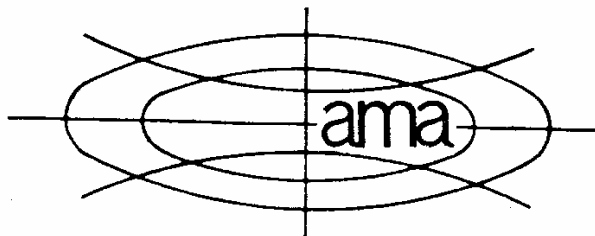


asian missions advance



JULY, 1979

BULLETIN OF THE ASIA MISSIONS ASSOCIATION

Number 9

SEVEN ISSUES

IN ASIAN

THEOLOGICAL

EDUCATION

Bong Rin Ro

Today there are some 500 theological schools in Asia, ranging from tribal Bible schools to graduate seminaries. 58 of these are Chinese theological schools, many of which it has been my privilege to visit on behalf of the Asia Theological Association.

Most Christians in Asia do not realize the importance of advanced training for local church leaders in the growth of the Church. Yet both evangelism and teaching are two inseparable pillars of vitality and growth in the Christian Church.

In recent years, after the withdrawal of Western control, Asian churches have experienced a rise of nationalism and traditional values. It is imperative in this that Asian Christians realize that the Gospel of Christ is not a Western product, but that it is eternal truth that has already grown deep roots in the life of Asia. And now the burden of communicating this Gospel in Asia must be primarily an Asian one.

Yet for the Church in Asia to mobilize its own Christians to evangelize their own peoples and to start thinking about world missions, requires far-reaching changes. Such changes in turn require changes in the way church leaders are produced. This necessity has high-lighted at least seven basic issues facing Asian theological edu-

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REGIONAL NEWS

cation.

1. LACK OF STUDENTS

Most theological schools in Asia have a shortage of students. Churches need to give a more biblical emphasis to the importance of their young people's entering the ministry. Korea produces the largest number of theological students in Asia. South Korea today has over 100 theological schools, and in 1976, 23 of them produced over 500 graduates, most of them going into full-time Christian service.

In the Chinese Church, there are several influences discouraging young people going to school for the ministry. One is that many Chinese ministers see little need for higher education, and feel threatened by others who are educated. Secondly, many of the independent church movements do not favor institutional training. Finally, even Christian families do not encourage their children to go to theological school and enter the ministry. The lure of business success and family name cause the most promising young people to be lost to Church leadership.

2. LACK OF TRAINED TEACHERS

The Chinese Church has produced only a small number of theological scholars. Chinese theological teachers have to go to schools in the West. Denominational seminaries in Asia tend to be largely administered by foreign missionaries and follow foreign curricula. But with the recent establishment of graduate schools the situation is improving, although it will be years before the majority of Chinese theological teachers have been adequately trained in Chinese institutions in Asia.

3. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Most theological schools in Asia are strongly denomination-oriented, due to the influence of Western missionaries in administration. Five years ago, all ten major theological schools in Taiwan had missionary presidents. Today four of these have Chinese presidents. Problems brought on by foreign control include using translated texts

which are not appropriate to Asia, following curricula packages designed around Western theological problems, and indicating Western cultural forms of Christianity. Even national teachers who are trained in the west tend to bring these elements. Theological education must instead come out of the local soil in order to be effective in cultivating the local soil.

4. BRAIN DRAIN PROBLEM

Of the Asians who go abroad for advanced theological training, many do not return. This is especially serious for the Chinese Church, because many potential leaders take overseas Chinese congregations instead of returning to Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Malaysia. The solution lies in establishing respected, advanced theological institutions in Asia.

5. LAY TRAINING

One characteristic of the Asian Church, with the possible exceptions of Korea and India, is the lack of Christian education in local churches. Sunday school is usually considered to be for children only. There are virtually no Sunday School materials for adults in Chinese. Consequently, there is widespread biblical illiteracy among Christians in Asia.

Over the last few years, Theological Education by Extension has spread throughout Asia to educate pastors and lay leaders. It is also active among Chinese churches. This education needs to have broader recognition through even more widespread supplementary training materials.

6. RESEARCH CENTERS

There is a perennial lack of suitable theological and training materials for schools and churches. We must create research centers where Asians can come, spend time in reflection and study, and produce textbooks and materials that deal with Asian issues and questions. Asian religions, Missions, Church growth, Communications etc.

7. THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

In Asia a number of theological issues are being extensively discussed. Evangelical

(Continued on P. 10.)

CHANGES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Jonathan Chao

During the past two years changes in China have surprised both the world and the Chinese people as a whole. The Christian world has again awakened its China evangelistic interest. What will this new opening mean to the church inside China and to the prospects of evangelism from outside China? To answer this frequently asked current question, I will first note the character of the most significant changes today, and then note their implications for the Christian church.

I. CHANGES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA, 1977-1979

To be brief, I will comment on changes in five key areas:

1. Political Changes

Even though Chinese Communist leaders still claim to carry out the revolutionary line laid down by the former Chairman Mao Tse-tung, there has been a substantial shift in the direction of the current political line, as exemplified by Vice-premier Teng Hsiao-p'ing. The most representative shift formally took place at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee meeting of the Eleventh Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held during Dec. 18-22, 1978. There it was decided that the CCP will no longer engage in massive political movements, but concentrate its energies and those of the people in national economic reconstruction. By so doing the Party has negated Mao's line of continuous cultural revolution, and has put a stop to Mao's ceaseless class struggles. The con-

comitant effect of this political shift is the recent restoration of senior party members to their places of respectability and active service, senior members like P'eng Te-huai and others who had been removed from power by Mao in the late 1950's or had been disgraced during the Cultural Revolution. Among ordinary people, those who had been deprived of their normal citizens' rights, the "four elements" (landlords, rich farmers, the anti-revolutionaries and bad elements) had their "caps" (of disgrace) removed. In a word, China is now heading to the pre-1958 political line, in which Teng Hsiao-ping was a major figure, but which Mao called "revisionist" and fought against so hard till his dying day. This "Teng Hsiao-p'ing line" was more or less consolidated at the top level by the Third Plenum and by his visit to the U.S. in January.

2. Ideological Changes

Ideologically the breakthrough came when Teng Hsiao-P'ing advocated a saying from Mao himself: "practice is the only standard for testing truth." This has become Teng's theoretical basis of his Four Modernizations. This shift from Mao's subjective, class-oriented political orthodoxy to a more objective, pragmatic-oriented standard has brought about a new opportunity for "equality before truth (of practice)." This tendency toward a more objective way of running the country has encouraged the development of "democracy and legal administration within the socialist system." The emergence of a ceaseless flow of "big character wall posters" on the "wall of democracy" in Peking, Shanghai, and elsewhere is a natural by-product of this ideological shift.

A more fundamental ideological change has taken place in the relationship between the ideological "superstructure" and economic productivity. In traditional Marxist theory, the type of economic production determines the character of the superstructure (other cultural elements such as politics, philosophy, culture, religion, education, law, and art). But Mao became dissatisfied with this theory when he realized in 1958 that the change from a capitalist to a socialist economy had not necessarily changed the

Chinese mind-people's ideas, or their superstructure. He therefore sought to implement a reverse approach to the building of a Communist society in China: shaping a new man through political transformation, believing that a new society would result from transformed men. That is the heart of his intentions in the Cultural Revolution. But the Cultural Revolution nearby brought China to economic collapse, and the new man did not emerge either. The present leadership under Teng has virtually repudiated Mao's new man and new society approach, and has reverted to using economic productivity as the way to establish a new (modern) society, leaving the superstructure to emerge on its own.

3. Cultural and Educational Changes

Prior to the death of Mao, the cultural arts, particularly literature, drama, and movies, always had a political didactic function. They were the chief avenues of Communist political propaganda, and functioned as the vanguard for Mao's latest ideological movements. During the last year a new dimension of artistic expression has appeared characterized by freedom from earlier political stereotypes and by a new plurality forms, though still predominantly socialist in content. In the realms of literature and drama, writers have become so bold as to criticize the darker side of socialist society, producing satirical novels such as "Shan-hung" ("Scars") and the play "Yu wu sheng-ch'u" ("In A Voiceless place"), which dramatized the T'ien-an-men events of April 1976. The government has recently translated and reprinted works of the renaissance period and of the West's 18th and 19th century, such as those by Tolstoy, Dostoyesky, etc. All these works reflect both humanistic and Christian aspects of Western culture. Recently the Chinese television and films association has invited leading producers, directors, cameramen, and film editors from America to visit their studios and consult with them on improvements.

In the area of education, Mao's whole philosophy advocated during the Cultural Revolution has been negated by the re-instatement of the national examination system for

high schools, universities, and graduate studies. Time spent on political instruction has been reduced to the bare minimum, and the development of scientists and technicians is being emphasized, and irrespective of their "class backgrounds." Again, the examination system is an avenue for Chinese social mobility. "Young intellectuals" who were "sent down to the country-side" during and after the Cultural Revolution have been allowed to sit for exams, and older intellectuals have been restored to their appropriate work units. Educational materials, methods, and even certain personnel from the West are being earnestly sought. Hundreds of Chinese students are being sent to schools in the West. All this is opening China to foreign and non-Communist cultural and ideological influences which were strictly forbidden prior to 1977. Likewise, China has become open again to her own traditional cultural heritage, through the resumption of studies of classical Chinese in the schools and of Chinese culture in the higher institutions. The new generation is again exposed to both traditional Confucian and foreign influences. This plurality of thought and ideological openness is releasing a surge of Chinese intellectual creativity.

4. Economic Policy Changes

The heart of these contemporary changes in China is her economic reconstruction program, the Four Modernizations in agriculture, industry, science-technology, and defense. Domestically China has re-introduced economic incentives to stimulate production in factories and in communes. A certain amount of free marketing has been permitted in villages. Political purists of the Maoist type who used to control practically every production unit have gradually been replaced by technical experts or trained managers. Externally China has been busy signing all kinds of trade contracts, making loan arrangements, and for the first time encouraging foreign companies to set up jointly-owned factories in China using their own technicians and managers.

Communist China seems to be learning from the capitalist West not only in science and technology, but also in economic policies. This shift seems to indicate that China is

beginning to honor again the right of personal property and man's basic economic interests, permitting him to have an increasing degree of economic freedom. This is being evidenced by the recent restoration of some confiscated properties to their rightful owners. The present rulers have learned the lesson from the party's painful experience that it is impossible to build a strong China while pursuing a policy of persistent ideological suppression and economic deprivation of the people; that the productive energies of man must be released by respecting man's basic rights and permitting him to enjoy at least some of the fruit of his own labour. In the long run if this present policy continues, we can expect the Chinese standard of living to rise.

5. Changes in Foreign Relations

In foreign diplomatic relations, formally China is still pursuing Mao's position of identifying herself with the Third World and opposing Soviet Russia by developing a united front with the United States and other Western countries. But in reality China has become more flexible in the implementation of her foreign policy. Since 1977 over a hundred high ranking officials have been sent abroad to strengthen her ties with various nations of the capitalist world, the developing countries, and the revisionist Communist countries such as Yugoslavia and Rumania. The most significant breakthrough was, of course, the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the United States.

Correlative with this wide diplomatic opening is China's development of a national tourist industry. Over a hundred cities have been opened to tourists, who are mostly overseas Chinese. The Chinese government is anxious to give people from all over the world a new image of post-Mao China.

These are but a few examples from the more significant areas of change in contemporary China. But this time the change is substantially different from earlier changes under Mao's leadership. One of the problems of interpreting today's China is that many people both inside and outside China still regard these changes along the same line as

they did previous changes under Mao. The chief difference is that Mao's vision and program for building a new China are now being replaced by a group of older party leaders who are basically Chinese pragmatists, and this Chinese pragmatism is opening the way to a much modified ideological or ideology-less future. This includes the possibility of eventually rejecting Marxism and Leninism, should they be proven "unpractical" for today's China. Yet, it would equally be a mistake to assume that China has totally abandoned the Communist system and is being transformed to the likeness of the West. It is, therefore, best to interpret China from her own modern history, particularly the history of the Chinese Communist Party, rather than look at China through Western "democratic" eyes. But the foreseeable future is pregnant with new possibilities for further changes, depending on the interplay of internal forces and external influences at work in and on China.

II. IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES FOR THE CHURCH IN CHINA

As a result of the political and ideological changes taking place during the last year or so, Christians are beginning to enjoy an increasing degree of common toleration. This is quite consistent with China's traditional as well as the Chinese Communist practice of toleration within state control of religion.

1. At this point the Chinese government has not published any statement on changes in her religious policy. However, there are signs that a new policy is being formulated in congruence with China's modernization program. On January 6, 1979 religious leaders in Peking were called together for a consultative conference, and on the 9th a large meeting of religious people was held in Shanghai. During January 12-27th the staff members of the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) in Canton spent two weeks in official meetings and were unavailable to receive visitors. In mid-February, a national conference on religious studies was held in Kunming, Yunnan, to which over 100 religious scholars and RAB workers from twenty-two provincial units were invited. They made plans for the next eight years'

work, and formed an association of religious studies with Chao P'u-ch'u as the head (Ta Kung Pao, Mar. 2, 1979).

2. The religious Affairs Bureaus in major cities such as Peking, Shanghai, and Canton have resumed operation after nearly twelve years of non-activity, since the Cultural Revolution. We have received reports that RAB officials in these cities are searching for pastors who used to cooperate with them during the 1950's to conduct worship services in state supervised churches, which are being readied for reopening in several cities. We have heard reports that former Three-Self Movement pastors in Canton each received a \$20 (JMP) Christmas subsidy last year. But the problem is that such liberal pastors have already lost their credibility and following among the Christian people, who regard them as Judases.

The United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party is studying its new religious policy and probably debating the place of religion in a modernizing China. Meanwhile, the old policy of strict suppression of religion, implemented during and after the Cultural Revolution, is being either relaxed or temporarily suspended. The degree of toleration, however, depends on several factors: (1) the geographical location, (2) the time distance away from the arrest of the "Gang of Four," (3) the extent to which local officials implement the Central government's orders, and (4) the character of the Christian groups and their relations with local officials.

3. Several factors influence China's present practice of limited religious toleration. First is the government's removal of guilt from the landlords, rich peasants, ideological dissenters (called anti-revolutionaries, among whom Christians are usually put), and other "bad elements." This has resulted in the restoration of many Christians and intellectuals to their normal rights of Chinese citizenship. They can now be employed according to their training and ability. Likewise, many Christians who were arrested during 1956-1958 and subsequently imprisoned until now, have been freed. However, it is difficult to determine whether

this is because they have completed the 20 year maximum term or because of this policy of toleration. But the shift from extreme left to the center, with a little leaning toward the right, is providing a general ideological relaxation which is being enjoyed by most of the people in China. Within this context, Christian house churches are enjoying a measure of toleration; the consequences for being discovered are not so severe, although Christians are still careful about their activities.

The second factor in China's new toleration is that China is anxious to develop friendships with the West and with all non-Communist countries, both on the official level and on the "people-to people" level. In order to implement her four-fold modernization program, China is taking a united front approach to those who can help her, temporarily redefining her friends. In Chinese Communist history, whenever they implemented a united front policy with ideological adversaries, their level of cultural toleration was high. Thus not only are regular foreign tourists allowed, but even religious people, who are not hostile to China, are welcome. The Bible used to be a proscribed item included in the "exhibit of smuggled poisonous materials" in Canton prior to January 1, 1979. Until then the Bible could not be sent in by mail, nor carried in large quantities by Christians. But after the Sino-American normalization (Jan. 1, 1979), the Bible could be sent in and carried in legally.

The third factor is the possibility that the present rulers under Teng are seeking to find a legal place for religions in China and to define proper limits for religious activities. Having abandoned Mao's continuous political movements and class struggle philosophy, the leaders are setting down a legal system by which to govern the country. Traditionally, the Chinese state tolerated religious activities as long as they did not threaten the security and stability of the government. In this structure, a legal sphere is given for religions, and religious people are given freedom within that sphere. In return, they are willing to be recruited to contribute toward China's socialist reconstruction.

It is perhaps with this kind of long range goal in mind that an Institute on World Religion was set up within the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in early 1978. Religions are now being studied scientifically as a scholarly discipline. Their approach is, of course, a critical one from the Marxist and Leninist point of view. But the practical purpose, I believe, is to formulate guidelines for China's religious policy. There appear to be more centers for religious studies in addition to the highest institute in Peking. Recent reports indicate that the former Nanking Theological Seminary has been converted into a center for religious studies affiliated with the philosophy department of Nanking University. If more such research centers can be attached to most universities, Christianity would enjoy more objective study.

The place of religion in contemporary China, therefore, is still uncertain. The Chinese rulers are asking can religious people make any meaningful contribution to China's four modernization programs? Is religion still needed by modern China? If religions could not be eliminated by force (as was attempted during the Cultural Revolution), how can they be brought under state control to oversee their life?

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THESE NEW TRENDS FOR THE CHURCH IN CHINA

The new political trends in Teng's China are opening a new page in Chinese church history. The era of persecution and suppression appears to be gradually fading away, but assurance of authentic legal toleration has not yet arrived. During this interim period of uncertainty and limited toleration, the people of God have not been idle. They are taking advantage of this "breathing space" to invigorate themselves and to do the Lord's work. Although they are hoping for more lasting better days, they are still prepared for a reversal to the dark days of suppression that they can still remember so vividly. In the past, the rhythms of suppression and toleration came in intervals of only a few years.

However, the responses of Chinese Christian communities today to the common grace

of toleration may be summarized as follows:

1. House church meetings: are gradually being resumed and increasing in number. This is a direct result of the government's rejection of post-Cultural Revolution programs advocated by the "Gang of Four." However, believers are still very discreet in conducting their worship of prayer meetings, especially in places where lower cadres are still implementing old policies of suppression. From our "State of the Church in China Interview Project" we are beginning to learn that such Christian activities are most active in the former treaty-port cities and their vicinities, especially Swatow, Amoy, Foochow, and Wenchow. Other cities of less active Christian gatherings are: Canton, Shanghai, Ningpo, Nanking, Tientsin, and Peking. Thus far we have heard very little from Christians who lived in the interior, the Northeast, and Northwest China. All of these are independent, local groups with no national or denominational organizations. Christians learned from their painful experience that it is best to remain unorganized and diffused, as arrests were always made of their leaders.

2. A process of faith consolidation appears to be taking place among older house churches. During the past two decades most Christians were barely able to keep touch with each other for mutual encouragement and prayer. While a few lay preachers emerged, they were mostly untrained men and women for whom God had done a miracle or given special gifts. The emerging Christian communities are generally weak in Biblical teaching and basic Christian doctrines, for obvious reasons. With the recent release of full time Christian workers arrested in the late 1950's, the church is receiving a few older experienced Bible teachers and preachers. Tried repeatedly under severe pressures, these are men and women who have emerged with a genuine and profound faith. They are the ones who are now strengthening the weak and uplifting the fallen. Most do their work quietly without pay, as they usually hold regular jobs as well. A lot of pastoral work is being carried out in silence. Bibles and hymnals are being supplied by Christian friends and relatives in limited quantities.

3. Evangelistic work is also being conducted quietly by Christians at home, among close relatives and friends. Many stories of miraculous healings are being reported, particularly in the villages. Those who have experienced the power of God are witnessing for Christ by re-telling their experiences. In some areas like Swatow and Amoy, some itinerant lay preachers are preaching the Gospel from village to village in house churches. They do work of both edification and evangelism.

4. Theological reconstruction to solve questions arising from their experiences are being attempted in an unstructured way. Some of these problems are:

(a) Will Three-Self Movement pastors or "Christian" workers who betrayed the brethren be saved? Should these "Judases" be forgiven, or rejected?

(b) Should believers have any fellowship with Seventh Day Adventists and True Jesus Church people, whom they regard as sects?

(c) How can baptism and the Lord's supper be handled when there are no ordained pastors around to perform these?

(d) What is the place of suffering in the believer's life? How should Christians interpret the meaning of such prolonged suffering in China?

(e) What should be the relationship between believers who have survived 20 years' imprisonment for their faith and those who avoided this by internalizing their faith? What should their attitudes and approaches be toward those who fell from their faith while under pressure?

5. Catching up with the world Christian community. As in the realms of science and technology, Christians in China have been isolated from the rest of Christendom. They are now quite anxious to know what has happened to the overseas Chinese church and to the church at large; what the major developments in ideas and movements are. Thus they are reaching out, seeking to establish meaningful contacts and to restore fellowship with the larger body of Christ.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH AND MISSION OUTSIDE CHINA

This is the central concern of most

Christians outside China, and this is where the most mistakes are likely to be made. Already there are mission groups who are anxious to join the "China band wagon" and be the first to launch a dramatic China evangelistic beachhead. It is this kind of uninformed evangelical zeal that will hurt the prospects of the Gospel in China the most. For this reason I would like to offer the following suggestions to church and mission groups concerned for the evangelism of China.

1. Christian evangelistic concerns and efforts should not be launched without adequate research and mutual consultation.

If we have learned anything from the past history of missions in China, it is that unscrupulous evangelistic zeal (as in the 19th century) reinforced the nation's rejection of Christianity as a form of foreign aggression. For this careless zeal, many Chinese Christians had to pay dearly with thousands of lives. Therefore, it is essential that Christian evangelistic concerns for China today not make assumptions beyond our current understanding of Chinese Communist religious policies, and not go beyond the scruples of Christians inside China.

This approach emphasizes the importance of church and mission cooperation in serious China research, joint planning, and coordinated response to this slowly opening door.

2. Christian China research and planning should have been the top missionary concern for the past ten years. For as the door to the Gospel is now being opened, the church at large wants to get into action. It is the responsibility of Protestant mission leaders to resist mission groups and individuals who want to jump into China with the Gospel. More positively, churches and missions should develop China research together by contributing their human and financial resources, and by systematically disseminating reliable information on changes in China and opportunities open to the church. The rapidity of changes in China demands a much larger number of qualified researchers and reporters than is presently available. Research should be followed by periodic consultation and



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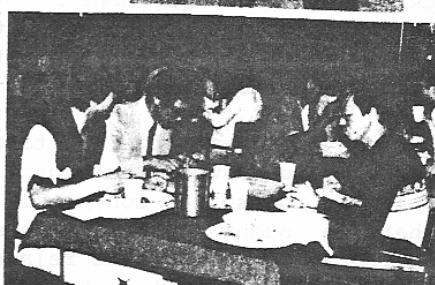
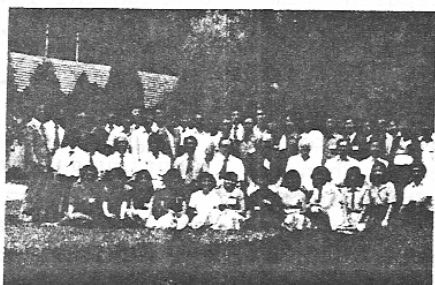
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planning with and for the churches, in a coordinated approach, if not joint action. In this process, we must humbly learn from believers who have recently come from China, and seriously take their views into consideration. The church at large, particularly evangelical churches in the West, ought to be given a real picture of Christians in China. They should not be exploited for fund raising purposes by capitalizing on the pathetic aspects of persecution, nor should only the triumphant stories be reported. Their weaknesses as well as their strengths, their failures as well as their triumphs, their needs as well as their contributions ought to be truthfully reported. It is high time for Christian missions to Communist lands to be witnesses to the truth.

3. "Pre-evangelism" literature work and training of lay people can begin now as part of the long range preparation for China evangelism. The Chinese people need to have their anti-religious and anti-Christian biases removed by their contacts with Christian people of all nationalities. But this can also be done by preparing pamphlets and radio programs that speak directly to their biases against religion, as well as to their need for God.

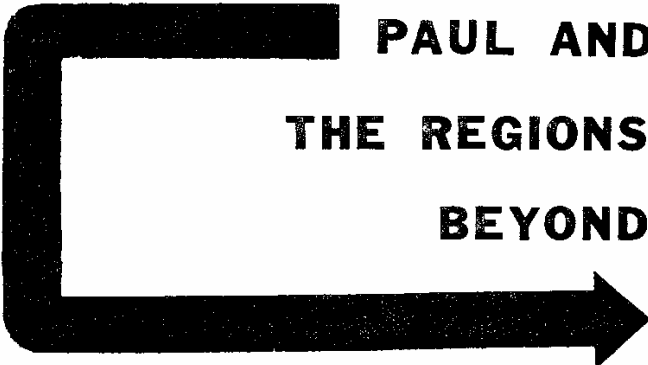
Pre-evangelism efforts take us into a border zone between the church and Chinese cultural and social concerns. This implies that we ought to begin thinking how the church at large ought to relate not just to the believers in China, but to the Chinese people as a whole. Christians need to enter into the interpretation of Chinese modern history and ask questions such as: "What have the Chinese people been searching for since the Opium War (1839-1842)?" "How can Christians contribute to China's modernization program?" "How can Christians contribute to the restoration of love and trust among the Chinese people after their prolonged period of alienation?" "How can Christians help the Chinese people restore their basic human rights, without appearing to threaten to the Chinese government?" Theological participation in Chinese contemporary history will help prepare both the Chinese soil and the sowers for the seed of the Gospel.

In the area of training, the gradual opening of China implies (a) that overseas Chinese and prospective China missionaries should receive their theological education in Asia with considerable training in China Studies; (b) that laymen training should be implemented in cooperation with Christian China research centers, (c) that special literature and radio broadcast personnel should be given China Studies training; and (d) that Christian colleges should consider opening departments or an inter-school department of Asian Studies, with a strong emphasis on China, to develop a new generation of Christian China scholars for the Church.

More can be said on the implications of recent changes for the church. But essentially we need to remember that we have passed the first stage of "pray for China" and have moved to the second stage of "prepare for China," but are not yet into the third stage of "preach in China." The challenges before us are research, planning, and preparation for China evangelism. This means willing cooperation, hard work, and substantial investment of human and financial resources, in a unified program that is substantial and lasting.

(Continued from P. 2.)

cal church leaders must formulate their convictions, based on the scriptures, on such issue as Indigenous Theology. Is it possible to have a truly biblically-oriented indigenous theology in Asia? Social problems (such as human rights), and "Roots" (A broad familiarity with our own history is the first task for our theologians who wish to solve current issues). For the church to face and to solve current and forth coming issues, it requires deep changes of attitudes and perceptions by Christians. Such changes can only come from leaders who are trained to see things and think about them in new ways themselves. These leaders are being trained in Chinese theological schools. The question is, how are these schools being supported by Chinese Christians, and what kind of educations are the students receiving?



PAUL AND THE REGIONS BEYOND

Ralph D. Winter

On the subject of Paul's life and ministry, much has been written and far more pondered. In attempting to interpret three aspects of his work, it is doubtful whether we can say anything absolutely new. My special interest will focus upon the reception given to these aspects of Paul's ministry by the community of believers in Antioch and Jerusalem. I will briefly touch upon, first of all, what he understood to be the limited scope of his mission, secondly, the para-church mechanism of his method and, thirdly the radical accommodation of his message. It would appear that his constituency supported him in only the first two of these three aspects of his ministry. Indeed, he may have actually lost his life as an indirect result of misunderstanding in the third case. I am concerned about his relationship to his supporting community---his constituency---because in my judgment all three aspects of his ministry would be widely misunderstood by a great many evangelicals in America today. This potential misunderstanding presents powerful factors which severely cloud the hermeneutical process. What then are these three aspects of his ministry in regard to which present day constituencies may stumble?

I. THE LIMITED SCOPE OF HIS MISSION

Let us first look at the limited scope of his mission. In Galatians 2:7, Paul underscores the complementarity of his and Peter's primary responsibilities: "I had been given the task of preaching the gos-

pel to the Gentiles just as Peter had been given the task of preaching the Gospel to the Jews." (NIV) We must not think of this statement as a rigid limitation, since we know that Peter was involved with Cornelius' household and Paul usually began his ministry in each new place-with a Jewish synagogue. Apparently, however, when the chips were down, Peter sided with and stayed with the Jewish believers who followed Christ rather than siding and going with the Gentiles who put their faith in the redemptive power of the Gospel of Christ. This kind of overall division of responsibility was apparently acceptable to the Jewish believing community. While Paul criticizes Peter, faulting his behavior in a specific instance, it is Paul himself who concedes the legitimacy of the normal limitations of Peter's mission as being primarily to the Jews. In a parallel sense, we also hear of no criticism of Paul's focus upon the Gentiles. The confusion about his message, to which we will refer in a moment, does not relate to the legitimacy of the limits of his mission but to certain unexpected elements in his message to the Gentiles. Thus, we may conclude that at least the New Testament records no objection to one man being called to foreign missions while another person is called to home missions.

How different it is Today. In the roughly two centuries of Protestant mission effort, there has always been a significant percentage of Protestants who have either ignored or opposed the idea of foreign missions. I recently visited a church in a southern state which is well known for its amazingly large mission budget, yet only 21% of the members participate in the faith-promise plan which provides that budget. only a few days ago I was involved in a conference of mission executives in which it was pointed out that the total number of foreign missionaries being sent out by member denominations of the National Council of Churches has dropped to 2500 out of a total of 37,000 missionaries sent from the US. Some of the representatives at that conference who were from NCC groups found it difficult to allow anyone to focus exclusively upon the kind of people to whom Paul referred when he said "all

the while my ambition has been to go still farther, preaching where the name of Christ has never yet been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else." (Romans 15:20, LB)

A close look at Paul's ministry reveals that even where he approached a synagogue already in existence, he soon found himself "going with the Gentiles" and though the main bulk of his ministry was in fact where synagogues already existed, yet his specific ministry was in effect to allow the Gentiles a type of cultural self-determination which would produce new synagogues wholly owned and operated by Gentiles. It would not appear that he objected to mixtures of Jews and Gentiles in the same synagogue, since he insisted that such distinctions were irrelevant in God's sight, but he did insist that the Gentile believers---in the KJV called "devout persons" or "God fearers"---did not need to go through a cultural naturalization process on order to be acceptable to God. Neither did Paul believe that Gentiles always had to be in the back rows, with Jews up front in charge.

In effect, then, Paul's ministry, whether he was in mixed situations or purely Gentile surroundings, was devoted almost exclusively to the significant strategy of reaching outside the Jewish community to another people which was culturally, if not geographically, in a "region beyond". Note well that such a narrow focus of ministry was not in his day unusual. For over 100 years, the Pharisees had been traversing land and sea to make Gentiles into Jewish proselytes. As we will see, Paul was not blamed for going to the Gentiles; he was blamed for not making proselytes. Today in some circles it is almost the reverse. Missionaries are increasingly blamed for focusing exclusively upon the "Gentiles"--- those beyond---rather than also concerning themselves with problems at home. And they are often accused of making cultural proselytes, even though they have in fact often made radical cultural accommodation, just as Paul did. More subtle, still, they are locked into work which, although it is overseas, is nevertheless very much with national churches a

work I would call home missions, since it is quite far from any kind of new frontier.

II. THE PARACHURCH MECHANISM OF HIS METHOD

A second look at Paul's ministry will highlight the structural method by which he worked. He was not blamed for the narrow focus of his work. Neither was he blamed for following the well established patterns of the Pharisaic missionaries---that is, for employing a mode of organization which would today be called a "parachurch" structure, the sort of non-inclusive specialized organization which cultural anthropologists call a "sodality".

The long unquestioned truism that Paul was sent out by the Antioch church rather than under a mission board is now beginning to be questioned. Dr. Harold Cook, emeritus professor of missions at Moody, put us all in his debt before he died by his article "Who Sent Out the Apostle Paul?" There he forthrightly questions the widely accepted idea that the Antioch church functioned as a mission board. Other recent studies also stress the idea that it may be more accurate to say that Paul was sent off by the church, not sent out by the church. I find no evidence in the New Testament that Paul took orders from the Antioch church, however much he may have considered it his home church. It is as though his team, his band, had all the authority of a travelling church. Just as he found no difficulty in employing the structural features of the synagogue in the new churches he planted among the Gentiles, so also he apparently found no difficulty in borrowing and operating within the structural mechanism which the Pharisees employed in their many journeys of their long-standing missionary cause. Paul's trip to Damascus before he met Christ was probably part of an operation carried out by a semi-autonomous Pharisaic missionary band. The letters of authority he obtained from the high priest do not in themselves rule out the initiative of an organized Pharisaic group.

Our attempt to interpret what actually happened in regard to Paul's structural method of working is made more difficult, but also more important, by the immense

significance which this issue has in terms of the structuring of organized Christian outreach today. The evangelical tradition in America has as one of its prominent characteristics the luxuriant growth of para-church organizations. Our Sunday School publishing houses, our seminaries, our Christian colleges, our evangelistic organizations and over half of all our mission societies are entities which are not under the control of what we call the church. The immense power of all these structures is itself the reason for both widespread hat tipping, but also quite sincere gesturing on the part of many of these para-church structures in regard to the central importance of the church organizations.

The most extensive literature questioning the legitimacy of Christian sodalities is in the area of discussion about mission boards. I would guess that a slight majority of evangelicals today would admit that ideally the churches should have enough vitality to administer their own mission programs and that mission societies have grown up by default. The pressures of this perspective would tend to exegete the Pauline situation as similarly non ideal, or would stress that the Antioch Church was in fact the administrative body under which Paul worked.

Probably the most influential single document in the history of Protestant missions is that 60-page treatise by William Carey which urged the necessity of a specialized organization for missions. The resulting Baptist mission, just as the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society today, was not subject to the vote of a church body but had its own autonomous board. In America, however, between 1850 and 1950, a striking new pattern of church administrative initiative in missions established as dominant a distinctive American pattern of mission-sending agency consisting of a church board of missions. While there have always been independent societies and also loyal, church-related yet autonomous boards, between 1850 and 1950, it seemed as though the denominational board would become the standard mission instrument in America. Then as ecumenical church leaders in America began to influence even continental

thinkers in this regard, a theology of the "church in mission" (or the church is mission) gained a great deal of head way, especially in the world of the mainline Protestant denominations.

Exegetically, however, this new theology overlooks the simple fact that the English word church is most likely traceable back to a Greek work (Kuriakon) which is not even to be found in the New Testament. Nevertheless, most evangelicals go along with the exegetical sleight of hand that takes place when our references to denominational organizations as churches or even local congregations as churches is substituted for the Greek word ecclesia in the New Testament, which more accurately refers primarily to a people, a community, a multitude, a movement and not to a specific type of organizational structure. I stand with Howard Snyder in whose recent book The Problem of Wineskins is found the provocative proposal that not some, but all organizations within the Christian movement should be called parachurch structures, whether denominations, local church organizations, colleges, seminaries or mission societies. In this way, Snyder emphasizes the people-hood of the church rather than the governmental or task-oriented structural dimension thereof.

Thus, we return to the New Testament, pressured by these contemporary issues. What kind of glasses do we use as we look back at the text? I am suggesting that Paul's missionary band was as much the church (that is, the ecclesia) as were the synagogue structures which supported him and which were in turn created by his ministry. If correct, this insight would do much to allay the endemic fears of parachurch leaders that they are somehow outside of the church, but it should also caution them from ever supposing that the Christian movement can get along without the more inclusive, structured fellowship which we commonly call "churches". I do not need to tell you that modern-day evangelicals do not for the most part hold this view. Evangelicals today have not yet arrived where William Carey started out, even though Paul's constituency was apparently there all the time.

III. THE RADICAL ACCOMODATION OF HIS MESSAGE

A third look at Paul's ministry involves us in the most delicate portion of our study. We have seen that the followers of Christ in the New Testament put up with Paul's exclusive focus upon the Gentiles, which despite contemporary opposition must legitimize such an emphasis today. We have also seen how Paul's followers put up with Paul's mission sodality, in my analysis, and did not criticize his organizational autonomy on the basis of an ill-conceived "church in mission" theology. But not even in the New Testament do we find widespread support for the most radical of his strategic decisions whereby he encouraged cultural and administrative initiative on the part of the Gentiles.

Precisely to what do we refer? Acts 13 portrays to us what must have occurred many times in his ministry. Paul's Pharisaic credentials evidently gained him an invitation to speak, and he was even invited back to speak the following Sabbath. But when his treatment of the Mosaic law seemed to make things easier for the Gentiles and to attract a huge number of them, the fully Jewish elements in the synagogue turned against Paul, while the Gentiles "heard him gladly".

It is curious to note that those fully Jewish on the first Sabbath were willing to listen to Paul incriminate Jewish leaders in Jerusalem for failing to understand the scriptures in regard to the coming Messiah, and were even willing to hear the news that Jesus was that Messiah. Their attitude changed only when it became clear that this new Gospel of the Messiah would significantly alter their traditions and accommodate itself to a whole flood of outsiders of divergent culture.

A careful reading of the New Testament makes clear that Paul's ministry of bringing about obedience to the faith among the Gentiles involved a profound transformation of the heart, but did not require a radical switching of diet and clothing. Even that most distinctive element of the Jewish tradition---circumcision---had now to be un-

derstood as having always been a matter of the heart, not of the flesh. We see further that this Gospel, so meaningful to the Gentiles, was equally meaningful to all those Jews perfunctorily bound up in a legalistic relation to the Mosaic law, yet Paul did not insist that Jews should give up their cultural traditions any more than he would allow the Jews to insist that the Greeks give up theirs. This was what was hard to understand back then and seems equally hard to understand today.

Suppose a Southern Baptist missionary to Egypt decided he was not going to work with the existing Southern Baptist church (which has not a Muslim background, but a Coptic background) but rather with the majority population, the Muslims, many of whom are well aware of the Christian faith and in some ways even approximate the Corneliuses and God-fearers of New Testament times. Their problem in some ways is baptism, just as in Paul's day a significant barrier was circumcision.

Further, suppose our fictitious missionary were to "go to the Muslims" like Paul "went to the Gentiles" and a whole new set of churches resulted, in many of which no baptized people were to be found, just Muslims for Jesus. And this word leaked back to Texas where his home folks were to be found. People began to talk, and presently at one of the mammoth Southern Baptist Convention meetings, say in Houston at the Astrodome, two were talking about the matter as they sat in the back row surveying with binoculars the events down at the podium.

It so happens that the missionary in question happens to come home at this time and the officials have taken him aside and said, "We know what you are doing, but many of the people here don't understand. Why don't you agree to assist in a baptismal service at the Convention? That will clarify that you still believe in baptism and haven't become a Quaker or joined the Salvation Army."

As the two in the back row pass the binoculars back and forth, one says, "I can't believe that old so and so has gone so far

off the deep end!" Meanwhile the other begins looking very intently through the binoculars. The opening service of the convention is taking place, and a baptism is being performed, symbolic of the central rite of this tradition. Now the man with the binoculars, gripping them tightly, says, "That's old so and so right now. He's down there in front. Here, look!"

"Sure enough, and look, he's doing the baptizing! Why, the hypocrite!" Instinctively the whole back row rose to their feet and began surging down the aisle. Others followed. The ceremony itself was interrupted as the missionary from Egypt was seized. Rage, confusion, consternation made the next 20 minutes seem like an instant. The new factor was the sudden appearance of a squad car at the door. Police pushed to the center of the mob. The church people stood back and in a moment the missionary was whisked down the street as the patrolman asked him, "What under the sun did you do?"

I tell this story because I believe that

the leaders of the church then and the leaders of the church now--and I refer especially to the theologians, Biblical scholars and historians--are the only ones who can see through the massive impasse we face in missions today.

The major world cultures--Hindu, Chinese, Muslim--are reeling under the impact of the scientific revolution. Christianity alone can survive that revolution because Christian cosmology provided the philosophical cradle for it. Thus we are in an era just like the ancient one in which all the Roman religions were breaking down. Now is no time to be hiding the Gospel under either a Jewish or a Western bushel basket.

But if Biblically informed scholars cannot lead the way in interpreting the challenge of those three major blocs of mankind, those missionaries that do will perhaps be mobbed and carried away. To some of them it may not seem tragic to be found in Paul's footsteps.

WRITERS' PROFILE

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- Dr. Ralph D. Winter is the Founder and the General Director of the United States Center for World Mission. He has been served as a professor of Fuller School of World Mission since its beginning and a founding member of American Society of Missiology.



CHINA

NEW CHINESE LAW

PROTECTS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The Chinese Parliament has enacted new laws to protect religious beliefs, the New China News Agency reported recently.

In a two-week session ending in early July, the National People's Congress approved the new guarantee for religious freedom as proposed by Panchen Erdeni of Tibet and Mr. Zhao Puchu, a leader of China's Buddhist Association.

China's new criminal law provides for up to two years in prison for any official "who unlawfully deprives a citizen of his legitimate freedom of religious belief or violates the customs and folk-ways of a minority nationality to a serious degree."

CHINA SETS UP

MOSLEM RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The Xinjiang Social Science Academy's Institute Into Religion has set up a research programme into the history of the Moslim religion in Xinjiang in the extreme west of the country, the *Agence France Presse* reported from Peking recently.

The programme includes establishing a reference library on the Moslim religion. The institute has already completed a translation into Chinese from Uighur of the *Life of Muhammad*.

Islam, which has 20 million adherents in China, has been the main religion to benefit from the recent softening of China's religion policy, *AFP* said.



PEKING GOVERNMENT PROMISED TO REPAY EXPROPRIATED MISSION PROPERTIES

U.S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena California reports that news comes to FEBC that letters from Mainland China are up from 18 per year (1968-1978) to 100 each day in March. Also China has now promised to repay \$19.4 million for expropriated properties to a whole list of U.S. mission agencies. And, they have invited the Jesuits back to take over a former Jesuit medical school in Shanghai.



CHINESE ASK FOR BIBLES

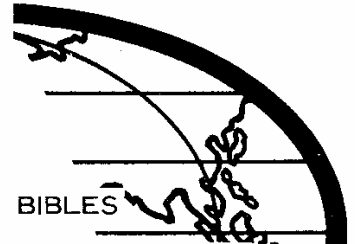
Radio broadcasts of Bible readings at dictation speed have encouraged Christians in the People's Republic of China to ask for the copies of the entire Scriptures.

Some 3,000 requests for Bibles have come from the broadcasts which are sponsored by the Hong Kong Bible Society.

Dr. Heyward Wong, general secretary of the Hong Kong Bible Society, reports that Christians in China have asked their government for permission to import a "seizable quantity" of Bibles.

He said: "It will be an historic event if the order does come through and the Bibles are officially supplied to Peking. We are praying fervently that this will be the case".

Wong learned of the order during a recent visit to China. He also found out that the officially recognized China Christian Patriotic Movement Three-Self Committee has applied for permission to print the Bible in China.



INDONESIA

THE INDONESIA

MISSIONARY

FELLOWSHIP

The Indonesia Missionary Fellowship is involved in many and varied missionary endeavours, both in Indonesia (Kalimantan and South Sumatra) and outside Indonesia (England, and Germany among Asians, in South America -- Brazil, Suriname, in Bangladesh and on the M.V. Doulos).

The followings are the items of Prayer request from I.M.F.

1. *South Sumatra-Bengkulu*: Though sometimes resistance is strong, yet in some areas church growth is obvious. Pray for all IMF missionaries in this area, as well as the Christians, as they live and witness to the power of God. May the medical work, distribution of Christian books and literature, and the evangelistic efforts all bear much fruit for Christ's Kingdom.

2. *West Kalimantan*: Pray for safety and good health for the IMF missionaries and other workers, especially as tropical diseases abound, and also traffic can get very dangerous on roads and rivers.

3. *Suriname, South America*: There quite a substantial Javanese population here and prayer is requested for the missionary family who are in a church-planting ministry among them. They write that mosques are in appearing as rapidly as "mushrooms during the rainy season!" Pray that the church will bear a strong witness.

4. *Bangladesh*: The government seems to delight in making missionary work difficult! Please pray for our worker in Bangladesh, that she may be able to meet all the government's demands in filling out forms and reporting every detail of her work, so that she may continue to stay on. Prayer is needed for her literacy work, and also that the Lord will provide a fellow-worker for her.

BANGLADESH

SCRIPTURE CASSETTES

MEET THE NEEDS OF NEW CONVERTS

SHANTI KUTIR CENTER, BANGLADESH (WEF)-The production of cassettes for a pilot Scripture teaching and literacy program designed to meet the needs of low-caste Hindus who have converted to Christianity begins in July. The cassettes will contain both the reading and singing of Bible texts and will be used in conjunction with newly-prepared readers.

The first stage of the project, which should be underway by October, involves ten villages. Portable Recording Ministries is training Bengalis to assemble its patented, inexpensive playback machines locally. PRM has also developed a solar-powered battery regenerator for the machines.

BURMA

BURMA'S EVANGELICALS

ORGANIZE FOR COOPERATION

The small evangelical constituency in this country of 32 million people has embarked on a cooperative endeavour. News of the formation last year of the Evangelical Fellowship of Burma has encouraged observers of the religious scene in this "land of the pagoda".

Although Buddhism is no longer the official state religion, about 75 per cent of the population are nominal Buddhists. The evangelicals of the country, who compose about three per cent of the population are divided into dozens of denominations. Approximately 98 per cent of that community are from ethnic minorities.

The primary purpose of the new Fellowship will be to promote cooperative endeavor among the churches, states the Rev. Robin H. Seia, a Free Will Baptist evangelist who was appointed general secretary.

JAPAN

JAPANESE PASTORS

REISSUE TELECASTS

TOKYO, JAPAN (WEF) - The Kanto TV Evangelism Cooperation Group(Kan Tele) reissued its successful 13-week series of telecasts from April through June, after receiving more than 2,000 letters during the first nine episodes earlier this year.

The nationwide group of evangelical pastors and lay leaders purchased the 7 am Sunday time slot on Tokyo's channel 12 for the second airing. This enabled the 15-minute programs to reach a greater portion of the Kanto area audience than had been possible with the original Thursday morning 9:45 schedule.

Entitled Ikiru, which means "to live," the series presents the testimonies of Japanese Christians describing how Jesus Christ transformed their lives. A second series, employing a similar format, is in production and is tentatively scheduled for broadcast from October through December.

The estimated audience for the Thursday morning showings ranged from 100,000 to as many as 253,000 per program, and consisted primarily of housewives. Kan Tele offered a new Bible correspondence course, designed specifically for housewives, at the close of each telecast.

AUSTRALIA

METHODISTS ANNOUNCE

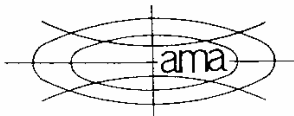
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

An international Christian youth conference, to be sponsored by the World Methodist Conference, has been announced for July, 1980 in Cornwall, England. The gathering, a part of the denomination's world evangelism programme, is expected to bring together about 5,000 young people from every continent.

The purposes of the conference, according to the Rev. Alan Walker, director of the Methodism's World Evangelism Centre here, are to challenge participants to personal commitment to Jesus Christ and to offer equipment for the task of global evangelization. The programme will feature major addresses by Christian leaders, Bible studies, a choice of 22 workshops and seminars, and a varied musical presentation.

A rally will be held in nearby Gwennap Pit where John Wesley preached to Cornish miners two centuries ago.

Methodist leadership is expecting a contingent from Third World Countries, and some financial assistance will be offered.



SINGAPORE

MISSION TOUR INDONESIA

A team of 12 members including 3 AEFers sang, shared and preached at 3 different places in Indonesia. Rev. B. T. Silas, AEF Evangelist in Indonesia, accompanied the team throughout the trip. From 15th to 18th June the team ministered at churches, fellowship groups and public meetings in Jakarta. From 19th to 24th the members were divided into 2 teams, one ministering at Ciloto and the other at Semarang. The team at Ciloto ministered in a family retreat where different church groups participated and the team at Samarang conducted training sessions in Personal Evangelism/Follow-up and preached at Revival meetings. Praise God for the many Indonesians who were blessed and challenged, and also for missionary experience the Team had, which widened their vision.

USSR

FURTHER ARRESTS

IN THE SOVIET UNION

The Council of Relatives of imprisoned Evangelical Christians and Baptists reports long-term sentences in forced labour camps for the following Church leaders:- Vsevolod A. Bugayenko (born 1939) from Saporoshye, Ukraine to 1½ yrs. Fyodor A. Korkodilov (1929) from Saporoshye, Ukraine to 2½ years. Pyotr I. Kravchuk from Bryansk, Russian Federation to 2 yrs. Jakov G. Skornyakov (1928) from Dshambul, Kazakhstan to 5 yrs.

DUDKO'S

"ORTHODOX WEEKLY"

The Russian Orthodox Priest, Dmitri Dudko, has been privately publishing type-written leaflets giving information and Christian teaching under the title of "In the Light of the Transfiguration" since September 1978. The paper is intended to depict the life of the Church scattered over the whole of Russia, including other denominations as well as primarily Orthodox Christians. "Our destinies are closely woven together through the very battering in of godlessness around us!"



GEORGI VINS IN THE WEST

The General Secretary of the unregistered Church Council of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists, Georgi Vins, together with four prominent Russian dissidents, was exchanged for two spies, Soviet employees in the United Nations, who had been condemned in America, on the 27th April. He had already served a 5 year sentence in a forced labour camp and was supposed to spend another 5 years in Siberia.

When visiting Jimmy Carter on April 29th Vins conveyed his thanks to the President for his personal intervention of his behalf and presented him with a copy of his autobiography, "Three Generations of Suffering"

(the Russian original of this book was published by LIGHT IN THE EAST). When interviewed Vins thanked all Christians and Human Rights Organisations in the West for all their help.

This Church leader reported that the Soviet prisons "are full of people who have lost everything. Most of them are embittered and form a disillusioned, unbelieving crowd". He had had keen contact with Christians and said literally, "I am persuaded that faith is strengthened through trial and that God gives spiritual comfort in physical suffering. The imprisoned Christian gets his support from God and through prayer, which is a source of never-ending strength."

The 51 years old national agriculturalist and engineer of German descent organized from 1961 onwards under the most difficult conditions a committee to represent the persecuted non-registered Baptist Churches. In 1963 he gave up his profession in order to effectively fulfill his leading role as General Secretary. In 1966 he was arrested and condemned to 3 years forced labour camp when taking part in a public protest with 500 other Baptists. Shortly after his release in 1969 a case was again set up against him.

From 1970 onwards he lived in hiding in order to be able to carry on his work. In 1974 the Secret Police managed to arrest him again. He was condemned to 10 years in a work camp of which sentence he had served 5 years in Siberia until his recent exchange. In spite of the terrible conditions of living in the labour camps, Georgi Vins comforted his relatives with the following words: "We have an inexhaustible source of encouragement, comfort and strength in HIM".

As the chicanery against the family became unbearable-his son Peter, was beaten to unconsciousness several times because of his activity in a Helsinki monitoring group-finally Father Vins gave permission for the family to emigrate to relatives in Canada. Mrs Vins applied in June 1978. Georgi Vins himself however, was determined to stay in the Soviet Union.

ACCF

Asia Christian Communications Fellowship

ACCF OBJECTIVES:

The ACCF seeks to:

1. serve as a catalyst and coordinating body for the concerns of Christian communicators in the churches of Asia.
2. promote the use of all available media to penetrate and permeate local cultures with the Gospel through relevant programmes and products orientated to the needs of Asians.
3. enhance the quality of Christian communications by sponsoring study groups, workshops, conferences, team visits, consultations, etc...
4. act as a clearing house for information about communication activities, special news, and research data.
5. study relevant practical and theoretical issues in communications and initiate research projects.
6. link available resources for Christian communications with existing needs.
7. encourage mutual concern between the churches and christian communicators.
8. stimulate and help develop national Fellowships of Christian communicators in all media.
9. provide opportunities for fellowship among Christian communicators in all the media at the international level.
10. cooperate with other international Christian communication agencies for fellowship and mutual assistance.

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