

## *Editorial*

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In a previous *Tripod* publication (No. 115), we presented an article by Benoit Vermander, SJ., entitled, “Blessed are the Peacemakers: Towards an Inculturated Chinese Theology of Peace.” In that article, Father Vermander invited the reader to listen to “what God is telling us about peace and violence, justice and disorder in China today.” We were challenged to discern the kind of contribution Christians...are called to offer “to hasten the coming of a time when justice and peace may embrace.” (p. 13)

In the present issue, Umberto Bresciani, in the lead article, “Towards a Chinese Theology of the Incarnation,” offers his own different but equally valid perspective on the same topic. Aware of the many schools of thought that Chinese culture embodies, the author proposes to start the theological dialogue by focussing on Confucian values that are not at odds with Christianity. These values continue to exert a significant formation influence on the attitudes and behavior of Chinese people everywhere in the world.

In “Relations between Christianity and Intellectuals since Liberation (1949),” Dr. Chen Zemin analyzes the situation of intellectuals within Church circles in China. The openness and reforms that have taken place in China during the past decades have also paved the way for openness within the academic community on a wide spectrum of subjects including religion. As a result competent and interested researchers and scholars have sprung up paving the way for the establishment of centers of religious studies, and even departments of religion within top level universities and within specialized institutes and academies. Dr. Chen maintains that the Church must find creative ways to nurture this interest, and respond to these new developments by “breaking out of the confining traditional framework of what exactly constitutes a Church...suited to the current situation in China and the Chinese Church.”

Anthony Lam in his article, “Belief and Superstition,” examines the status of atheism in China through an analysis of a talk entitled, “Disseminate Atheism, Promote a Scientific Spirit, Build a New Socialist Civilization,” presented by Ren Jiyu, the director of the Chinese Institute of Atheism. Lam emphasizes the importance of dialogue between believers and non-believers in order to arrive at a

deeper mutual understanding of these two diametrically opposite positions.

In a departure from the usual *Tripod* articles which focus almost exclusively on the Church in Mainland China, Edith Wong Hee-Kam's contribution, "Religious Beliefs of the Chinese in the Mascarenes," provides us with insights into the popular religious practices and the spread of Christianity among those Chinese who immigrated to the islands of the Mascarene archipelago following the victory of the Communists in China in 1949.

We also continue Gianni Criveller's series, "Dialogue on Jesus in China." This time Dr. Criveller sets out to answer the question: "Why Was the Incarnation Not Mentioned in the Chinese Classics?" a question often asked by intellectuals in China throughout the ages.

Patrick Taveirne, a researcher at the Holy Spirit Study Centre, reviews three splendid and scholarly works that should be of interest to China scholars and watchers everywhere. The first is the two volume, "Western Learning and Christianity in China: The Contribution and Impact of Johann Adam Schall von Bell, SJ (1592-1666)," that offers insights into the relationship between science and religion and the dynamics of the cultural contact between East and West during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The third volume, "Scholar from the West," contains the 27 papers presented at the International Symposium, "Giulio Aleni, SJ (1582-1649)," held in Brescia, Italy, October 19-22, 1994.

The third, "Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact," contains 15 essays presented at an International Workshop held in Jerusalem in June 1996. This particular work aims to help readers understand of how the Bible has functioned in the discourses of China's literary and intellectual circles.

Finally, Roderick O'Brien, in his article, "Beifang Jinde Catholic Service Centre," presents the story of a unique phenomenon in present day China: the establishment of the first government-approved social service centre under Catholic Church auspices. He credits much of the success of this enterprise to a young energetic priest from Hebei Province, John Baptist Zhang.