



天主教中美交流中心

United States Catholic China Bureau

## Reading Notes

- **God Is Red: The Secret Story of How Christianity Survived and Flourished in Communist China.** *Liao Yiwu, Translated by Wen Huang.* HarperOne, September 2011.

In 1990, Chinese dissident *Liao Yiwu* was imprisoned for writing a poem about the Tiananmen Square protests and remained under police surveillance after serving a four-year sentence. Moreover, in the past ten years, *Yiwu* was denied leave from China and forbidden to publish "illegal" works outside of China.

Now, with empathy and compassion, *Yiwu* gives voice to another persecuted people in China - Chinese Christians. His new book recounts their ongoing battle for freedom of expression and religion. In *God is Red*, *Liao* reveals that Christianity is undergoing a resurgence in China. According to the World Christian Database, five percent of China's population practices Christianity, making it the country's largest formal religion.

Providing an unprecedented glimpse into a deeply complex religious and political reality, *Liao* shares the stories of a wide range of astonishing and unique characters for whom Christianity is life-sustaining—a faith that has enabled survival, forgiveness, a sense of community, and peace, both under Mao and now as Christians continue to be persecuted. Through this human lens, *Liao Yiwu* reveals a new Christian identity which is distinctively Chinese.

- **China: the whys of the conflict between church and state.** Gossaert V. – Palmer D. A., *The religious question in modern China*, The University of Chicago Press, 2011 pages 441.

The Chinese anti-religious policy for the moment fails. Instead, the hasty rush to secularization by the state generates a favorable reaction to the development of religion. This explains why in China Christians are growing at a rate of twenty thousand new baptisms every day and with a total of 200 million faithful; **a phenomenon with which the government does not know how to deal.**

As can be seen from the events last year with the Catholic Church, the government has stopped acting with tolerance and now, through the Patriotic Association (Beijing-approved Catholics) imposes illegal ordinations (illegal because not endorsed by the Vatican) in an attempt to have a *government's Catholic Church*. China and the approach to religion is the subject of a documented book by two scholars of the University of Chicago.

The basic problem, the authors argue, is if and to what extent religion has a place in China today, to help build a society open towards the future. The answer is: we will see; meanwhile in the medium term the government thinks that religious groups should be monitored because they are too independent from the project and the structure of a centralized state.

