

Editorial

Almost daily during the last several weeks, the media have reported on some aspect of Sino-Vatican relations and on some newsworthy happening within the unregistered Catholic church of China. In line with this publicity, we in the English section of *Tripod*, decided, in this particular issue, to focus our attention almost exclusively on the situation within China's underground Catholic church. While always including some news from the underground church in each issue of *Tripod*, we seldom concentrate at great length on the happenings in the underground church since accurate information is so sparse and difficult to come by.

In this March-April issue we hope, with the objectivity of those who seek the truth in any historical situation, to be able to shed some light on the reasons for the development of the underground Catholic church in China and on the plight of that church in China today.

To do this we have sought to include a number of articles of varying lengths and opinions on the matter.

In his article, *China's Underground Movements: Meaning and Resolution*, Anthony Lam analyzes the reasons for the development of the various underground movements that actually existed in China before 1979, as well as the others that proliferated following China's economic opening. Within these movements he traces the history of the underground Catholic church. The author also suggests several strategies that the government might use for dealing with these phenomena. The strategy used depends on the desired results.

Peter Barry, M.M. in his article "Their Voices Should Be Heard", analyzes several recent news reports and attempts to assess the position of the underground church today. He traces today's religious policy and examines several statements made by officials in which Chinese leader carefully spell out how the religious question is to be handled and how religion must adapt to socialist society. The author seeks to speak on behalf of the underground church whose voices cannot easily be heard.

In line with official statements, on the need for religion to adapt to a socialist society, and emphasized again on March 4, 1999

by Jiang Zemin in an address to the ethnic minority and religious delegates to the Second Plenum of the Ninth Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, (cf. p. 26 of this issue of *Tripod* for Jiang's address), we are including an abbreviated form of an article written by Gao Yuchun of the Research Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Gao's research gives the origin and development of the theory of the need for religion to adapt to China's socialist society.

A piece of news that shocked people all over the world was the report of the sexual harassment of young priests in the underground church. It was alleged that this effort was to intimidate them into giving information, or blackmailing them and ruining their reputation. We sought to assess the truth of these allegations by interviewing a well-known and informed sinologist, Sergio Ticozzi. His responses to *Tripod's* interviewer sheds a great deal of light on the situation and tries to pinpoint where the responsibility for such actions may lie.

In several shorter articles, we feature certain significant personalities within the underground church movement. These include a memorial to Bishop Melchior Zhang, whose 10th anniversary of death last November, was marked by large crowds remembering him with deep affection.

We are also including a short biographical sketch of two of Baoding's bishops: Bishop Su and his auxiliary, Bishop An. The lives of these two men have been a revolving door in and out of prisons, and whose whereabouts at the time of this writing are unknown.

Since women are not to be forgotten within the underground movement, we are including the touching story of Sister Theresa Zhou, the last Carmelite left in the Bai-Mao Ling Labor Camp in Anhui Province, who died in January at the age of 90.

The China Church and News Update attempts to summarize the various reports on possible developments in Sino-Vatican relations. Such reports require careful sifting. They often seem to be filtered by people of good will who, nonetheless, do not seem sufficiently informed. The situation as it relates to diplomatic relations with Taiwan and efforts of the Vatican's State Department to insure that all parties are dealt with fairly and diplomatically is extremely sensitive and complex.