martino Martini, 17th century Jesuit, to the advancement of culture in China and Europe.

Another meeting was held at Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei, Taiwan, from September 25-30, 1994, to celebrate the 7th centenary of the arrival in Beijing of Giovanni da Montecorvino. Montecorvino, a Franciscan, is recognized as the first evangelizer to the Chinese people.

China Issues Major Documents Affecting Religion

During 1994, China issued three major documents affecting Religion and Religious Activities:

Document No. 144 issued on January 31, 1994, by the State Council of the People's Republic of China with the subtitle: *Regulations on the Supervision of the Religious Activities of Foreigners in China.*

Document No. 145 issued on January 31, 1994, by the State Council of the People's Republic of China with the subtitle: *Regarding the Management of Places of Religious Activities.*

In May, the Religious Affairs Bureau and the State Council jointly issued *Registration Procedures for Venues for Religious Activities* (The complete texts of these documents can be found in *Tripod*, Nos. 79 and 82).

Beijing Tightens Controls

Over Ideology, Culture and Media

At the January 24-27 Chinese Communist Party Conference, Party leaders, in an effort to secure more social stability, sought to tighten controls over ideology, culture and the media. President Jiang Zemin urged all "to strengthen and improve Party leadership in ideological and media work" ((*SCMP* Jan. 26, 1994).

Xinhua reported that more surveillance would be exercised over videos, pornographic materials, magazines and newspapers. In September, propaganda chief, Ding Guangen, laid down comprehensive guidelines on how national and regional media are to check with Central authorities before releasing "potentially destabilizing news". The Propaganda Department has also been given powers to vet practically any kind of political story. Censorship on economic stories has also been boosted as well as censorship against "infiltration of foreign publications and broadcasts" (*CNCR*. 2281, Jan. 28, 1994, and *SCMP* Sept, 26, 1994).

Over Publication of Religious Books

In a move aimed at controlling the content and the quantity of religious books, the Chinese Government has assigned one publishing house to each of the five approved religions in China. Only these companies have been given the right to publish religious books. (*CNCR* 2343, July 15, 1994).

Over Construction of Religious Buildings

The Communist Party's official newspaper, the *People's Daily* has called for a slowdown in the construction of religious buildings in China, especially in the rural areas. "It is time to bring a swift halt to the blind construction of places of worship," the article said. Such buildings were "a waste of money" (*Eastern Express* June 21, 1994 quoting the *People's Daily*).

Over the Handling of Minority Religious Affairs

Li Ruihuan, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC, in speaking to 30 leading Party officials, stressed that nationality and religious affairs must be implemented in line with specific local conditions. He emphasized that the interests of various nationalities should coincide

with the overall interests of the Chinese nation, and respect for the characteristics of minority nationalities should coincide with the maintenance of China's unity (*Beijing Review*, July 18-24, 1994).

He also told leaders of the Chinese Islamic Association to tighten control over Chinese Muslims after widespread protests in 1993 (*CNCR* Jan. 7, 1994, #2272).

Religious Affairs Bureau Officials Meet

Some 100 officials of the Religious Affairs Bureau "met January 12-16 to assess and formulate means and goals for religious work to cope with China's current situation." This was prior to the January 31 issuing of religious regulations #144 and #145 (*UCAN* Feb. 23, pp. 14-15).

Religious Affairs Bureau Upgrades Religious Information Network

To monitor religious activities around the country, the National-level RAB has taken steps to improve its ability to gather and exchange information. The Bureau has bought more than 2000 fax machines for local offices. According to the CCRC report, the RAB director, Zhang Shengzuo, said the machines were needed not only to gather information but also to relay information immediately to the Central Government to enable "the authorities to nip any unrest in the bud." The report also quoted the director as saying, "The ultimate goal is to enable top officials to make better informed decisions about how to deal with religious activity" (*CCRC* Oct. 7, 1994).

"Superstition" on the Rise in China

According to the *People's Daily*, the Communist Party's official communication, superstition is on the rise in China. There is a daily increase in the number of geomancers and fortune tellers and people, including Communist cadres, consulting *fengshui* experts to find lucky spots to build tombs for their relatives who are still alive. One of the most bizarre aspects of this development is the growing number of people who are now worshipping Mao Zedong as a god who can offer protection, good health and fortune to those who pray to him (*CNCR* Sept. 9, 1994).

Bible May Soon Top "The Selected Works of Mao Zedong" as Best Seller

The Amity News Service reports that the number of Bibles

printed is now second only to *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, the book most widely published today in China ((UCAN, 773/B June 30).

Other Significant Happenings, 1994

Human Rights Watch Reports

Amnesty International's June 1994, report, *China: Human Rights Violations Five Years after Tianamen*, highlights *Amnesty International's* continuing concern about human rights violations in China, especially as these relate to the Tianamen crackdown. The report also includes a list of "arbitrary arrests and other human rights violations which have occurred during the last year."

The document is a call to the Chinese authorities to introduce fundamental reforms to put an end to human rights violations.

China's Justice Ministry lambasted Robin Munro and Mickey Spiegel for their 600 page *Human Rights Asia Watch* report published in February, alleging that there were still about 500 detainees in prison from the June 1989 incident. The ministry asserts that only a small number were arrested and that the overwhelming majority have been released. The Ministry also rejects *Asia Watch's* claim that some of the prisoners were being badly treated. The ministry called these accusations "sheer fabrication with ulterior motives" and "malicious slander" (*China Daily*, May 25, 1994).

Academy of Social Sciences Report Surfaces Problem Areas

The March 3 edition of Hong Kong's *Dagong Daily*, leaked the main points of an Academy of Social Sciences report entitled, *China in 1993-1994 - Social Situation, Analyses and Forecasts*. The five problem areas noted in the "Blue Paper" are

1. Disputes over allocating tax dollars;
2. Corruption;
3. Development disparity - gap between rich and poor regions, also between rich and poor individuals;
4. Unrest among ethnic and religious groups which may lead to incidents;
5. Public order - floating population, not enough police officers, loopholes in the public security system, spread of social evils.

Reforms and good government, plus crime fighting and propaganda are all needed, the report concluded (*China News Analysis* #1506, March 15, 1994 p. 4).