

# Introduction to "Catholics In America Concerned With China"

In March of 1979, Mr. Franklin Woo, the Director of the China Program Committee of the National Council of Churches, invited a few Catholic representatives to come to a meeting in New York City to Share ideas on the new opening of China, and its implications. At lunch after that meeting, the five Catholic representatives agreed that the American Catholic Church was unprepared for the sudden change and had done little reflection on its meaning. They agreed to meet again in July, and at that gathering designed a simple questionnaire to be sent to twelve religious societies and congregations who formerly worked in China, to ascertain the degree of interest in the changing Chinese situation. The response was overwhelming, indicating a keen interest and enthusiasm in the whole issue.

On the basis of that, all were invited to a meeting in December 1979 at Maryknoll, New York, to discuss the question and share ideas about the future. Three presentations were made, dealing with the past history of mission work in China, the present situation regarding religion, and possible future responses. A small ad-hoc committee was asked to continue to coordinate activities, maintain contact with those interested, and to organize another meeting the next year.

At the second meeting, a year later in December 1980, the assembled participants decided to formalize a simple structure called "Catholics in America Concerned with China" (CACC). That meeting reflected on the newly emerging church structures in China, especially the Church Affairs Committee and the Catholic Bishops Conference.

A third meeting was held in October 1981, which consisted principally of reports on the Montreal meeting, which had taken place the week before. Participants from China, Hong Kong, and Europe took part in that meeting.

There are presently forty-eight members of CACC, some of whom represent their religious congregations, while others participate as interested individuals. Catholics in America Concerned With China describes itself as follows:

## Organization

CACC is a loose coalition of representatives of religious congregations and/or individuals, held together by common interest. Between meetings it functions through an Executive Committee. Through this committee, CACC relates to the U.S. Catholic Mission Association.

## Purpose

CACC is to be: 1) a point of contact in North America for China/U.S. & Canada relations; 2) a vehicle for sharing information and reflection: a) for mutual understanding, and/or b) constituency education about contemporary China, particularly events of the Catholic Church in China; 3) a forum for considering and providing active support to endeavors which further these goals.

## Membership

Membership in CACC is open to congregations or individuals with expertise, interest, and openness regarding contemporary China.

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of five members elected by the membership. The term shall be for one year, renewable. They will elect their own chairperson. The liaison person with the USCMA will be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee and serve as Executive Secretary of CACC.

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the ongoing development of CACC, for planning CACC meetings, and for providing information through a periodic newsletter.

## Funding

With the exception of staff services, which will be contributed by the USCMA and the Maryknoll China Project, CACC will be self-supporting. A small membership fee will be requested annually.

## Meetings

Frequency of meetings will be determined by the membership.