

Two Underground Bishops: Whereabouts unknown

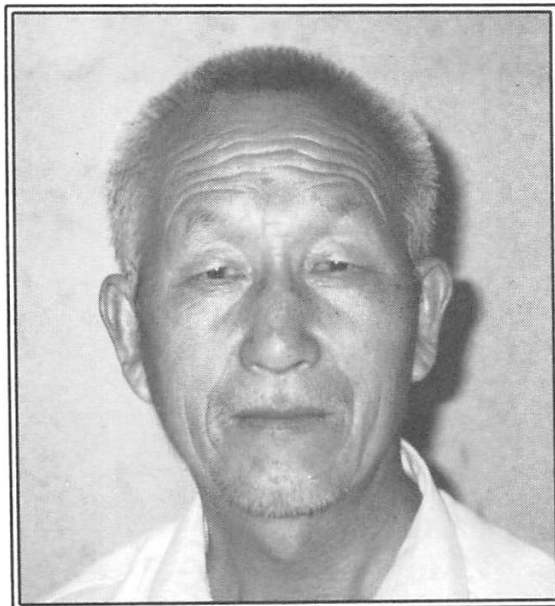
Among all the bishops in the unregistered church, perhaps the best known at the moment are two bishops of Baoding, Hebei Province: Bishop Su Zhimin, 67, and his auxiliary An Shuxin, 50. Much of their fame derives from the fact that they have not been at liberty for the last three years. They are being held somewhere at a place unknown to their followers. Furthermore, the two men have neither been the benefit of a trial nor any specified sentence.

Since 1956, Bishop Su has been in and out of prison for some 19 years, including a stint in an agricultural labour camp during the Cultural Revolution. In 1996, Su wrote a letter to the People's National Assembly saying that all he wanted was what was guaranteed by the Chinese Constitution: freedom to exercise his religion.

Bishop An, Su's auxiliary, is dearly loved by the people especially for his work among the poor to whom he has given away all his belongings.

Bishop Su Zhimin

- 1932- Born on July 1;
- 1941- Entered Yixian Seminary in Hebei Province;
- 1956- Arrested for publicly defending his religious beliefs against the government's policy; he was later released;
- 1959- Arrested on November 6; detained for 5 years; released on June 6, 1964;
- 1964- Sent to an agricultural labour camp;
- 1975- Arrested on December 29; given 12 years of prison; released in 1979;
- 1982- Ordained a priest in April; sentenced to 3 years of forced labour on December 13; released on January 13, 1986;



- 1988- Ordained a bishop by Bishop Fan Xueyan and appointed auxiliary bishop of Baoding;
- 1989- Sentenced to 3 years on December 29 for taking part in a meeting of the unofficial bishops' conference; released on June 3, 1993;
- 1993- Appointed Bishop of Baoding on May 2; Bishop Fan Xueyan, arrested and dies in police custody;
- 1994- Met with US Senator Christopher Smith, President of the US International Commission for Human Rights, on January 8;
- 1995- Arrested on January 20 and released on January 29; later detained for brief periods and interrogated;
- 1996- Arrested in March to prevent Christians from making a pilgrimage to the Marian Shrine in Dong Lu; shrine area closed and under police surveillance; bishop escapes from prison; from hiding place, writes an appeal to the Standing Committee of the People's National Assembly and a pastoral letter to the people;
- 1997- Arrested on October 8;
- 1998- Whereabouts unknown.

Bishop An Shuxin

- 1949- Born on July 16;
- 1981- Ordained a priest on January 7;
- 1982- Sentenced to 3 years of forced labour; released in 1985; arrested and released several times in 1985-1993;
- 1993- Ordained a bishop May 2; and appointed auxiliary of Baoding;
- 1994- In October, a French television company filmed his activities at an underground seminary in Baoding;
- 1995- Arrested in March with Bishop Su Zhimin;
- 1997-98- Police accompanied him to visit his invalid, sick mother, 90, on Chinese New Year. They then returned him to a place of detention which is unknown.

