

Paul's knowledge of Greco-Roman rhetoric seems to be beyond serious doubt. As has already been noted earlier, he might even have made use of certain rhetorical methods and skills to express his own thought and argument in some special situations (such as in his dealings with some controversial issues in Corinth). But the degree to which Greco-Roman rhetoric might have influenced the apostle is a very complicated issue, especially when certain vital information is still not accessible to biblical scholars over the years. As such, we can hardly make

any final judgment on how Greco-Roman rhetoric might have influenced the apostle Paul. ■

#### Endnotes:

1. Plato, *Gorgias* 453a.
2. Cicero, *Brutus* 15.59.
3. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 2.15.34.
4. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 11.3.180-84. See also 1.pr.9.
5. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 3.8.13.



## Academic Programs

### International Conference on Theology and Aesthetic

The first international conference on theology and aesthetic was organized by Xiangfan College and co-organized by North American Chinese Christianity Society and Institute of Sino-Christian Studies on 24-27 September, 2006. About 40 scholars participated in this conference, they came from Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Britain, USA and Canada, etc. Six main themes were discussed in the conference, which included "Biblical Text and Theological Aesthetic", "Theology of Art", "Balthasar's Theological Aesthetic", "Studies on Theological Aesthetic", "Theology and Cultural Studies", "Theological Aesthetic in the Chinese context".



Most participants agreed that theology and aesthetic have a mutual relationship, in which theology seeks for the truth, beauty and goodness in the realm of divinity, and aesthetic urges for the transcendental ground and content of the experience of beauty. The inquired object of aesthetic usually takes a kind of divine beauty as its ultimate basis and objective, especially in ancient Greek and medieval culture. Chinese scholars also discussed the particular role and function of aesthetic in the Chinese context. In their training, they entered this discipline through literature, social critical theory and philosophy, etc. In the last century, the social and moral values change dramatically in the Chinese society. Aesthetic was once playing an important role to provide a path for salvation. Now, they have to seek for the religious ground of aesthetic when this discipline no longer bears this function.

In discussing the relationship between theology and aesthetic, many scholars think that theology provides the foundation for aesthetic. In the development of the history of

western philosophy, beauty is originally a divine category. That means aesthetic experience is a part of experience of the divine. Many theological ideas were expressed through visual and artistic images. For Balthasar, theology formulates a kind of aesthetic, which is grounded within theology; all kind of secular aesthetic should find their ultimate goal and value in divine beauty. This is a kind of theological aesthetics rather than aesthetic theology.

It is not easy to articulate the complex relationship between theology and aesthetic. Does theology provide some ultimate criteria for aesthetic? Can theology enrich the character of aesthetic? If these two disciplines were separated after the Enlightenment, can we claim that postmodern theology is a kind of enterprise to integrate theology and aesthetic? When Chinese scholars discussed the relationship between theology and aesthetic, is it a phenomenon representing the collapse of aesthetic value or the hopelessness of the human soul?

### 4<sup>th</sup> World Public Forum—Dialogue of Civilization

Director Daniel Yeung was invited to join the 4<sup>th</sup> World Public Forum—Dialogue of Civilization from late September to early October in Rhode Island, Greece. This forum, originated in 2002, was called forth by social activists in Russia, India and Greece. One of the important tasks is to enhance dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation between different cultural systems from different geographical areas. This year more than 500 participants come from more than 50 countries. They include social activists, representatives of NGOs and foundations, youth leaders and religious leaders (coming from Christianity, Islam and Judaism)

Since the China factor is becoming more and more important these years, Daniel Yeung took this opportunity to introduce the recent development and reason of Christian studies in China, which arose from the interest of Mainland Chinese scholars and included the investigations in different traditions and thoughts. From which the concept of Sino-Christian theology and its specificity and the potential contribution to the Chinese academia were also introduced. Participants were interested in this phenomenon and hope to follow its later development.



## Seminar for Overseas Partners



ISCS sets up internal seminars with its overseas partners every year. It is for the sake of doing dialogue between Chinese and overseas scholars. This year the seminar was held on 7 November, the speakers

included Prof. GAO Shining, Prof. TIAN Haihua and Prof. LI Yuehong, who shared their experiences in Christian studies and teaching in Mainland China.

GAO's presentation reported her investigation of the current situation of Christianity and Chinese society. Although the interaction between Christianity and Chinese society is limited, the effect of Christianity in today's China can be seen clearly in three ways. Firstly, in sustaining the traditional values to some extent, including the best of the traditional Chinese values. Secondly, in providing more choices for the people in the context of pluralistic value systems. Thirdly, in promoting some set of higher values, at the same time stemming the trend of deteriorating social values. In Prof. TIAN's sharing, she directed the focus to some phenomena of biblical studies in Mainland China. First, general knowledge of biblical stories is lacking among Chinese students. Second, it is hard for them to appreciate biblical monotheism. Third, some Chinese Christians hold a fundamentalist perspective towards Bible reading.

Furthermore, TIAN explained the cross-textual reading as a methodological consideration in biblical studies in Sino-Christian Theology. Lastly, Prof. LI analyzed the theological problem of Chinese house Church. He thought that their theological understanding was rigid and narrow-minded. Therefore, it cannot face the challenge from outside. Prof. LI pointed out that systematic translation and teaching of the Bible and theology are needed; higher level of Bible commentaries in both writing and publication are urgent. These materials should be related to the faith and life of Chinese Christians.

## Conference on "Christianity and Harmonious Society"

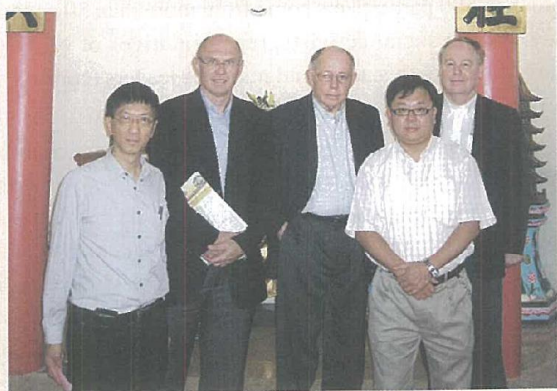
The Centre of Christian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences organizes this academic conference every year. It is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006, and the theme is "Christianity and Harmonious Society". The conference was held on 14-17 December 2006 and there were more than 150 participants, the number of papers presented reached nearly 60. ISCS is the co-organizer and Director Daniel Yeung and Research Fellows Keith Chan and Jason Lam joined the conference. Chan also presented a paper on Tillich's ecological vision.



# Academic Exchange

## The Visit of Scholars of Public Theology

In June 2006, famous scholars of public theology including Prof. Max Stackhouse and Prof. William Storrar from Princeton Theological Seminary, Prof. Miroslav Volf from Yale University and Prof. Hans G. Ulrich from University of Erlangen visited ISCS. They came to Hong Kong for the conference on "Religious Value and the Public Forum" held by the Baptist University of Hong Kong on 8-10 June. Director Daniel Yeung had a good discussion with the guests and introduced them to the work of ISCS and the development of Sino-Christian Studies in China.



## The Visit of Italian Scholar Matteo Nicolini-Zani

On 21 June 2006, brother Matteo Nicolini-Zani from Comunita' monastica di Bose, Italy visited ISCS. Director Daniel Yeung and Dr. Jason Lam had a good talk with him. Nicolini-Zani is the first person to translate the Jinjiao monument into Italian. His visit was to collect information of recent patristic studies in the Chinese academia, and the result was put in written form as "«Aolijin/Eligen», or Origen in Chinese: A Report on Origenian and Patristic Studies in Contemporary China", forthcoming in *Adamantius*.



## The Visit of Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

On 27 June 2006, Prof. George McLean and Ms. HU Yeping from the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, USA visited ISCS. The two institutes had in-depth discussion and mutual understanding of each other's work, and both expected to enhance the dialogue between Chinese and Western scholars in the future, and explored the possibility of cooperation.

## The Visit of Institut catholique de Paris

On 8 August 2006, representatives of the Institut catholique



de Paris, including Prof. Médevielle Geneviève, Prof. Henri Jerome Gagey and other guests, visited ISCS. They were on a trip to Hong Kong and Shanghai, to understand the recent development of Christian studies in the Chinese academia. The two institutes have good discussion and explored the possibility



of promoting dialogue between the French and Chinese scholars. After this visit, some Chinese scholars were invited by Institut catholique de Paris to write on Sino-Christian theology from different perspectives. The papers are forthcoming in *Transversalités*.

## The Visit of Prof. Arnim Speck

In September 2006, Prof. Arnim Speck from University of Bonn, Germany stayed at Tao Fong Shan for one month, doing his academic research. Speck is a Sinologist and is interested in the history of Tao Fong Shan. He visited ISCS on 4 September and collected information of our founder Rev. Dr. Karl L. Reichelt.

## The Visit of Dr. Clifford Anderson

On 18 October 2006, Dr. Clifford Anderson from Princeton Theological Seminary visited ISCS. Dr. Anderson is the Curator of Reformed Research Collections and his expertise is in Karl Barth studies. His visit is for understanding the situation of Barth studies in the Chinese academia.)



# Academic Research



## Visiting Scholars

From June to December 2006, ISCS hosted seven visiting scholars.

- **Dr. HUANG Jianbo** stayed at ISCS from June to August 2006. Dr. Huang is currently the researcher of the Institute of Anthropology in Renmin University of China. His research interests include sociology of religion, empirical study on religions and anthropology of religion. His research topic is "Review on the Empirical Studies of Christian Studies in Mainland China during 1980s". During his visit, he finished the article "Review on the empirical study of the Christianity in Mainland China in the last twenty years" and two book reviews on *Christianity and Christians in Beijing Today* by GAO Shining and *Christianity at the Foot of Mount Tai* ed. by Peter Tze-Ming NG et al.
- **Dr. YANG Junjie** stayed at ISCS from July to September 2006. Dr. Yang finished his doctoral degree with a thesis on Schelling's Philosophy of Arts. He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Literature, Beijing Normal University. His research topic is "Tillich and German Idealism". Dr. Yang will continue to translate and edit a collection concerning Paul Tillich on Schelling.
- **Prof. SHANG Jiuyu** is currently the associate professor of the Faculty of Politics and International Relation, Beijing Normal University. During his visit from July to September 2006, Prof. Shang collected the research materials on his research topic "Puritans and American Spirit".



- **Mr. QU Xu Tong** is studying in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Heidelberg under the supervision of Prof. Michael Welker. During his visit from July to September 2006, Mr. Qu collected research materials for his doctoral thesis, which is on the essence of Christianity from the perspective of Harnack and Bultmann in their studies on Gnosticism.
- **Mr. LI Yuehong** is the professor of Yunnan National University. During his visit from September to December 2006, he collected research materials on the research topic "Sino-Christian Theology in the Modern Context".
- **Prof. TIAN Haihua** is the associate professor of the Institute of Religious Studies in Sichuan University. Prof. Tian graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and her research interest is mainly on the Hebrew Bible. During her visit from October to December 2006, she collected